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THE

HOLY BIBLE,

CONTAINING THE

Old and New Testaments,

WITH

ORIGINAL NOTES,

AND

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS,

BY THE

REV. THOMAS SCOTT,

MORNING PREACHER AT THE LOCK CHAPEL, LECTURER OF ST. MILDRED, AND ST. MARGARET MOSES, BREAD-STREET.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A CONCORDANCE, GENERAL INDEX, AND TABLES.

VOL. I.

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A NEW EDITION, CORRECTED AND IMPROVED.

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PREFACE.

WHOEVER ſeriouſly reflects upon the powers and capacities of the human mind, regarding them as the work of him who doeth nothing in vain, and compares them with thoſe of the inferior creatures will readily perceive that man alone was created to be religious. Of all the inhabitants of the earth, none elſe are capable of receiving any knowledge of their Creator, or of rendering him any worſhip and praiſe: Man alone poſſeſſes the capacity of diſtinguiſhing betwixt Truth and Falſhood; betwixt moral good and evil; and of being inſtructed in ſocial and relative duties, with the obligations, which he lies under to perform them, and the advantages of ſo doing: He alone is capable of being governed by a law, and of underſtanding and being influenced by the propoſal of rewards and puniſhments; of acting under the eye of an inviſible obſerver, and with reference to the future ſeaſon of retribution. From theſe premiſes we infer with abſolute certainty that the all-wiſe Creator thus conſtituted our minds, and conferred upon us theſe diſtinguiſhing powers, in order to render us capable of Religion, for the purpoſes of his own glory, and our felicity.

When further we conſider what this word Religion implies; and define it, in it's moſt general acceptation, to be ſuch an habitual regard to the one true, living, and eternal God, the creator, governor, and judge of all, as influences us to ſeek his favour, do his will, and aim at his glory in the temper of our hearts, and the regulation of our actions, both in the worſhip we render to him, and the duties we perform to man for his ſake, and according to his will: we ſhall be conſtrained to allow, that Religion is the moſt reaſonable and excellent thing in the world.—Doubtleſs the exerciſes of true devotion form the nobleſt effort of the human mind, which in them emulates the angelic nature: This conſcientious regard to the all-ſeeing eye of a righteous and

omnipotent judge, is the beſt bond of human ſociety, and regulator of our relative conduct: and were this principle of action univerſal and complete, human laws and tribunals would be entirely unneceſſary. This would alſo moſt effectually moderate our appetites and paſſions and produce the greateſt poſſible proportion of peace, contentment, and felicity, perſonal and ſocial, of which our nature in its preſent ſtate is capable. And when we look forwards beyond the grave, to that immortality and future world of recompenſe, which Reaſon itſelf pronounces at leaſt highly probable, the abſolute neceſſity of Religion to our felicity in that eternal ſtate appears ſelf-evident.

Hence with certainty we alſo determine that Religion is that great buſineſs, to which all men ſhould attend; and that bleſſing, after which all men ſhould ſeek, whatever elſe were neglected, or ſuperſeded.

But tho' it be demonſtrable that man is capable of religion, and in duty and intereſt bound thereto; yet when we come to facts, we muſt conclude, that, left to himſelf, he would never be religious.—According to the general definition above given, where ſhall we find religion upon earth, in any age or nation, which hath not poſſeſſed in a greater or leſſer degree the advantage of thoſe writings, which we will now take for granted, and hereafter prove to be a divine Revelation?—An aſſemblage of the wildeſt abſurdities in opinion, the moſt ſtupid ſuperſtitions in worſhip, and the moſt dangerous miſtakes, as well as the moſt abandoned licentiouſneſs in morals, forms that Religion (if it may be dignified by ſo venerable a name) which forces itſelf upon our obſervation, wherever the light of revelation hath not ſhone. And we cannot ſo much as except one nation, or one city, or ſcarce one family from this general rule. If there have been a few individuals who have manifeſted ſomewhat not totally diſſimilar from true religion; and we are diſpoſed to allow, that indeed it was ſuch: it would be more rational to aſcribe it to the remains of original tradition, or even to a perſonal revelation afforded them for their own benefit, tho' not authenticated for the good of others, than to make it an exception from the general rule, that without revelation, there never was on earth, ſince Adam's fall, any true religion.

Men

Men indeed living under the light of revelation, and making what uſe they chooſe of that ight, may draw up ſyſtems of natural religion plauſible enough, and apparently very rational. But it ſhould be remembered that it is all borrowed originally from the Bible, tho' with equal abſurdity and ingratitude, ſet up in oppoſition to it's ſacred and and ſublime truths: and univerſal experience demonſtrates that no ſuch natural religion ever was diſcovered, and delineated by men, who had never ſeen any part of the Bible, or any thing deduced from that ſource.

However reaſonable and excellent many of thoſe truths and precepts are, which are propoſed to us as the oracles of reaſon; not one of them ever was diſcovered and propoſed by Reaſon alone, with that certainty, clearneſs, and authority, as to become a conſtant principle and rule of action, in ſecret, and in public, towards God, and towards man.

Indeed, after all the ſuppoſed improvements and diſcoveries of modern times, if we reject the *peculiar Doctrines of the Bible*, what darkneſs and uncertainty reſt upon points the moſt important?—Even in reſpect of the immortality of the ſoul, when Reaſon at her beſt advantage, has done her utmoſt, her boaſted power of *Demonſtration* fails: much more in uncertainty does ſhe leave us about the nature of the future world, and the rule of judgment, with which our whole conduct, and our hope and peace are ſo connected. The conſiſtency of perfect juſtice with boundleſs mercy is hard, if not impoſſible, by her light to be perceived: it ſtill remains dubious whether God will puniſh at all, or pardon at all; or by what rules he means to puniſh, or pardon: and indeed a thick cloud veils our underſtandings, and diſcourages our inquiries wherever we turn, if we leave the light of God's teſtimony, to bewilder ourſelves in ſpeculations in matters evidently beyond our reach. How much worſe hath it been with almoſt all the nations of the earth, and generations of men? and ſo far have men been from advancing in religious knowledge, where revelation hath not been afforded; that ſuch nations evidently ſeem to have ſunk deeper and deeper into ignorance, and ſeveral of them almoſt into abſolute Atheiſm: as if the little glimmering that ſhone amongſt them, was the effect of original tradition, which gradually expiring, hath left them in utter darkneſs.

But the moſt complete information of truths, and duties, would be inadequate to the production of the deſired effect, except ſuch information was enforced by ſufficient authority, gave neceſſary encouragement, and propoſed effectual aſſiſtance. The diſcovery of our duty, and of it's reaſonableneſs is utterly unavailing, whilſt we are under the dominion of our head-ſtrong luſts and paſſions. There is in that caſe no diſpoſition in the mind to perform the dictates even of our own conſcience. A Heathen could ſay; *Video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor.* The propoſal of virtue as amiable, and excellent, with the feeble recommendation of the moraliſt's pen, is vaſtly inferior in it's energy, to the authoritative command and ſanction of the Almighty, denouncing his awful diſpleaſure againſt the tranſgreſſor: And yet matter of fact undeniably ſhews that men venture upon ſin, even with the threatenings of everlaſting miſery ſounding in their ears; nay, with the trembling apprehenſions of it diſmaying their hearts: for divine as well as human laws, are weak thro' the fleſh, and with all their ſanctions and barriers, are unable to affix boundaries to the ſwelling torrent of human depravity.

Indeed were men fully acquainted with the whole character and law of God; with the nature and malignity of ſin; with their own real character and ſituation as ſinners; and with the rule and conſequences of the future judgment: and were they left at the ſame time, utterly deſtitute of the encouragements and aſſiſtances, which the Goſpel propoſes, and which form the grand peculiarity of the Bible: This their knowledge, ſo far from rendering them religious, would probably, by leaving them without hope, annihilate all appearances of religion: wherever ſuch appearances are found, which have no reſpect to the mediation of Chriſt, and the aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, they have their foundation, not in men's knowledge, but in their ignorance of God, and of themſelves, of his law, and of the evil of ſin; as might eaſily be evinced even upon rational principles.

But the propoſal of ſuch encouragements, and ſuch aſſiſtance is entirely out of the province of reaſon: theſe are heavenly things, of which we can know nothing but by revelation from God, and of which we can have no aſſurance but his expreſs declaration,

and faithful promiſe. He alone can inform us upon what terms, or in what manner his honour permits him, and his ſovereign pleaſure diſpoſes him, to forgive his offending creatures; and to communicate thoſe gracious influences, which may produce a holy diſpoſition of heart, and enable them to overcome all thoſe obſtacles, which retard their progreſs, who eſſay to lead a ſober, righteous, and godly life.

From ſuch conſiderations, the neceſſity of a revelation from God may be inferred; and it might reaſonably have been expected, that he would afford ſuch a revelation, if he intended to accept of any worſhip and ſervice from fallen man. Indeed this expectation hath been very general in the world. And as counterfeit coin proves the exiſtence of ſterling money, and the value men put upon it; ſo counterfeit revelations, (inſtead of invalidating the argument) if they do not prove the exiſtence of a real revelation, yet evince that men felt their need of one, were ſenſible that it would be a moſt valuable acquiſition, and were generally diſpoſed to expect one.

Each of theſe pretended revelations have, one after another, been expoſed, and ſunk into general contempt: and, I believe, that in this age and nation, it may be aſſerted without hazard of contradiction, that there is but one book in the world, that ſo much as appears to be of divine original. This we call the Bible, that is, by way of eminence, the Book: And ſuch is the internal and external evidence, which authenticates it's claim; that I am perſuaded, were men as open to conviction in this matter, as they are in a mathematical proceſs, they could no more, after examination, reject it, than they could contradict an evident demonſtration.

It may, therefore, not be improper to inſert in this place a few of the moſt obvious reaſons, which the more ſtudious Chriſtian is ready to render of that hope, which is in him; grounded upon this firſt principle, that the Bible is the word of God. In order to ſhew that tho' faith and reaſon are diſtinct from, yet they are not contrary to each other; but that it is very reaſonable to believe the Bible to be a divine revelation; and if ſo, then equally reaſonable to take all our meaſures of truth and duty from it; and to bow our underſtandings, and inclinations to it's teaching and governing.

I. Then

I. Then I confeſs it has ſome weight with me, that ſuch numbers of the wiſeſt and beſt of men in ſo many countries, and during ſo many generations; many of them perſons of peculiar ſerioufneſs, deep penetration, eminent erudition, and acknowledged impartiality in judging of men, and things, have concurred in receiving this Book as the word of God; and have made it the rule of their conduct, the ſtandard of their faith, the foundation of their hope, and the ſource of their comfort, living and dying: and have left the world bearing teſtimony to it's divine excellency, and recommending it to thoſe dear friends, whom they left behind, as the richeſt of all treaſures.—Comparing theſe perſons, in their characters, lives, and deaths, with thoſe who have oppoſed, or neglected the Bible; I cannot but conceive, that a perfectly impartial being poſſeſſed of ſound judgment and an holy diſpoſition of heart having this ſtriking contraſt repreſented to him, would open the Bible with profound veneration, and a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion.

II. The miracles recorded in the Scriptures form, even to us, at this diſtance of time and place, a powerful argument in proof of their divine authority. The hiſtories of theſe miracles may be proved to have been publiſhed in the very ages and countries, in which they are declared to have been wrought, in the preſence of numerous witneſſes, enemies as well as friends to the cauſe, in ſupport of which they were performed. A public challenge was thereby given to all men, to contradict or diſprove them, if they were able: but none of thoſe, whoſe reputation, intereſt, and authority moſt required it; and who wanted neither inclination nor opportunity, ever ventured to give them a full inveſtigation. Conſcious that they could not diſprove the facts, they either waved the queſtion, or aſcribed them to cauſes evidently falſe and ridiculous.

As a ſpecimen of what might be urged, in good meaſure at leaſt, in behalf of the other miracles, were not brevity to be conſulted; let us examine into that capital miracle, the reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, after his embittered enemies were ſatisfied of his being really dead. For this one event, once eſtabliſhed, proves beyond diſpute the whole Bible to be a divine revelation; his authority and doctrine eſtabliſhes the Old Teſtament; and the witneſſes of his reſurrection either penned, or ſanctioned every part of the New Teſtament.

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In order to prepare men's minds to expect, and notice this event, which was intended to be the grand external evidence of the truth of chriſtianity; in addition to the Old Teſtament prophecies, Jeſus himſelf, publickly, and repeatedly predicted it, with the very time, when it would take place: theſe predictions his enemies the Jewiſh rulers noticed; and they employed their utmoſt addreſs and power to prevent any poſſible impoſition in the caſe:---yet, notwithſtanding all their precautions, his body was gone; and neither the ſoldiers, who guarded the ſepulchre, nor themſelves, could give any rational account how nor whither: unleſs they confirmed or allowed the teſtimony of his diſciples, who declared that he was riſen from the dead. According to the allowance of all civilized nations two witneſſes of unimpeached characters, and underſtandings, are ſufficient, even in caſes of life and death, to prove any fact, of which they declare themſelves to have been ſpectators, and concerning which they are competent judges: and by the ſame allowance, men are ſuppoſed competent to diſtinguiſh with certainty one man from all others, and to prove the identity of his perſon; not only upon long and intimate acquaintance, but even upon a ſingle, tranſient, and often confuſed ſight of him.---Now, in this caſe, here were twelve perſons of good characters, plain ſenſe, ſober minds, and ordinary education, that had been the intimate companions of Jeſus Chriſt for ſeveral years, who unanimouſly declared that they frequently ſaw, converſed, eat and drank with him, after his crucifixion and reſurrection from the dead; that they had every evidence they could deſire, and were perfectly aſſured that it was he; and that at the end of forty days, he viſibly aſcended from amongſt them, till a cloud received him, and they ſaw him no more; but were aſſured by a viſion of angels, that he was gone into heaven, and ſat down on the right hand of God. Contrary to their moſt manifeſt temporal intereſts, at the expence of renouncing every earthly comfort, and of embracing labours, ſufferings, contempt, and reproach, as their portion; avowedly expecting, and actually experiencing much the ſame treatment, as their maſter had met with: expoſed to the oppoſition of all the learning, wealth, and authority of the world, yet unawed by all the terrors of their indignant perſecutors, they perſiſted in this teſtimony unto the end, and cloſed their holy lives, and chearful ſufferings, moſt, if not all, of them, by joyfully ſealing it with their blood.

It is doubtful whether any other matter of fact was ever proved by ſuch undeniable evidence: and tho' the reſurrection of a dead perſon to life be an extraordinary event; yet we know that 'tis neither impoſſible, nor difficult to almighty power: and when a ſufficient cauſe requires it, why ſhould it be deemed incredible by us, that God ſhould exert that almighty power?—And, to ſtamp with the ſeal of heaven, a revelation, which is the baſis of all true religion, and which immediately tends to his own glory, and the everlaſting ſalvation of mankind is—the moſt important reaſon for a divine interpoſition that can poſſibly be conceived.

But even this teſtimony forms only a comparatively ſmall part of the whole evidence of the reſurrection. Five hundred brethren ſaw the riſen Jeſus at one time, and bare record thereto. Saul, the perſecutor, beheld him likewiſe, became his diſciple, and apoſtle, ſpent his life in teſtifying of him, and ſealed that teſtimony by his death.—Nay, the primitive moſt malicious and cruel oppoſers of Chriſtianity, not attempting to confute the teſtimony of thoſe, whoſe blood they ſhed, united their reluctant evidence, that Jeſus was indeed riſen, and they could not deny it. Moreover, the Apoſtles, and firſt preachers of the Goſpel publickly averred that God confirmed this their teſtimony by the miracles, which he enabled them to perform, and by the gifts of the holy ghoſt, with which he abundantly endued them: and that by laying on of hands theſe ſame powers were communicated to others; who openly exerciſing them in many wonderful works, in the name of the riſen Jeſus, formed an increaſing multitude of unexceptionable witneſſes: nor was this ever contradicted by any of their oppoſers; tho' it was an appeal to facts ſo numerous, public, and notorious.—Finally, the effects of the Apoſtles preaching, tho' unarmed, unlettered, and obſcure, and every where oppoſed and ſpoken againſt, cloſes this multiplied demonſtration. Not only were tens of thouſands brought to embrace the humbling, holy, and perſecuted religion of Jeſus; but the deep-rooted foundations of pagan ſuperſtition, as well as of the moſaic ceremonial, were ſpeedily determined, and within about 300 years the ſurpriſing ſpread of chriſtianity effected revolutions in the civil, as well as religious ſtate of the then known world; the effects whereof remain to this day, along with that religion whoſe ſucceſs occaſioned them. With a trifling alteration we may quote the words of a cautious oppoſer of chriſtianity, and ſay, "If it had been of man,

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"it would have come to nought; but as it was of God it could not be overturned; "and they, who oppoſed it, found it in vain to fight againſt God."

III. Let us next advert to the prophecies of Scripture. Thoſe prophecies, which have had their accompliſhment many ages ago, form a proof ſome what ſimilar to that of the miracles, which we have been conſidering. But thoſe, which are fulfilling before our eyes continually, are, if attentively obſerved, equivalent to a ſucceſſion of miracles performed in every age, and nation.—Let any man candidly and carefully examine the prophecies of the Scriptures, eſpecially thoſe of the New Teſtament, concerning the unbelief, rejection, and diſperſion of the Jewiſh nation; concerning the deſolations of Jeruſalem, and it's being trodden under foot of the Gentiles; and concerning the future calling of that people into the church, which implies their being preſerved ſeparate from other nations; let him then compare theſe prophecies with the paſt and preſent ſtate of the Jews, diſperſed amongſt, deſpiſed by, and yet preſerved diſtinct from other people: and then let him aſk, Is not here a *demonſtration* that this book, containing theſe prophecies of ſuch diſtant and improbable events, was inſpired by that God, who knows the end from the beginning?

Afterwards let him proceed to examine thoſe prophecies of the New Teſtament, which foretel the corruption of Chriſtianity by it's profeſſors; and compare them with the various abuſes of the Goſpel, which prevail in every age and nation; eſpecially let him compare the predictions of the coming, the character, and the abominations of Antichriſt, that man of ſin, and of the myſtical Babylon, &c. See 2. Theſ. 2 C. 1 Tim. 3 C. 1.—3 V. and the Revelations, with that ſyſtem of idolatry, ſuperſtition, tyranny, and perſecution, the Roman hierarchy which forbids to marry, and commands to abſtain from meats, and moſt minutely anſwers the deſcription of thoſe Scriptures; and he will find that even theſe lamentable abuſes ſhall turn unto him for a teſtimony; and he will no longer be ſtumbled, by finding that the worſt abominations have been grafted upon the Chriſtian religion; when he diſcovers that thus it is written, and thus, in the myſtery of God's providence, Satan was to be permitted to practiſe and proſper for a Seaſon.

Finally,

Finally, let a man well conſider what the ſcriptures foretel of the oppoſition, which the gates of hell, with all their power and policy, would make to the ſpread of the Goſpel, and their efforts for it's deſtruction: and of the continuance and prevalency of the religion of Chriſt, in defiance of all: let him alſo well attend to the character of the true chriſtian, and the treatment with which he was in all ages and countries to meet; then let him look around him, and ſee whether there are not ſtill ſuch perſons amongſt us who meet with ſuch treatment? And whether true Chriſtianity does not ſtill defy the gates of hell, and like the burning buſh, continue unconſumed in the midſt of the flames of perſecution, and every ſpecies of oppoſition? All theſe prophecies, and their accompliſhments are of the nature of miracles, an evident interpoſition of God to produce effects, which could not otherwiſe be produced; namely, the prediction of diſtant and future contingencies in vaſt variety, verified continually by the event: and this is a proof of the divine original of the Scripture, which it contains within itſelf, carries with it wherever it is ſent, and by which it ſhines, like the ſun, by it's own light, and by it's own beams proclaims it's author. And I am perſuaded that this argument will always prove more and more concluſive, in proportion to the diligence and attention, with which it is inveſtigated.

IV. To this we may next ſubjoin the argument deduced from the nature of the Revelation itſelf.—There is no book extant upon earth, except the Bible, and thoſe books that make the Bible their baſis, which ſpeak in a ſatisfactory, and rational manner of the Being, Perfections and government of God; which uniformly delineate his character, as compriſing all poſſible Excellency, without any mixture of imperfection, and record his whole conduct, as conſiſtent with ſuch a character. The Bible alone introduces the Governor of the Univerſe, ſpeaking with that Majeſty, Simplicity, and Authority, which becomes him; and promulgating laws and ordinances, which are worthy of him. In this extraordinary book we meet with uſeful information upon the moſt important ſubjects; and a clear ſolution of the moſt perplexing difficulties. Here we have our only ſatisfactory account of the creation of the world; of the entrance of moral and natural evil; of the preſent ſtate of things, and of the otherwiſe inexplicable phœnomena around us; and here we have our only comment upon that difficult book, God's Providential Govern-

ment of the world, and a plain revelation of the method, in which ſin may be pardoned, and ſinners ſaved. 'Tis true the doctrines of the Scriptures are myſterious: but this is ſo far from invalidating the argument, that it exceedingly corroborates it.—A pretended revelation without myſteries, would confute itſelf: a work of God, which we ignorant, ſhort-ſighted creatures can fully comprehend, involves a contradiction. The ſtyle of Deity is incomprehenſibility: from the creation of an atom, the formation of a mite, or the vegetation of a blade of graſs, to the nobleſt work of Almighty Power; all is to us myſterious, as to the mode of it's production and ſubſiſtence. Men with proper information, may fully comprehend the moſt intricate devices of men like themſelves; but no inſtruction in this world afforded us, can enable us completely to underſtand the ſimpleſt of the works of God. Should a watch-maker therefore declare that God created his watch, immediately, and in it's preſent form, it would not be a more palpable impoſture, than a pretended revelation from God, devoid of myſtery.

But the myſteries of the Bible are ſublime, intereſting, and uſeful; they tend to diſplay the perfections and operations of God, are connected with our moſt important intereſts, and lay at the foundation of our hope and peace; they tend to excite our admiration, to promote our humility, love, and gratitude; to inſpire confidence, and to draw our minds from earth to heaven. They are, indeed, myſteries, but not abſurdities; they are above, not contrary to our reaſon; and are in part intelligible, tho' not to be wholly comprehended. For a myſtery may be defined to be a divine truth, which we never could have diſcovered, unleſs it had been revealed; and concerning which we can know nothing further, than is revealed: that, which is declared unto us, we by faith apprehend, and in ſome degree, underſtand; that which is not declared, remains in impenetrable darkneſs, notwithſtanding all our reaſonings and enquiries. The information, therefore, which is communicated by myſteries, is capable of being applied to the moſt important practical purpoſes; whilſt the very darkneſs, that ſtill reſts upon thoſe infinite and eternal things, to which they relate, reminds us what we are, and where we are; and has a tendency to abate our pride, and to raiſe our expectation of thoſe glorious diſcoveries, which ſhall be made in that world, where we ſhall ſee face to face, and know, even as we are known. But to return from this digreſſion.

The tendency of all the truths, and precepts of the Bible, evidently is, to lead men to the knowledge, love, worſhip, and ſervice of Almighty God, to render them humble, and heavenly; and to form their character, and direct their conduct unto every thing that is juſt, holy, ſincere, benevolent, peaceful, and uſeful. Every motive, encouragement, inſtruction, warning, and aſſiſtance are therein propoſed, which are conducive to godlineſs, righteouſneſs, temperance, and every good work.

Oft it has been obſerved, and it will bear repetition, becauſe it admits not of confutation; that an evil ſpirit could never tempt men to write ſuch a book as the Bible; for then Satan would be divided againſt himſelf. Wicked men could have no inducement to ſuch an undertaking, for they ſtand condemned by it, in every page, and could only thereby expoſe themſelves, to the contempt and hatred of the world: and good men never would have invented ſuch a book, and then aſcribed it to divine inſpiration; when, in that book itſelf nothing is more ſeverely condemned than ſuch, (not *pious*, but) impious frauds. But, indeed, the more accurately, and impartially, any man examines the Scriptures, the fuller will be his conviction, that they are a work, as far beyond all the powers of the human underſtanding, as the ſun exceeds thoſe illuminations, whereby men attempt to imitate his ſplendour, or ſupply his abſence.

Indeed, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither did it ever enter into man's heart to conceive ſuch things, as God hath revealed in his holy word, and it's contents as fully declare it's author, as the heavens declare the glory of God their Creator; tho' both in one caſe, and the other, men not liking to retain God in their knowledge, do not chooſe to conſider, and are not willing to be convinced by any evidence.

V. The agreement, which is found amongſt the penmen of the Scriptures, forms another argument of their divine original. Should twenty men, all living in the ſame age, and country, all partakers of the ſame education, and in the ſame ſituation, and habits of living; yea, all ſubſcribing one common creed, concur in forming a book as large as the Bible, upon religious ſubjects; each ſingly contributing his quota, the attentive and accurate reader would be able to

perceive a difference in opinion amongſt them, in ſeveral things, let them beſtow what pains they would to avoid it. This is evidently the caſe in the writings of modern divines: there are not two books to be found of different authors, upon theological ſubjects, wherein diſagreement, in ſome particulars, might not eaſily be pointed out, and the more they are ſtudied and compared, the plainer their diſagreement appears.---

But the penmen of the Scripures, ſucceeding one another for the ſpace of above 1500 years; being perſons of different ranks in life, princes, and peaſants, fiſhermen, &c. of different education, natural abilities, and modes of living: ſome writing hiſtory, ſome giving laws, others uttering prophecies, collecting proverbs, deviſing parables, compoſing poems, pouring out devotions, diſcuſſing doctrines, confuting errors, &c; all concur in ſo wonderful a manner, that the oppoſers of the Scriptures have never yet been able to prove any real diſagreement amongſt them. The more theſe writings are ſtudied and compared, the more evidently it will be perceived, that the penmen were all of one judgment, and aimed to eſtabliſh the ſame principles, and to draw the very ſame inferences: in ſuch inveſtigation every appearance of inconſiſtency, which as a ſnare catches the ſelf-ſufficient, and prejudiced reader, will vaniſh from the humble, teachable, and attentive enquirer: And he will plainly ſee, that all of them give exactly the ſame view of the divine character, of human nature, of ſin, of holineſs, of the promiſed Saviour and Salvation, and of every ſubject, upon which they had occaſion to touch.

VI. The Effect produced by this book, in proportion, as it hath been attended to, in all ages, and nations, in turning men from ungodlineſs, and idolatry to the worſhip and ſervice of the true God: and in that change produced in the moral character, and conduct of tens of thouſands, who were otherwiſe irreclaimable, forms a moſt convincing proof that it is a revelation from God, and the inſtrument by which alone he works, in turning men from their iniquities.---But this argument hath been anticipated in ſome meaſure in the preceeding part of this preface. And ſhould any one preſume to object, that this light hath been withheld from ſo vaſt a proportion of the human race: it were

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obvious to anſwer, that it is a benefit, which none can demand of God, as in juſtice due unto them, and therefore that he confers it as an unmerited favour, upon whom he will, for reaſons with which he hath not been pleaſed to acquaint us. Nor are we in temporal matters generally diſpoſed to undervalue, and refuſe to make uſe of the ſpecial advantages, of our climate, or ſuperior ſtation in life, becauſe, all the world does not ſhare them with us. And we may add, that if man had been diſpoſed to welcome this light, every nation upon Earth would long ſince have enjoyed it: And that nothing at this day ſtops its progreſs, but the indifference of men about it, the oppoſition they make to it: and the bad uſe which they make of it.

VII. There is in the word of God *brevity* connected with *fulneſs* to ſuch a degree, as there never was in any other book. It is indeed an inexhauſtible treaſury of divine knowledge. And whilſt thoſe things, which are immediately neceſſary to ſalvation, are ſo plain, that the moſt illiterate reader, or one of the meaneſt capacity, who has got faith ſimply to believe the teſtimony of God, and a diſpoſition to obey his will, may with very little ſtudy learn thence the way of ſafety, and the path of duty, there is alſo in it that depth of inſtruction, which the moſt learned, acute, and diligent ſtudent, can never in the longeſt life exhauſt; but the more he ſearches the Scriptures, the richer treaſure will he find; and feel, when death is about to cloſe his enquiries, that he hath not attained; nay that what he hath thence learned is little, compared with that, of which he ſtill is ignorant. Nor is this a feeble argument of their divine authority.

Laſtly, He that believeth, hath the witneſs in himſelf.

By the light of God's word, he hath made moſt intereſting diſcoveries reſpecting his own heart, and character; as well as concerning heavenly things; and theſe diſcoveries have produced abiding effects upon his judgment, choice, diſpoſition, and conduct: he hath alſo, in anſwer to his prayers oft had experience of the truth of the promiſes contained in this bleſſed book, and hath had earneſts and foretaſtes of heaven in communion with God in that way, which is therein revealed; theſe things put the matter with him beyond all doubt. This, this is the grand evidence, which alone ſuffices to the bulk of chriſtians.---The word of God by it's authority and impor-

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tance arreſts their attention, and awakens their concern about eternal things: In the goſpel they perceive a ſuitable remedy and refuge for their ſouls, They ſee the neceſſity of faith, pray for it, and are enabled to believe, and thus obtain this witneſs in themſelves: and tho' ſuch chriſtians are not able to diſpute againſt infidels, yet they are enabled to obey and ſuffer for the goſpel; And tho' objections may puzzle them; it is as impoſſible by argument to convince them that the Bible is no divine revelation, as it would be to perſuade them that man created that glorious luminary, whoſe light they behold, and with whoſe beams they are cheared.---As to the external, yea, and internal evidences alſo, conſidered as mere arguments, I would ſay with the Apoſtle in another caſe, "Ye do well to take heed to them, until the day dawn, and the day ſtar ariſe in your hearts."

If this plain ſimple demonſtration of the divine original of the Scriptures, excite in any reader, double attention, and diſpoſe him to read them with ſtricter impartiality, and larger expectations of improvement: If it induce any one, who hath hitherto not conſidered the ſubject, to turn his thoughts that way, and examine more fully for himſelf the external and internal evidences of their being a divine revelation: if it obviates the unhappy prejudices, or confirms the wavering faith of one individual; if it ſtirs up any one to ſeek and wait for the witneſs in himſelf: The author will then have accompliſhed his purpoſe, and attained his end, in prefixing it to this intended publication.

Proceed we next to conſider the nature of a divine revelation, and the reception to which it is entitled. There are different ſorts of knowledge attainable by us. Some things we know by intuition, others by demonſtration: matters, not capable of ſtrict demonſtration, may be ſhown to be probable in ſuch a degree, that it would be abſurd to doubt of them, and madneſs not to be governed in our conduct by them. Many things we know by the teſtimony of our own ſenſes; and many others by the teſtimony of competent witneſſes. A very ſmall proportion of the actions of men are the effect of demonſtration, intuition, or perſonal knowledge: probabilities, and human teſtimony ſet mankind in motion, and form the main ſpring of their perſevering labours, vigorous exertions, and daring adventures. But if the teſtimony of man be great, the teſtimony of God is greater; which is indeed, when evinced to be his, the higheſt poſſible demonſtration. The

Bible is then the authenticated Teſtimony of God to truths, and facts, not otherwiſe diſcoverable, or not with ſufficient clearneſs, and certainty. Things paſt, future, and inviſible: truths important, ſublime, and myſterious are brought to our knowledge, atteſted by him, who cannot err and cannot deceive. Faith therefore is the only operation of the human mind, which is fitted to receive, and appropriate this information. Faith, ſimply receiving, and crediting the teſtimony of God's word, is to reaſon, what the teleſcope is to the aſtronomer: thereby are diſcovered objects, which are totally hid from the unbeliever; and thoſe are ſeen diſtinctly, and accurately, which to him appear obſcure, and confuſed. Reaſon, appropriating this information received by faith, adds immenſely to her former ſcanty ſtock; and in the poſture of a ſcholar, receives that knowledge, which muſt for ever be withheld, whilſt ſhe proudly affects to be a teacher. The weakeſt and moſt illiterate of mankind poſſeſſed of true faith, and acquainted with the word of God, acquires a knowledge in divine things, as much more uſeful, and certain, than ever fell to the ſhare of the wiſeſt unbeliever: as the prince's boſom friend, who is privy to all his ſecret plans, and purpoſes, is ſuperior in knowledge, to the ſpeculating politician, who argues without information from his own ſuppoſed ſagacity; and predicts, from what he conceives ought to be done, that thus it certainly will be; but finds in the event his ingenious conjectures were groundleſs, and his predictions erroneous. When in reliance upon the divine veracity, we receive the Scriptures, as, in every propoſition, indiſputably true, the whole, becomes our own; and we have only to work the mine, and be enriched with the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge therein contained. But this faith is very different from a mere aſſent of the underſtanding to the truth of a propoſition: It has alſo reference to it's importance, and our own concern in it, and is inſeparably connected with a conſiſtent practice.—Noah was informed, that the flood would come; we are informed that it actually came: but he was intereſted in the event, we are not: we may therefore aſſent to the truth of the hiſtory, without any influence upon our conduct; he could not believe the divine monition, but he muſt neceſſarily do as he did; be moved with fear, and prepare the ark. The truths of the Bible, are not like the reports of the day, which amuſe and gratify, but are of no conſequence to us, true or falſe: they all relate to our important intereſts, and therefore have reference to practice: and the Bible received in true faith, will become the foundation of

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our hope, the ſtandard of our judgment, the ſource of our comfort, the lanthorn of our feet, and the light of our paths; and implicit faith, will produce as implicit obedience.

The Bible alſo is to be conſidered as a complete revelation, ſo that nothing is needful either to be known, believed, or practiſed in religion, except what may be plainly proved thereby. But on the other hand, it ſhould carefully be remarked, that the *whole word of God is our rule*; and that the preference, which is manifeſted, by many profeſſing Chriſtians for one part, above another, is derogatory from the credit of the whole; and ariſes from a latent unbelief, and an indulged doubt, whether the whole Scriptures be of divine authority; or only that part, which coincides with their favourite tenets. True Faith receives the whole teſtimony, and allows every part it's proper place, and applies it to it's proper uſe, in ſupporting the believers hope, directing his conduct, and forming his character; "for all Scripture is given by inſpiration from God, and is profitable for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs; that the man of "God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good works."—See 2. Tim. 3. C. 16. 17.

But we muſt altogether reject the claim of all unwritten traditions, as well as of apochryphal additions to the written word. Indeed, tradition is ſo uncertain a vehicle, and every thing, thus communicated, is ſo liable to be corrupted, mutilated, or interpolated, that ſcarce any dependance can be placed thereon: and it is no improbable conjecture, that the art of writing itſelf, was firſt communicated, by revelation to Moſes; in order to preſerve and perpetuate the records of thoſe facts, laws, and truths, which he was about to deliver to the children of Iſrael: and it is much to be queſtioned, whether one ſingle particular of the whole revelation made to Prophets and Apoſtles, would have reached our time uncorrupted, had not written records preſerved them. Learned men find no traces of *literary* writing, not even amongſt the Egyptians, till long after the days of Moſes. The art itſelf of expreſſing an almoſt infinite variety of ſounds, by the interchanges of a ſmall number of letters, ſeems more like a diſcovery made to man from heaven, than an human invention: and it's moſt beneficial effects, and almoſt abſolute neceſſity for the preſervation, and ſpread of true religion fa-

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vour the conjecture. But be that as it will, all who love the Bible, ought to be thankful to God, for this important advantage; as well as for the invention of printing, by which, copies of the Scriptures are made ſo numerous, and ſo cheap.

Nor, is there any need of apocryphal additions, or benefit from them; but much danger, leſt they ſhould uſurp the authority, and, in ſome points at leaſt, be ſubſtituted inſtead of the Bible. Conſidered as mere human writings, they may have their uſe; but if cuſtom ſanction ſome of them, being bound up with the Bible; truth requires, that we ſhould explicitly be reminded, that they are not the *word of God*. Should it be enquired, how we are to diſtinguiſh, betwixt the genuine books of Scripture, and ſuch as are apocryphal? The anſwer, is obvious: not only ſome, but all the books contained in the canon of the Scriptures, as allowed, in the articles of the church of England, and comprized, in our common copies of the Bible, have many, or all, of thoſe internal and external evidences of their divine original, which have been inſiſted on: but, there is not one of thoſe called apocryphal, that might not be proved, to be entirely deſtitute of ſuch evidence; and many of them, to contain internal evidence of their ſpuriouſneſs.

But what is the province of reaſon, reſpecting revelation? Is that noble faculty, to be utterly diſcarded and degraded? God forbid. We have already obſerved, that, in the proofs, whereby revelation is authenticated, an appeal is made to us, as reaſonable creatures, to judge, but with modeſty and caution, whether it have not a claim to our attention, as coming thus warranted with a meſſage of infinite importance, from the moſt high God. Our reaſon alſo muſt be employed, in underſtanding the language, and explaining the terms, in which that meſſage is delivered: in matters, wherein we may be ſuppoſed competent to form a judgment, as with reference to the excellency of the commands, the equity of the adminiſtration, and the kindneſs of the conduct of God towards his offending creatures, we are appealed unto, and called upon, to approve the reaſonableneſs of the divine conduct. We may allow alſo, that if any perſon, or body of men, put ſuch a conſtruction, upon any Scripture expreſſion, as implies an evident contradiction, (as for inſtance, if any aſſert and bring Scripture to prove, that what we ſee, feel, and taſte to be bread, is indeed, the very material body, bones, and blood of a man; which tho'

a creature, is preſent in ten thouſand places at once;) we may reaſonably, nay, ought aſſuredly to reject ſuch interpretation; for no evidence can poſſibly prove that to be true, which our underſtanding, and ſenſes demonſtrate to be falſe.—But when doctrines, propoſed as matters of Revelation, and by ſober rules of interpretation ſhewn to be contained in that revelation; involve no real contradiction, but are only myſterious, and above our comprehenſion, or contrary to the general notions of men, and thoſe preconceptions, which we indeed dignify as the dictates of reaſon, but are more frequently the off-ſpring of pride and ignorance: upon ſuch grounds to reject the teſtimony of God, out of regard to human reaſonings, would be the moſt *unreaſonable* conduct imaginable; unleſs man were indeed wiſer than his maker.

The penmen of the holy Scriptures often expreſs themſelves in language, taken from their own habits of living, and the ſcenes, with which they were converſant: knowledge therefore of various kinds may be very uſeful, and in ſome inſtances neceſſary, for the full underſtanding of them. We are therein addreſſed as creatures endued with common ſenſe, and expected to employ it, in deducing inſtruction, and forming practical concluſions from what we read, and from comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual.—We are expected alſo to have ſuch a value for divine truth, as to be willing to beſtow ſome pains in ſearching for it, as for hid treaſure; otherwiſe revelation is "a price put into the "hands of a fool to get wiſdom, who has no heart to it." A humble, teachable, and dependant ſpirit is alſo requiſite; for except we receive the divine teſtimony of the kingdom of God, as little children, we ſhall not enter therein. And at laſt we ſhall read and ſtudy in vain, if we are not willing to practice what we have already learned; and to aſk in daily prayer further wiſdom of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. The author of revelation hath alſo beſtowed on ſome men larger abilities, and afforded them more advantages of education, more leiſure, and more opportunities for ſtudy, than others have; theſe are talents, which the word of God commands them to improve: Some ſuch perſons, in every age, are induced by divine grace to devote theſe endowments to the acquiſition, and communication of religious knowledge, for the benefit of thoſe, whoſe time is otherwiſe engaged, whoſe talent does not lie that way, and who have need to be excited to conſider, and aſſiſted in underſtanding thoſe things, which belong unto their

eternal peace. This is especially the work of the Gospel ministry: men thus qualified of God, by giving themselves wholly thereunto, become mighty in the Scriptures; and being diligently employed in opening, and alledging, in reasoning and persuading from them, are God's instruments to awaken men's minds to a concern about eternal things, and stir them up to read for themselves, and enable them to apply general truths, precepts and examples to their own cases and circumstances, for the purposes of encouragement, and edification.—And tho' the bare reading of the Scriptures is oft times blessed to the souls of men for their everlasting salvation: yet generally faith comes by hearing the word preached, and not merely by perusing it. This is God's ordinance, to which from age to age his seal hath been affixed; and I am persuaded universal experience decides, that true christianity hath evermore flourished in almost exact proportion to the degree, in which the *word of God unadulterated, and unmutilated,* has been earnestly, diligently, and publickly preached by men, whose disinterested labours, and holy lives have given sanction to their doctrine.—

But tho' oral preaching be the grand means of promoting Godliness; written preaching, (if I may be indulged the expression) has had much subordinate usefulness in disseminating divine truth. A large proportion of the Scriptures themselves were occasional writings, sent to those, whom the penmen could not address by word of mouth: and many eminent men, tho' dead, yet speak to great purpose in the writings, which they have left as a bequest to the church: provided what is written be truly scriptural, and lead men to read, and assist them in reading the word of God, we can no more have too many religious books than too many faithful preachers of the Gospel. False and superficial religion will be sure to be propagated both from the pulpit and from the press; and if Satan's ministers (See 2 Cor. 11 C. 15 V.) be so industrious, in sowing tares; the servants of Jesus Christ should not be timid, or backward in dispersing the good seed.

No method of conveying truth seems more advantageous, than that of plain expository lectures upon Scripture, with practical inferences, and animated addresses to the heart and conscience: and if this be true of preaching, it cannot be far otherwise in respect of writing: where the word of God is still kept in sight, and the hearer or reader perceives, that

that he is not amuſed with a pretty fancy, but is indeed informed of the evident meaning of the Bible itſelf, it will have an authority over his conſcience not otherwiſe to be acquired. Not that I would be underſtood as undervaluing critical comments upon the ſacred Scriptures; whatever tends to elucidate their true meaning has an important uſe, and many have done well in that way: but ſtill practical expoſitions ſeem more calculated for general uſefulneſs. Indeed expoſitions are all liable to abuſe, thro' the pride, and luſts of men, who wreſt the Scriptures themſelves to their own deſtruction: but the pious and faithful commentator's labour is no more to be blamed for that abuſe, than the labour of the huſbandman for the intemperate uſe, which men make of the fruits of the earth: and if expoſitions really explaining the Scriptures were multiplied tenfold, there could not be too many; except ſome one had exhauſted the ſubject, (which indeed is inexhauſtible), and that one was in every perſon's hands, and read by them all. It is impoſſible that all men ſhould hear the ſame preacher; and it is alſo highly improbable that all ſhould read the ſame book.

The formation of men's minds, and their habits of thinking are ſo diverſe, that miniſters of equal faithfulneſs ſeem intentionally to be endowed with ſuch different qualifications, and ſuch varied methods of delivering the ſame truth, and aiming at the ſame object; in order more advantageouſly to engage the attention of diſtinct deſcriptions of hearers: in like manner, ſome are ſuited with the ſtyle, method, and that which may be called, the *peculiarity* of one writer: whilſt others are delighted and profited with one, who is in all theſe things the very reverſe. Every man alſo has his connections; and ſome are diſpoſed to hear or read with attention what he ſpeaks or writes; who have not the ſame favourable diſpoſition towards another perſon, perhaps of ſuperior excellency.

Thus ſome read one man's book, and ſome another's; and ſome have leiſure and opportunity of reading many, and collect ſome benefit from each; and ſo knowledge is diſperſed, and 'tis to be hoped good done.

Altho' a man's chief care ſhould be to approve himſelf to God, and to his own conſcience with reſpect to the ſimplicity, and integrity of his intention: yet, when there are ſo many comments upon the Scripture already, the bold undertaking of adding one to their number,

number, may ſeem to require an apology to the public. The preceding obſervations introduce the author's; which is ſimply this: experiencing the utility, efficacy and comfort of that meaſure of acquaintance with the word of God, with which he has been favoured, he would wiſh, were it poſſible, that all the world ſhould enjoy the ſame felicity: and the heart ſearching God is witneſs, that no motive would have induced him to venture forth in ſo weighty an engagement; had he not hoped to be thereby an inſtrument in promoting the glory of God, and the ſalvation of men.

It is no part therefore of the deſign of this publication, to detract from the merit of former commentators, or to ſuggeſt an idea that he can add any thing, which hath never been advanced before. But having for ſeveral years made the Bible his daily and main ſtudy; and having beſtowed ſome pains to obtain ſatisfaction in his own mind, as to the meaning of moſt parts of Scripture, and the inſtruction contained therein: and ſuppoſing his ſmall talent to lie in ſpeaking plainly and intelligibly to perſons of ordinary capacity; he wiſhes to occupy therewith, in communicating his views of divine truth, in connexion with the Scriptures, from which he hath deduced them.

Some comments are too learned for the uſe of plain people, ſome are too voluminous and expenſive; and ſome are in very few people's hands, nor likely to be more generally read; and ſome, which are moſt excellent, are to many readers, antiquated, thro' that faſtidiouſneſs, which reliſhes not the quaintneſs of former, perhaps better times. Were this preſent undertaking therefore entirely upon the plan of former comments, it would not be ſupernumerary, if duly executed. But in arranging old truths, the author purpoſes to adopt ſomewhat of a new method: not indeed entirely *new;* for Browne's ſelf-interpreting Bible ſuggeſted the hint, which will here be enlarged upon: and the improvements in Dr. Doddridge's family Expoſitor, are propoſed in ſome reſpects, as models for imitation. The author's deſign is to annex ſhort expoſitory notes at the bottom of each page, and at the cloſe of each chapter (or perhaps in ſome places each diviſion of a chapter) to ſum up the inſtruction contained therein, as it occurs to him, in what he calls, PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS; not becauſe doctrine and experience will be excluded; but becauſe he would refer the whole to it's practical effect upon the heart and life.

Perhaps

Perhaps the barren field of conjectural criticiſm has already been ſufficiently cultivated; at leaſt the author has not at preſent, either leiſure, inclination, or talents for it: and intends to touch but very ſlightly upon chronology, and ſuch other matters, as are of more difficulty than utility. In general, the tranſlation will be commented upon; and if, in ſome inſtances, the author avails himſelf of the learned labours of others; he intends to communicate the information, without attempting to bring forward thoſe critical diſcuſſions upon the original languages, from which it is deduced: being perſuaded that the ordinary reader is not thereby edified, and conſcious that he is incompetent to inſtruct the learned one. The contents of each chapter expreſſed with all poſſible brevity, are ſolely intended to aſſiſt the reader in finding any ſubject, which he wiſhes to conſider. And upon the whole, to awaken and direct the conſcience, to inform the underſtanding with the knowledge of divine truth, to affect and improve the heart, and to promote the fruitfulneſs and comfort of the true Chriſtian, are the leading objects, which he has in view, and hopes never to loſe ſight of in this undertaking; avoiding nice diſtinctions, acrimonious controverſy, or ſtudied exactneſs, and conſiſtency; chuſing rather to follow the leadings of Scripture, than to preſs it into the ſervice of a preeſtabliſhed ſyſtem; and preferring the ſatisfaction of promoting the edification of pious perſons of different ſentiments, to the applauſe of the zealots of any party.

Whatever acceptance this work may meet with from man, the author hopes to be ſatisfied with the teſtimony of his own conſcience, and the expected approbation of his judge: and would conclude with deſiring an intereſt in the prayers of all, who love the truth, and favour this deſign; that the Father of Lights, the Giver of all Wiſdom and Knowledge, and the God of all Grace would guide his thoughts and pen, enliven and purify his affections, and give him a ſingle eye, and a ſimple dependant ſpirit, thro' the whole of this arduous undertaking, to which, without ſuch aſſiſtance, he is conſciouſly inſufficient: and that by the divine bleſſing, it may be acceptable and uſeful to the people of God, and tend to the ſpread of true Chriſtianity, and to the glory of God in the ſalvation of men. He truſts his earneſt prayers are and will be to the ſame effect; and for the everlaſting good of every one, who ſhall peruſe this publication. AMEN.

INTRODUCTION

TO

THE OLD TESTAMENT, TO THE BOOKS OF MOSES, AND TO THE BOOK OF GENESIS IN PARTICULAR.

IN opening the ſacred Volume, we begin with the "Old Teſtament," ſo called, not in oppoſition to, but as diſtinguiſhed from the New Teſtament.—The word, tranſlated Teſtament, is more generally rendered, and more commonly ſignifies a Covenant, and hath reſpect to the condeſcending dealings of God with man, in a way of covenant tranſactions. We are not to ſuppoſe that the Old Teſtament has it's name from the Old Covenant of Works, as oppoſed to the New Covenant of Grace and Mercy; as if God dealt with his Old Teſtament Church according to the former. When Adam ſinned, that old Covenant was broken; but it never was, or can be aboliſhed to the end of time, as to it's general tenor, "Do this, and live; tranſgreſs, and die:" All unbelievers remain under it, break it by every ſin, and are condemned by it; and all the warnings and threatnings of the Bible originate from it. But when the "Seed of the Woman" was promiſed, the New Covenant of mercy and grace entered, from which all the promiſes of God to ſinners flow, and all their hopes ariſe: The tenor of this Covenant is, "Believe, and thou ſhalt be ſaved;" according to which, all true believers have been dealt with from the beginning. But of this Covenant, there have been, ſo to ſpeak, ſeveral editions; of which the laſt, and moſt complete, is called the New Teſtament: In contradiſtinction to which, the foregoing editions are called the Old Teſtament: not without reference to that Covenant of peculiarity made with the people of Iſrael, which the introduction of a better Covenant hath cauſed to wax old, and to vaniſh away.—The ſubſtance being come, thoſe types, and ceremonies, which were but the ſhadow, are aboliſhed, as to their authority over the conſcience: and the boundaries of the church being enlarged, the peculiar temporal bleſſings covenanted conditionally to the Iſraelites,

as a nation; and the peculiar ſtatutes enacted for them in their political capacity, are now antiquated, as are all other things, wherein it accords not with the New Teſtament. —This ſeems the occaſion of the diſtinction betwixt theſe two grand diviſions of the word of God; yet the whole is of divine original, and important uſe: and even thoſe parts of the Old Teſtament, which we are no longer required to obey as commands, are full of inſtruction, and tend to eſtabliſh, and elucidate the New Teſtament; and will grow into the eſteem of every one, in proportion as he rightly underſtands, and reliſhes the peculiar doctrines of chriſtianity.

In the Old Teſtament we firſt enter upon the five Books of Moſes, generally called the Law, to diſtinguiſh them from the Pſalms, and the Writings of the Prophets: becauſe the law was given by Moſes, and is contained in theſe books.—However much in them is hiſtorical, much prophetical, ſome devotional, and all impreſſed with an evangelical ſtamp.—Probably they were the firſt books which ever were written; we are ſure they are the moſt ancient records now extant. The Hiſtory, as well as the Prophecy and the Law, was all, without doubt, given by inſpiration from God; or penned under his infallible ſuperintendancy, who ſpake with Moſes face to face, as a man ſpeaketh to his friend. Part of the hiſtory could only be known by revelation, much more of it could only by that means be known with accuracy and certainty; and the whole is of ſuch importance, and utility; and written with ſuch ſimplicity, majeſty, and impartiality, as may ſatisfy us, that he wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghoſt.

We now enter upon "*The Book of Geneſis*," a name not found in the Hebrew original, but given to it in the Greek tranſlation, called the Septuagint, and which ſignifies the Book of the Beginning, of the Original, or of the Generation; namely, of the Univerſe. It is remarkable that the New Teſtament begins with the ſame two words, "*The Book of the Generation*;" namely, of Jeſus Chriſt; for as the World was made by him, ſo was it made for him. This Book begins, as it's name imports, with the Hiſtory of the Creation of the World; then informs us of the entrance of Sin and Death; gives us ſome brief account of the wretchedneſs of men, and the judgments of God upon them for their ſins, eſpecially by the deluge, and the deſtruction of Sodom

and

and Gomorrah by fire: but more fully records the promiſes of the Saviour, and the Hiſtory of the Church of true believers, from the fall of Adam to the death of Joſeph, for the ſpace of 2369 years, according to the general computation. In which we are particularly informed of the faith and obedience; the trials and ſupports; the excellencies and blemiſhes; the lives and deaths, (with the exception of Enoch, who was tranſlated, that he ſhould not ſee death) of a choſen few, who were preſerved uninfected with the general contagion of idolatry and wickedneſs, which overſpread the world around them.—Theſe things are recorded in part for our imitation, and altogether for our inſtruction, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.

The Names and Order of all the Books of the Old and New Teſtament, with the Number of their Chapters.

GENESIS *hath Chapters*	50	II. Chronicles	36	Daniel	12
Exodus	40	Ezra	10	Hoſea	14
Leviticus	27	Nehemiah	13	Joel	3
Numbers	36	Eſther	10	Amos	9
Deuteronomy	34	Job	42	Obadiah	1
Joſhua	24	Pſalms	150	Jonah	4
Judges	21	Proverbs.	31	Micah	7
Ruth	4	Eccleſiaſtes	12	Nahum	3
I. Samuel	31	The Song of Solomon	8	Habakkuk	3
II. Samuel	24	Iſaiah	66	Zephaniah	3
I. Kings	22	Jeremiah	52	Haggai	2
II. Kings	25	Lamentations	5	Zechariah	14
I. Chronicles	29	Ezekiel	48	Malachi	4

The Books of the New Teſtament.

MATTHEW *hath Chapters*	28	Epheſians	6	To the Hebrews	13
Mark	16	Philippians	4	The Epiſtle of James	5
Luke	24	Coloſſians	4	I. Peter	5
John	21	I. Theſſalonians	5	II. Peter	3
The Acts	28	II. Theſſalonians	3	I. John	5
Epiſtle to the Romans,	16	I. Timothy	6	II. John	1
I. Corinthians	16	II. Timothy	4	III. John	1
II. Corinthians	13	Titus	3	Jude	1
Galatians	6	Philemon	1	Revelation	22

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

G E N E S I S.

WITH

EXPOSITORY NOTES, and PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. a Revelation of God, the Creator of all things, v. 1. 2d. A diſtinct account of the Creation of the World in ſix days, with the particulars of each day's work, v. 3.—27. 3d. The creation of man at the cloſe of the ſixth day, v. 26—27. 4th. The bleſſing pronounced on him, the dominion veſted in him, and the grant made to him, v. 28—29. 5th. Each part approved as good, and the whole accounted very good by the Creator, v. 4—10—12—18—21 25—31.

IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkneſs *was* upon the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

3 And God ſaid, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God ſaw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkneſs.

5 And God called the light Day, and the darkneſs he called Night: and the evening and the morning were the firſt day.

6 And God ſaid, Let there be a firmament in the midſt of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided

NOTES.

V. 1. *In the beginning.*] It is natural and unavoidable to us, who ourſelves are but of yeſterday, to enquire about thoſe things, which have been before us, and to carry our reflections back to the original of all things: but our reaſon is evidently incompetent to the ſatisfactory ſolution of theſe enquiries; as is demonſtrated by the uncertainty, contrariety, and abſurdity, in which the wiſeſt of the heathens were bewildered upon this ſubject. However rational it be to conclude, that all things were at firſt created by the eternal, ſelf-exiſtent, and Almighty God; yet reaſon hath ever lamentably failed of drawing this concluſion: By revelation alone hath the matter been decided: "by faith we underſtand that the worlds "were framed by the word of God; ſo that things, "which are ſeen, were not made of things, which "do appear!" Heb. 11. 3. This information, conveyed to us by the word of God, reaſon may appropriate, approve, and apply, but was unable to anticipate.

This knowledge is uſeful and neceſſary, and therefore communicated: but nothing is mentioned about eternity, a *parte ante* (a paſt eternity); that abyſs which ſwallows up all our thoughts, and involves all our reflections, and diſcourſes in confuſion; for this could only gratify our curioſity, and increaſe our ſtock of barren notions. The Scriptures declare that God is from everlaſting to everlaſting; and reaſon allows that it muſt be ſo, though it cannot comprehend in what manner.—All elſe had a beginning. Here the inſpired penman commences his hiſtory, and with moſt ſublime abruptneſs breaks forth, "In the beginning:" as if he ſhould ſay, "This, O "man, is enough for thee to know; here ſtop thy pre-"ſumptuous enquiry; call back thy intruding thoughts "from things too high for thee; and learn to know, and "adore thy Creator."

God created.] The Scriptures are eſpecially intended to teach us the knowledge of God; which is done in the manner beſt ſuited to inform, and affect us; by recording

vided the waters which *were* under the firmament, from the waters which *were* above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven: and the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry-land appear: and it was so.

10 And God called the dry-land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that *it was* good.

11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, *and* the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed

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his words, and his works.—From the creation of the world we learn his eternal power, and godhead; and discern in the things, which he hath made, his infinite wisdom and goodness; whilst the simplicity, and harmony subsisting in the midst of the richest variety, lead the mind in the easiest manner to conceive of the Creator, as the *one living* and true God. At the same time it is generally known, that the original word translated God is plural, in a language, which admits of three numbers; yet, when speaking of the true God, it is joined with singular verbs.—Probably the Hebrew was the original language; and certainly it is the language which God made choice of, for the first written revelation of himself to man. Meeting us thus in the very beginning of the Bible, it seems to imply that this grammatical anomaly was intended to teach us somewhat respecting that God, who is therein revealed; and may well be interpreted as an intimation, that in the unity of the Godhead, there was also plurality; that is, one God subsisting in three persons. Though it would be improper to lay the whole weight of this important argument upon this intimation; yet it should not be altogether rejected as a mere verbal criticism.

The heaven and the earth.] The whole universe visible and invisible. The word heaven sometimes is used in Scripture for that place, where the divine glory is especially displayed, and where angels and happy spirits have their residence: at other times for the vast expanse, wherein the sun, moon, and stars are placed: and at other times for the circumambient air, even to the very surface of the earth; and must therefore be interpreted as the context requires.—We can collect nothing from hence concerning the angels, except that in the beginning they were created of God. But this visible world was created in six days, as afterwards described.

Created.] It appears that the chaotic mass was first instantaneously created out of nothing; and then gradually reduced to order and beauty.

V. 2. *The earth.*] This earth, with the heavenly luminaries immediately connected with it, was at first an *unformed* mass of the component elements; and *void*, or destitute of plants, trees, animals, &c. and covered with thick darkness.

Deep.] Or abyss, the unformed chaotic mass.

The Spirit of God.] Here again, at the very opening of the sacred Volume, we have an intimation of that divine Spirit, whose agency and operations form so conspicuous and distinguishing a part of Revelation.

Moved upon.] As the efficient cause in creation. Let the impartial reader here turn his attention to those texts in the New Testament, (*John*, c. 1. v. 3. *Col.* c. 1. v. 16, 17. *Heb.* c. 1. v. 2, 3.) which, in the most emphatic language, ascribe all creation to Jesus Christ, the Son and Word of God: and, comparing them with this account of the agency of the divine Spirit in the work of creation, and with such Scriptures, (as in particular v. 1.) which declare that *God created all things*, he must allow, that from the beginning of the Bible there is a real foundation for the doctrine of three divine persons in the unity of the godhead.

V. 3. *Let there be light.*] The sublimity of this passage has been universally admired by men of learning and taste; and indeed this simplicity is unspeakably more majestic, than those studied ornaments of style and language, which are generally affected. But it is more to our purpose to observe that St. Paul, speaking of conversion, which he frequently terms a new creation, makes a plain allusion to this passage: (2 *Cor.* c. 4. v. 6.) intimating thereby, that the dark, disordered, and unholy state of a sinner's heart much resembles this chaos: until the Spirit of God moves upon it, and causes light to shine into the understanding, regulates the disorder of the affections, furnishes the heart with holiness, restores the soul to beauty, and harmony, and prepares it as an habitation for his own immediate residence.

V. 5. *And the evening, &c.*] There was, it seems, before the formation of the sun, moon, and stars, a regular succession of light and darkness, on the different parts of the chaotic mass, which thus measured out the first day.

V. 6. *Let there be a firmament.*] The word firmament, seems to signify the whole expanse, which surrounds the earth, even to the fixed stars, which are said "to be set "in the open firmament of Heaven;" "as the fowls are "said to fly in the open firmament of Heaven;" and again, "he called the firmament Heaven."—It must therefore be understood according to the context, as was observed upon the word Heaven.

V. 9. *Let the waters be gathered, &c.*] The waters being separated from the dry ground, were divided into those under the firmament, which are deposited in the ocean, seas, lakes, &c.; and those, above the firmament, which are suspended in the air, form the clouds, and descend in rains, and dews, &c.—Instead of attempting a further explanation of the terms here used, I would rather call the reader's attention to the power, wisdom, and goodness of God displayed in this part of creation.—In the vast reservoir of the ocean and seas, the waters are primarily treasured up, being by their saltness, and incessant motion preserved from becoming putrid: these facilitate commerce, and friendly intercourse betwixt distant nations;

seed *is* in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

12 And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.

15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

16 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: *he made* the stars also.

17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth;

18 And to rule over the day, and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that *it was* good.

19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl *that* may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beasts of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind: and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

26 And

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nations; supply immense quantities of wholesome provisions; and are in many ways serviceable to mankind. From them originally, in one mode of conveyance or other, the whole earth is supplied with water, now become fresh, and fit for use, and communicated in the gentlest method. Hereby the surface of the ground is fertilized; hence all living creatures quench their thirst; and thus all the purposes of cleanliness are answered. Thence returning to the sea by brooks, and rivers, the waters enrich and beautify the regions, through which they flow, and confer manifold benefits upon mankind through the whole of their course. Let this hint suffice to demand of the reader a tribute of grateful praise to the kind giver of all our comforts.

V. 10. *And God called, &c.*] It is observable that God himself gave names to those creatures, over which Adam could not exercise dominion; but left him to give names to the rest.—Without doubt, these names were expressive of the nature of the creatures, whether we can now understand them, or not.

V. 11. *And God said, &c.*] Hitherto the whole was inert, and lifeless: but now the whole vegetable system was at once produced, in all its vast variety, and numerous tribes, for the use of man and beasts. Each of these was created not only for individual vegetation, but with the surprising power of propagating, and multiplying almost infinitely it's peculiar species, by seeds oft very minute, and scarce discernible from each other; which yet never fail to produce the same kind of plant, from which they sprang. Thus creation is carried on from year to year, and, in an incomprehensible manner, the earth is filled with the riches, and liberality of the Lord.

V. 14. *Let there be lights*, &c.] By this command the light was, as it were, treasured up for the use of man in these heavenly orbs, as water in the ocean; and therewith warmth and fertility have ever since been conveyed to the several regions of the globe: whilst by their regular circuits time is measured out for our convenience. —Modern experiments prove that the moon is an opaque body, much less than the planets: and it is with great probability supposed, that the fixed stars are lights in themselves immensely large; yet the moon is here called a *great light*, in distinction from the stars: which is a plain proof that the penmen of the Scriptures were not inspired to speak of natural things with philosophical exactness; but were left to use popular language, and to discourse of such matters according to their appearance. Ignorance or error are not in these respects of any fatal consequence; and the most exact knowledge is *comparatively* of small value: "Unto man he said, the fear of "the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil, that "is understanding." *Job*, c. 28. v. 28.

V. 22.—25. The earth reduced to order and beauty, replenished with vegetable treasures, and lighted up with unspeakable splendour, had yet remained destitute of inhabitants: but in these verses we have a concise account of the formation of the various species of animals which inhabit the waters, the air, and the dry land. A very superficial

26 And God ſaid, Let us make man in our image, after our likeneſs: and let them have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his *own* image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And

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ficial acquaintance with their numerous tribes, and different ſizes, immenſely large, and inviſibly minute; their diſtinct modes of exiſtence in different elements, and on different ſuſtenance; the ſurpriſing exactneſs, and kind contrivance, with which the organized body in every ſpecies is formed; and the various ways, in which they ſubſerve the uſe and pleaſure of man, may ſuffice to ſhew us that we have abundant reaſon to admire and adore the great Creator. Whilſt the nature of life itſelf, its production, continuance, and propagation in every diſtinct ſpecies, forms a very proper ſubject for our ſpeculations; if we would be convinced how incomprehenſible the works of God are, and how very ignorant we ourſelves are.

The great Creator need not deſcend to minute enumeration of his works to diſplay his glory; though we may properly deſcend to the minute inveſtigation of them. We may, therefore, juſt obſerve, that there is no particular mention here made of many things, which are to us of the greateſt importance. The air, which modern experiments have evinced to be of abſolute neceſſity to animal and vegetable life, and in which ſuch traces of divine wiſdom and goodneſs are diſcovered, is not here explicitly mentioned. Whilſt the ſurface of the earth is clothed with vegetable riches, and inhabited by uſeful animals, we know that underneath are ſtored moſt valuable treaſures, placed thus out of our way, but not out of our reach. "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wiſdom haſt "thou made them all, the earth is full of thy goodneſs!"

V. 26. *And God ſaid, let us make man*, &c.] This is not only the language of deliberation, but of conſultation; and intimates much more than the ſuperior excellency and dignity of the creature, now about to be formed.—It is hard to be conceived, that the infinite God, by ſpeaking in the plural number, ſhould employ a language, which, tho' uſed by, reflects no honour upon earthly princes; and, which (in its original invention at leaſt), favours of mean oſtentation, and little vanity; and forms one of thoſe trifling expedients, which have been deviſed, to prevent monarchs, who were not poſſeſſed of more ſubſtantial diſtinctions, from ſinking to the level of their ſubjects.—But it would be ſtill more intolerable to ſuppoſe that the eternal God in theſe words addreſſed any of his own creatures, as fellow workers with him in the creation of man. Yet as far as I can ſee, theſe are the only expedients, which can be employed, by thoſe, who allow the divine inſpiration of the whole Scripture, yet refuſe their aſſent to the doctrine of the Trinity. Upon the ſuppoſition of this doctrine being ſcriptural, the expreſſions are ſuitable, and natural, and need no further explanation. The three perſons in the ſacred Trinity, at firſt concurred in counſel and operation in forming man, as afterwards in his recovery from the fall.—Nor let it be imagined, that in avoiding one difficulty, we run ourſelves into another, and a greater. For it can never be ſhewn impoſſible, that the ſame infinite being ſhould be *three* in one reſpect, and *one* in another. We *know*, and it is abſurd to deny the ſoul and body to be two diſtinct ſubſtances; yet they form one man, who is *two* in one reſpect, and *one* in another: but who can comprehend the bond of union betwixt his own ſoul and body, or explain how they mutually operate upon each other? And if we are incomprehenſible to ourſelves, how ſhould it be poſſible for us to comprehend our great Creator?—This indeed ſeems the limitation of human knowledge. By experiments the natural philoſopher diſcovers, that things indeed *are ſo*; and have *ſuch* properties and powers: but *how* and *why* they *are*, and *operate* in ſuch a manner, remains ſtill an impenetrable ſecret: and the proceſs of nature in the vegetation of a grain of corn, from its being caſt into the earth, until the gathering in of the harveſt, lies no more within the powers of our comprehenſion, than the doctrine of the Trinity.—And he who will believe no more than he can comprehend, rejecting all myſteries, as incredible, muſt queſtion his own exiſtence, or be inconſiſtent with himſelf. The authenticated teſtimony of God is ſurely as ſufficient to eſtabliſh the doctrine, as to its actual exiſtence, in matters of revelation, as experiments are to eſtabliſh the fact in philoſophy: the manner *how* is no more matter of *faith* in the one, than of *ſcience* in the other: nor are the difficulties greater, except as the objects are greater, and therefore more beyond the ſcanty graſp of our limited comprehenſion.

None, but a God, can comprehend a God.

In our image after our likeneſs.] The expreſſion is doubled and varied, that it may more engage our attention, and enſure our belief.—This image and likeneſs of God cannot be in the body, for God is a *ſpirit*, which no bodily ſhape can in any reſpect reſemble; in his ſoul, therefore, muſt we enquire for it; and there we ſhall find it according to that meaſure, wherein finite can reſemble infinite being. The ſoul of man even in his preſent ſtate bears ſome reſemblance of its maker: the underſtanding, memory, and imagination in their ſeveral operations give a faint ſhadow of the divine wiſdom, and knowledge: the *will*, and the active powers, which it poſſeſſes, have ſome ſimilitude to the almighty effects of the divine volitions; and ſhew that *mind* can act upon *matter*, though we cannot explain in what manner. Nay conſcience, in the exerciſe of her dictatorial, and judicial functions, gives ſome feeble reflection of the juſtice and holineſs of the judge of all: whilſt the derived, and dependant immortality of the human Soul reminds us of him, who is ſelf-exiſtent, and eternal.

But fallen angels, who poſſeſs theſe powers in ſuperior meaſure, are never ſaid to bear the image of God; and little, if any thing, in ſcripture can be fairly interpreted of *fallen* man's being like his maker, till renewed unto his image by divine grace: we muſt therefore conclude that there was a higher and nobler ſenſe in which Adam was formed in the image, and likeneſs of God.—It is allowed

28 And God bleſſed them, and God ſaid, unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the earth, and ſubdue it: and have dominion over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God ſaid, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing ſeed, which *is* upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which *is* the fruit of a tree yielding ſeed: to you it ſhall be for meat.

30 And to every beaſt of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein *there is* life, *I have given* every green herb for meat: and it was ſo.

31 And

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allowed that we can have no adequate conception of Adam's primeval ſtate, and powers, from the brief account, which is given of him in Scripture: but in this argument we may alſo avail ourſelves of the revelation given us, concerning the moral attributes of God: we may contemplate the character of Jeſus Chriſt, who in human nature diſplayed the divine image in full perfection: we may examine the moral law, which deſcribes; and the chriſtians character, who, being *renewed* in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, exemplifies the image of God: whilſt the expreſſion *renewed*, implies that it is the ſame image, which ſin had defaced.

From theſe ſeveral ſources of information we may come to ſome ſatisfactory concluſions upon this ſubject, perfect, infallible, immutable knowledge God alone can poſſeſs: but Adam was doubtleſs created in his meaſure after the divine image, both in his capacity of receiving, and in the diſpoſition of his heart, to entertain true knowledge: and actually poſſeſſed from the gift of God a right underſtanding and a competent knowledge of his creator, of himſelf, of his own ſituation, his duty, his intereſts, of his obligations to obedience, and of the evil nature, as well as evil conſequences of diſobedience.—In theſe and ſimilar concerns, we may be aſſured, he knew, and judged according to the knowledge and judgment of his Maker; though not *infallibly*, nor *immutably*.—Reſulting from this ſtate of the underſtanding and judgment, we may conclude that in conformity to God, he poſſeſſed a diſpoſition to value, or contemn, to approve, or diſapprove, to love, or deteſt every object, which preſented itſelf to his mind, according to its real excellency, worthleſsneſs, or hatefulneſs.—In ſuch a ſtate of the heart, that is of the judgment, will, and affections, the divine image muſt evidently conſiſt: and in ſuch things we may thence certainly infer, that Adam reſembled his maker. Knowledge in a creature muſt be limited, thereon error may be grafted, and thence a change of judgment and diſpoſition be induced: that is, a holy creature may fall, and become unholy: but imperfection in the original diſpoſition of the heart, ſuppoſes the creature formed unholy, and is inconſiſtent with being created after the image of God.

In an underſtanding therefore enlightened with true knowledge, a judgment free from corrupt bias, a will diſpoſed to obedience, and affections regulated according to reaſon, and truth, we determine the image of God, in which Adam was created, to have conſiſted, nor can we conceive it to conſiſt in any thing elſe. From ſuch a ſtate of mind, godlineſs in all its internal exerciſes, and external expreſſions; righteouſneſs, truth, benevolence, purity, and an exact regulation and government of every appetite and paſſion muſt neceſſarily reſult; and every duty to God and man be conſtantly, and delightfully attended to.

The ſame diſpoſition of heart would enſure his belief of every truth, which God ſhould afterwards reveal; his obedience to every precept, which he ſhould enjoin; his cordial acceptance of every propoſal, which he ſhould make; and admiration of every diſcovery of the divine glory, with which he ſhould be favoured: and could it have been poſſible for him to have ſinned, without impairing this divine image, that would have diſpoſed him to repent; and in faith, and with love and joy, to receive the mediator, in whom believers truſt; and to exerciſe all thoſe graces, and practiſe all thoſe duties, which ſpring from the character of a redeemed ſinner.

Let them have dominion, &c.] The dominion over the inferior creatures has been frequently termed a part of the divine image; but it ſeems more natural to conſider the capacity for exerciſing dominion as the reſult of that image; and the actual grant of dominion, as made to man in conſequence of that capacity, and as ſhadowing forth the divine ſovereignty over all his works. The ſubjection of the animals had not ſin entered, would have been more entire, and voluntary, and the exerciſe of man's authority more benign and gentle, than at preſent.—Man too often now is a ſevere tyrant over the animals within his reach, and under his power; and numbers ſeem to have ſhaken off, or fled away from his abuſed dominion.

V. 28. *And God bleſſed them*, &c.] Having formed them with capacities for enjoyment, and furniſhed them with all things externally conducive thereto; the beneficent Creator, thus aſſures them of his favour, and bleſſing, to conſummate their felicity, and ſecure its continuance. And it is probable that Adam was taught to expect, that after a term of probation upon earth, he, and his deſcendants perſevering in obedience would be tranſlated into heaven; or be favoured with ſome confirmation in happineſs equivalent thereto.

Be fruitful and multiply, &c.] In caſe of obedience, the propagation of the human ſpecies would have been a progreſſive communication, and multiplication of felicity! In this method creation is ſtill carried on, and the divine perfections exerciſed and diſplayed in the continuance, as well as in the firſt production of the creatures: though it excite leſs ſurprize in us, becauſe cuſtom leads us to expect it.

V. 29.—30. *Behold I have*, &c.] Neither our wants and inclinations, nor the ſuitableneſs of the creatures to ſupply and gratify them, give us our right to uſe them;

31 And God ſaw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good, and the evening and the morning were the ſixth day.

CHAP. II.

Is an appendix to the preceding hiſtory of the creation; and contains, 1ſt. The inſtitution of the ſabbath, v. 1.—3. *2d. Further particulars of the production of the vegetables, and of the creation of man, v.* 4.—7. *3d. The garden of Eden, how it was planted, where ſituated; man placed in it; the permiſſion given him to eat of the fruit, with a ſolemn interdiction of one ſingle tree,* 8—17. *4th. The animals named of Adam, the woman created, and marriage inſtituted,* 18.—25.

THUS the heavens and the earth were finiſhed, and all the hoſt of them.

2 And on the ſeventh day God ended his work which he had made: and he reſted on the ſeventh day from all his work which he had made.

3 And God bleſſed the ſeventh day and ſanctified it: becauſe that in it he had reſted from all his work, which God created and made.

4 Theſe *are* the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created: in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

5 And every plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field, before it grew: for the LORD God had not cauſed it to rain upon the earth, and *there was* not a man to till the ground.

6 But there went up a miſt from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath of life: and man became a living ſoul.

8 And the LORD God planted a garden eaſtward in Eden: and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleaſant to the ſight, and good for food: the tree of life alſo in the midſt of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

11 The name of the firſt *is* Piſon: that *is* it which compaſſeth the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold;

12 And the gold of that land *is* good: there *is* bdellium and the onyx ſtone.

13 And

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but the grant of the great proprietor: in this grant the animals are joined, as equally entitled to proviſion from the Creator's bounty.—Animal food ſeems not to have been granted till after the flood; nor to have been deſired, or thought of before the fall.

V. 31. *Very good.*] Each production of creative power was before pronounced *Good.*—After man's creation the whole is declared to be *very good.* A ſuperior excellency, from an harmonious connexion of perfect parts in one perfect whole, was ſuperadded, each deriving from, and reflecting beauty upon the reſt: and the creation of man, the image, and vicegerent of his Maker, the only worſhipper in this auguſt temple, who in reaſonable adoration might render to him the glory of the whole, completed the deſign, and ſtamped it *very good.* The perfections of God are worthy of being exerciſed, diſplayed, contemplated, admired, and adored: man was formed capable of perceiving that manifeſted glory, rendering the tribute of vocal praiſe, and finding felicity in his Maker's worſhip and love. This was well pleaſing to the Lord, who moſt perfectly acquieſced in his work "Whilſt "the morning ſtars ſang together, and all the ſons of God "ſhouted for joy." Thus was completed the creation of the heavens, and the earth in ſix days; which doubtleſs the Creator could have effected in an inſtant: but he deemed it more ſuited to his majeſty and wiſdom to do it gradually, and by progreſſive advances; that we leiſurely contemplating theſe his wonders, might note more carefully the glories diſplayed in them; and ſeeing each majeſtically riſing ſuperior to all, that went before, might be more ſuitably affected with admiring gratitude, and ſtirred up to adoring praiſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The account given us in this chapter of the author, and original of all things is ſo rational, ſatisfactory, and ſublime: and the viſible creation, as it ſubſiſts at this day, diſplays ſuch wiſe contrivance, ſuch powerful operation, and beneficent attention to the wants, and welfare of all creatures; that atheiſts, and all others, "who" with the Bible in their hands, and the creation before their eyes, "honour not the Creator as God, neither are thankful," muſt be for ever left without excuſe; and infidelity and impiety muſt manifeſtly appear to be as abſurd, and fooliſh, as it is wicked. The Creator of all things is without controverſy the ſole proprietor, and ſovereign Lord of all. Our very bodies and ſouls are his, and not our own; for "he made us, and not we ourſelves:" he hath therefore an undoubted

13 And the name of the second river *is* Gihon: the same *is* it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.

14 And the name of the third river *is* Hiddekel: that *is* it which goeth towards the east of Assyria. And the fourth river *is* Euphrates.

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.

18 And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone: I will make him an help meet for him.

19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

CHAP.

undoubted right to dispose of us, and of all as he pleases. To him an account must be rendered of the use, which we make of his gifts, according to the precepts of his holy law. Of this we should not allow ourselves to lose sight, no, not for a moment; and should by such considerations, not only be restrained from abusing the work, and gift of God in the practice of sin; but excited to employ all we are, have, and enjoy in the service, and to the glory of our liberal benefactor. Our obligations to him being so vast, his largest demands of our love, worship, and service are perfectly reasonable: yet tried by this plain rule—our own hearts must certainly condemn our past, and present conduct.—Within ourselves, and in our own private history, as well as in the history of the world in all ages, we may read what havock sin hath made in the creation of God, once by infallible wisdom pronounced *very good!* especially in man created in his own image and likeness! We shall shortly hear the Creator speak of him in other language.—In the mean time let us bless God for the Gospel of Christ, and take warning from the consideration of the *almighty power* of that God, against whom we have sinned (the effects of which we have been contemplating), to flee from the wrath to come, and to seek reconciliation to him; that his powerful arm may be engaged in our salvation, and not to our destruction. Thus protected from, and victorious over all our enemies, and being new created unto the image of God in holiness, we shall be rendered meet for, and at length obtain admission into the "new heavens, and new earth wherein "dwelleth righteousness."

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *All the host of them.*] All the component parts of the visible creation, numerous as they are, arranged in, and filling up each it's proper place; as soldiers in a well-disciplined army.

V. 2. *On the seventh day.*] Just when the sixth day closed, and the seventh commenced.

And he rested, &c.] Not as if his work had occasioned weariness, or his rest had been quiescent: still he upholds, preserves, renovates, and governs the whole: in which sense Christ says, "The Father worketh hitherto, and I "work." It only implies, that he ceased from creating, and added no more; and acquiesced with entire satisfaction in the whole work, as worthy of himself, and expressive of his glory.

V. 3. *And God blessed,* &c.] This appears evidently to be recorded historically, and not by way of anticipation. We have here both the appointment of the sabbath, and the reason for it: "Because that in it the Lord "rested," &c. which reason subsisted from the beginning: and seems more cogent immediately, than it could be, after having lain dormant above 2000 years; and when not adduced, till sin had marred the beauty of the great Creator's works. This supposition is confirmed by the custom of measuring time by weeks; that hath *generally* prevailed in all ages, and nations of the world; and which may most reasonably be accounted for, by supposing it to be the remains of an original tradition, handed down to all the posterity of Adam, and Noah. And the silence of Moses concerning the observation of the sabbath

CHAP. III.

Is an hiſtory of that melancholy event, to which the Apoſtle refers, when he ſays, "By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin; and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned. It contains, 1ſt. Satan in the ſerpent tempting the woman, v. 1—5. 2d. The woman eating the forbidden fruit, and tempting the man, who follows her example, v. 6. 3d. Their guilty ſhame, and vain attempt to remove it, v. 7. 4th. Their ſummons, arraignment, and conviction before their judge, v. 8—13. 5th. The ſentence denounced againſt the offenders, containing the gracious promiſe of a Redeemer, v. 14—19. 6th. Adam and Eve clothed with ſkins of beaſts, and excluded from the garden of Eden, v. 20—24.

NOW the ſerpent was more ſubtil than any beaſt of the field which the LORD God had made: and he ſaid unto the woman, Yea, hath God ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of every tree of the garden?

2 And the woman ſaid unto the ſerpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

3 But of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midſt of the garden, God hath ſaid, Ye ſhall not eat of it, neither ſhall ye touch it, leſt ye die.

4 And the ſerpent ſaid unto the woman, Ye ſhall not ſurely die;

5 For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes ſhall be opened: and ye ſhall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

6 And when the woman ſaw that the tree *was* good for food; and that it *was* pleaſant to the eyes, and a tree to be deſired to make *one* wiſe; ſhe took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave alſo unto her huſband, with her, and he did eat.

7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they ſewed fig leaves together, and made themſelves aprons.

8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God amongſt the trees of the garden.

9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and ſaid unto him, Where *art* thou?

10 And he ſaid, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, becauſe I *was* naked; and I hid myſelf.

11 And he ſaid, Who told thee that thou *waſt*

ſabbath by the Patriarchs, ſo far from proving that they were not commanded to obſerve it, will not render it ſo much, as probable, that they did not actually keep it; in the judgment of ſuch perſons, as have attentively conſidered, how much darkneſs reſts upon many ſimilar ſubjects, in the Scripture hiſtory of the Old Teſtament Church.

The ſabbath being made for man, was coeval with his creation.—Even in the ſtate of innocence, Adam, and Eve were employed in dreſſing, and keeping the garden: though free from ſin, and ſuffering, they were in an inferior condition to that, of which the rational nature was capable, and for which they were to conſider themſelves as training up.—This day therefore being bleſſed and ſanctified of God, ſeparated from common employments, and conſecrated to his immediate worſhip and ſervice, on which they were called eſpecially to remember their Creator, contemplate his works, and render him their tribute of thankful praiſe; would even in Paradiſe be conducive to the glory of God, and beneficial to them; perhaps abſolutely neceſſary to their ſafety and felicity.

V. 4. *Theſe are the generations.*] That is; this is the real and true account of their origin, in oppoſition to the fables of poets, and the fancies of ſpeculating philoſophers.

V. 5. *For the Lord God*, &c.] God ordinarily employs both the genial warmth of the ſun, and the refreſhing rains, and alſo the labour of man, in producing the fruits of the earth; but he needs them not: therefore theſe firſt productions (which were probably in full perfection) were prepared before the ſun was created, the rain deſcended, or man was formed.

V. 6. *There went a miſt*, &c.] From the time that the vegetables were created, for their refreſhment, and preſervation.

V. 7. *The duſt of the ground*, &c.] This is mentioned to excite our admiration of our Maker's ſkill, who formed ſo exquiſite a ſtructure as the human body, of ſuch mean materials: to abate our pride and vanity, and over ſolicitude about theſe bodies, which are of ſo low original; and to prepare the reader for the ſolemn ſentence, "Duſt thou art, and to duſt thou ſhalt return."

Breathed into, &c.] The Lord not only gave him life in common with the other animals, whoſe bodies were formed of the ſame materials, but immediately communicated *from himſelf* the rational ſoul; which is denoted by the expreſſion of breathing: hereby reminding him to give his ſoul, thus nobly deſcended, the decided preference above the earthly body, and to ſpurn animal indulgencies in compariſon with heavenly things. Thus the firſt Adam became a living ſoul: but by *the fall* man having become

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waſt naked? haſt thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou ſhouldeſt not eat?

12. And the man ſaid, The woman whom thou gaveſt *to be* with me, ſhe gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

13 And the LORD God ſaid unto the woman. What *is* this *that* thou haſt done? and the woman ſaid, The ſerpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

14 And the LORD God ſaid unto the ſerpent, Becauſe thou haſt done this, thou *art* curſed above all cattle, and above every beaſt of the field: upon thy belly ſhalt thou go, and duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy ſeed and her ſeed: it ſhall bruiſe thy head, and thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel.

16 Unto the woman he ſaid, I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow and thy conception; in ſorrow thou ſhalt bring forth children; and thy deſire *ſhall be* to thy huſband, and he ſhall rule over thee.

17 And unto Adam he ſaid, Becauſe thou haſt hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and haſt eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not eat of it: curſed *is* the ground for thy ſake; in ſorrow ſhalt thou eat *of* it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns alſo and thiſtles ſhall it bring forth to thee: and thou ſhalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it waſt thou taken: for duſt thou *art*, and unto duſt ſhalt thou return.

20 And Adam called his wife's name Eve; for ſhe was the mother of all living.

21 Unto Adam alſo and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of ſkins, and clothed them.

22 And the LORD God ſaid, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now leſt he put forth his hand and take alſo of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23 Therefore the LORD God ſent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man: and he placed at the eaſt of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming ſword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

CHAP.

become *dead* in ſin, through the departure of him, who is the author, and giver of ſpiritual life: in infinite mercy, the ſecond Adam, the Lord from Heaven, became a quickening ſpirit, (1 *Cor.* 15. 45.) and by the communication of the Holy Ghoſt, the fruit of his meritorious mediation, he reſtores to us divine life, and renews the divine image. And it is remarkable that Jeſus, after his reſurrection, with apparent reference to this expreſſion, and intimating that it was he, "who firſt breathed into man's "noſtrils the breath of life," breathed upon his diſciples, and ſaid, "Receive ye the Holy Ghoſt." (*John*, c. 20. v 22).

V. 8. *The Lord God planted*, &c.] This garden, planned doubtleſs with exquiſite beauty, and ſtored with every thing, which could regale all man's ſenſes, ſeems to have been intended as an earthly reſemblance, and pledge of heavenly felicity.—The word Paradiſe, or the garden, in alluſion to Eden, is frequently uſed fot Heaven itſelf, and there are many other references to it in Scripture.

The tree of life, &c.] This alſo ſeems to have been a ſacramental pledge of immortality; by acceſs to, and eating of the fruit of this tree, life and felicity were ſealed to Adam, as long as he continued obedient. The frequent alluſions in Scripture to this tree of life, when Chriſt and heavenly things are ſpoken of, intimates that in the firſt creation there was a reference had to the new creation in Chriſt Jeſus; for "known unto God are all "his works, from before the foundation of the world."

The tree of knowledge, &c.] This tree ſeems to have been thus called, becauſe that by the prohibition of eating of the fruit of it, a revelation was made to Adam of his Maker's will; of his own duty, intereſt, ſituation, and danger; of the conſequences of his future conduct; and of the preſcribed condition of life, or death, happineſs, or miſery; in which things his moſt intereſting *knowledge* conſiſted. By this teſt alſo his Creator would prove him, and make *known* what is in the heart of creatures; and how little dependance can be placed in them. By abſtaining alſo from this fruit, the knowledge of good would be enjoyed: but by eating of it, the knowledge of evil would be fatally introduced. It might alſo intimate that he ſhould ſet boundaries even to his thirſt for knowledge; and covet rather to know, and obey the commands of God, than to pry into unrevealed ſecrets. To theſe meanings Satan artfully ſuperadded his pernicious miſinterpretation, which will ſhortly require our attention.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. The birth of Cain, and Abel, 1.---2. *2d. Their offerings, Abel's accepted, and Cain's rejected, with Cain's subsequent displeasure, and the murder of his brother,* 3---8. *3d. His conviction, condemnation, banishment, and consequent behaviour,* 9---17. *4th. His descendants to Lamech, with some particulars of him, and his children,* 18.---24. *5th. The birth of Seth,* 25.---26.

AND Adam knew Eve his wife: and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord.

2 And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord.

4 And Abel, he brought also of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering, he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am* I my brothers keeper?

10 And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brothers blood crieth unto me from the ground.

11 And now *art* thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brothers blood from thy hand.

12. When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth.

13. And Cain said unto the LORD, my punishment *is* greater than I can bear.

14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth: and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.

15 And

V. 14. *Hiddekel—Euphrates.*] From these well-known rivers, the Hiddekel, or Tygris, and the Euphrates, learned men have determined that the Garden of Eden was situated somewhere in, or near Mesopotamia; and have even supposed that the precise spot hath been ascertained.

V. 15. *To dress, and keep it.*] God gives every thing to man's labour, of which there was some need even in innocence, and in Paradise; because in activity his true excellency, and felicity consists. Even the heavenly rest will not be inaction, but action with delight, and without weariness.

V. 17. *Thou shalt not eat,* &c.] Man created in the image of God, had the moral law written in his heart, as the law of his holy nature; and doubtless was both required, and inclined to that *love* of God, and his creatures, which is it's substance, and fulfillment.—But the prohibition of this verse was an additional instituted test of obedience; and being accompanied with the liberal allowance which precedes it, formed a proper trial of his love, and submission of his inclinations to the will of his beneficent benefactor. It likewise intimated to him that not animal gratification, but the favour of God, was the proper felicity of his nature; and taught him not to consider himself at the summit of his happiness, in a state where self-denial was required of him.

In the day, &c.] The event demonstrates that this denunciation implied, that by transgression he would totally forfeit his Maker's favour, and incur his displeasure, with all it's awful effects: as that immediately he would become liable to pain and disease; which as a tedious execution should not cease, but in the dissolution of the body: and that he would immediately lose the holy image of God, and all the comfort of his favour; and experience the torment of sinful passions, and the terror of his Maker's vengeance; which *according to this covenant,* must endure coeval with the existence of his immortal soul. The same evidence proves, that the whole human race, then in the loins of their common Father, and represented by him as their federal head, were interested in this transaction.—To argue against these things, is to combat stubborn facts, as well as divine revelation: for man is evidently a sinful creature, and shews his natural propensities by his first actions, and his continual conduct: he is under undeniable tokens of divine displeasure, and exposed to sufferings and death; whilst a dark cloud, impenetrable

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C.R. Ryley del. *Fiskett sculp.*

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15. And the LORD ſaid unto him, Therefore whoſoever ſlayeth Cain, vengeance ſhall be taken on him ſeven-fold. And the LORD ſet a mark upon Cain, leſt any finding him ſhould kill him.

16 And Cain went out from the preſence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the eaſt of Eden.

17 And Cain knew his wife, and ſhe conceived and bare Enoch; and he builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his ſon Enoch.

18 And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael; and Mehujael begat Methuſael: and Methuſael begat Lamech.

19 And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one *was* Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.

20 And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of ſuch as dwell in tents, and *of ſuch as have* cattle.

21 And his brother's name *was* Jubal: he was the father of all ſuch as handle the harp and organ.

22 And Zillah, ſhe alſo bare Tubal-cain, an inſtructer of every artificer in braſs and iron: and the ſiſter of Tubal-cain *was* Naamah.

23 And Lamech ſaid unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my ſpeech: for I have ſlain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.

24 If Cain ſhall be avenged ſeven-fold, truly Lamech ſeventy and ſeven-fold.

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and ſhe bare a ſon, and called his name Seth? For God, *ſaid ſhe*, hath appointed me another ſeed inſtead of Abel, whom Cain ſlew.

26. And to Seth, to him alſo there was born a ſon; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.

CHAP.

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penetrable exeept by the light of revelation, reſts upon his ſtate beyond the grave. And the Scriptures always addreſs him as in this miſerable ſituation, and of this ſinful character: and theſe things have been univerſally true of men in all ages, and of all nations. If men will find fault with that, which God hath evidently done, let them anſwer it to him.—He deigns not to apologize for his own conduct: and with our dark and imperfect views, we ſhall probably be deemed too officious, ſhould *we* attempt it—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do "right?" ſeems the proper anſwer; and to wait for a world of clearer light, is our proper behaviour.—To allow the wiſdom and juſtice, and goodneſs of the divine conduct, only when we are capable of perceiving them, ſavours neither of humility, nor of faith: the ſame approbation is due to an equal, or an enemy: but it is becoming us, and honourable to God, when we adore the depths, which we cannot fathom, and believe that "though clouds and darkneſs are round about him, yet "juſtice and judgment are the habitation of his throne."

Could we diveſt ourſelves of partiality, we might diſcern in ſome degree the reaſonableneſs of this prohibition; and the divine goodneſs, in ſelecting, as the condition of this covenant, ſo eaſy a teſt of obedience; and in the implied reſtipulation, that if he did not eat, he ſhould not die: and ſomewhat of the peculiar meetneſs of Adam to be the repreſentative, as being the common father of the human race: and many things have been copiouſly and plauſibly argued upon theſe topics. But after all it is freely granted, that great difficulties remain; and that they, who will give their Maker credit for his juſtice and goodneſs, no further than they can perceive them, muſt needs ſtumble at this ſtumbling ſtone, after all that can be done to remove it. Man's mortality and depravity, and the whole hiſtory of mankind authenticate the Scripture Revelation upon this ſubject; and as collateral evidences, prove that it is God's teſtimony, and that we miſtake not it's meaning: on this ground faith receives it, and humbled reaſon ſubmits to her teacher, God, and allows his righteouſneſs, though ſhe cannot comprehend it.

V. 18. *Not good*, &c.] Not conducive to his comfort, and happineſs, to remain without the ſolace of ſociety, and the endearments of tender friendſhip: not conducive to the end of his creation to be without marriage, by which the earth was to be repleniſhed. God withholds no good thing from thoſe, whom he loves.

V. 20. *Adam gave names* &c.] We have reaſon to think that Adam was better acquainted, by intuition as it were, with the diſtinct properties of every creature; than the moſt ſagacious obſervers, ſince the fall, have been able to become with their utmoſt ſtudy.

Not found, &c.] Upon this review not one was found in outward form his counterpart, as the animals were formed male, and female: nor one ſuited to engage his affections, participate his enjoyments, or aſſociate with him in the worſhip of God.

V. 21. *Deep ſleep.*] Therefore without his conſciouſneſs, or any pain.

One of his ribs.] The woman, who was to be as part of himſelf, and the object of his moſt cordial affections, was taken from that part of the body, which is near to the heart. She was formed from *him*, and not out of the ground; that there might be a natural foundation of moderate ſubordination on the Woman's part, and ſympathizing tenderneſs on the Man's: As a man rules over; yet in ruling over carefully

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1st. a retrospect to the Creation, and to the birth of Seth, v. 1—3. *2d. A genealogy through Seth from Adam to Noah, v.* 4—28. *3d. In the midst thereof, the piety, and translation of Enoch, v.* 22—24. *4th. An account of Noah and his sons,* 29—32.

THIS *is* the book of the generations of Adam: In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him:

2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.

3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat *a son* in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth.

4 And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth were eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters:

5 And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.

6 And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos:

7 And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters:

8 And all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died.

9 And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan:

10 And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters:

11 And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died.

12 And Cainan lived seventy years and begat Mahalaleel.

13 And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters:

14 And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.

15 And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared:

16 And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters:

17 And

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fully defends, and tenderly takes care of his own body.

V. 22. *And brought her*, &c.] The Lord conducted her as his gift to Adam; that under his sanction, and according to his appointment, yet doubtless with their own most entire approbation they might be united in marriage for their mutual good. And that he might thus authorize, and give an example for the regulation of all future marriages.

V. 23. *Called woman.*] The original word is the same as that rendered *man*, with the feminine termination added to it; and imports that she was exactly his counterpart, taken from him, united to him, and like him in every thing but sex; and it expresses his grateful satisfaction in his Creator's gift

V. 24 *Therefore*, &c.] According to this original appointment of *marriage*, the first, and nearest of all relations, in after times, men leaving their father's and mother's, more immediate society, should enter into the married state; to lay the foundation of new families, and thenceforth all other relative affections, and duties must be regulated in subordination to the affections and duties of that new relation.

One flesh.] So united, that according to the original institution, nothing could separate them, but that, which dissolves the union of soul and body; and even separates the component parts of the body from each other.

It is evident that Polygamy and divorces accord not to this original institution: In the beginning it was not so; nor would ever have been, but for the sinful lusts of men. Equally unscriptural are constrained celibacy, and needless restraints upon marriage.

The records of former times, and observations upon the present evince, that still it is not generally good for man to be alone.

The mutual inclination of the sexes for each other, (which was originally implanted by the Creator, however debased by sin,) when regulated by the law of God, and free from other restraints, becomes the foundation of all the other relations of life, the source of the most rational of all our earthly comforts, and equally beneficial to individuals, families, and nations: Like a river, which, gliding within it's banks, beautifies and enriches the neighbouring plains. But when it's regular course is obstructed by unscriptural restraints, and when it bursts through the bounds appointed of God, it spreads vice, discord, disease and misery around with horrible rapidity: like the same river, obstructed in its natural channel, overflowing it's banks, inundating, and desolating the fields, and converting the neighbouring country into a marsh, or fen, whose stagnating waters spread stench, and infection all around.

V. 25. *Were not ashamed*, &c.] The human body, the most noble production in the material creation, needed not to have been concealed, had not sin disgraced the Creator's work; and probably shame had not been excited in the manner, in which it hath been, even since man became a sinner; had not the sinful nature been communicated with the propagation of the human species.

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17 And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died.

18 And Jared lived an hundred ſixty and two years, and he begat Enoch.

19 And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat ſons and daughters.

20 And all the days of Jared were nine hundred ſixty and two years: and he died.

21 And Enoch lived ſixty and five years, and begat Methuſelah.

22 And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuſelah three hundred years, and begat ſons and daughters.

23 And all the days of Enoch were three hundred ſixty and five years.

24 And Enoch walked with God, and he *was* not: for God took him.

25 And Methuſelah lived an hundred eighty and ſeven years, and begat Lamech.

26 And Methuſelah lived after he begat Lamech ſeven hundred eighty and two years, and begat ſons and daughters.

27 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When God himſelf contemplated his whole work with cordial approbation, and reſted in it with entire acquieſcence; it muſt be very preſumptuous, and dangerous for us to find fault with any part of it.

We are capable of perceiving the wiſdom and goodneſs of God diſplayed in many of the conſtituent parts of the vaſt creation, and of rendering to him the tribute of adoring praiſe; But it indicates the moſt daring pride, to ſuppoſe ourſelves competent to underſtand, or criticize the whole.

As the only wiſe God inſtituted the Sabbath in Paradiſe, before the entrance of ſin; we may thence infer, not only the advantage, but the abſolute neceſſity, of time ſet apart for the immediate ſervice of God, in ſuch a world, as we now live in; if we would pay any ſuitable regard to Religion, or to the ſalvation of our immortal ſouls. How much then ſhould we ſinners value, and how diligently ſhould we *keep holy* the Chriſtian Sabbath; and take care that our children, and domeſtics have leiſure, and opportunity; and make uſe of them, for the ſame ſalutary purpoſes!

Additional favours conferred upon us, lay us under additional obligations to chearful obedience: And as our liberal benefactor indulges us in all things truly good for us: It is but reaſonable that we give him credit for his wiſdom and kindneſs even in his reſtraints, and prohibitions; and chearfully deny ourſelves at his requirement.

The covenant of works was holy and juſt, and good, being both propoſed by a God of perfect holineſs, juſtice, and goodneſs; and acceded to by Adam, before ſin had impaired his powers, perverted his judgment, or depraved his heart: Yet it is *contrary to us*, who in Adam, and after his example have violated the terms of it. We have need therefore to be thankful for another covenant, eſtabliſhed upon better promiſes; and above all ratified by the engagements of a better ſurety. To him let us flee for refuge, and from him alone ſeek deliverance from ſhame, and pain; from ſin and death. And whilſt we receive all our worldly, and relative comforts from the hand of our reconciled God; whilſt we ſeek his bleſſing upon them; uſe them according to his appointment; and attend to the duties, which they require, according to his command: Let us not forget, that an union muſt be formed with the Lord Jeſus, of which marriage itſelf is but a type, and ſhadow; we muſt be *one Spirit* with him, and cleave to him in ſimple dependance, cordial attachment, and devoted obedience and ſubmiſſion; even tho' it ſhould interfere with the comfort of that moſt endeared relation: Then death which diſſolves all other unions, will complete this to all eternity.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *The ſerpent was* &c.] Probably Adam, and Eve had noticed with pleaſure, and partiality, that the ſerpent poſſeſſed an inſtinctive ſagacity, more reſembling the effects of reaſon, than that of any other creature: Which ſuggeſted to Satan the device of uſing this animal, as his inſtrument in temptation.

He ſaid] To the woman the ſerpent appeared to ſpeak: In reality Satan ſpake by the ſerpent; as in the days of Chriſt, the unclean ſpirits employed the organs of ſpeech of the poſſeſſed perſons, in addreſſing him. Common ſenſe, as well as the whole Scripture, leads us to this concluſion, that the ſerpent was but the inſtrument, ſatan the real actor in this matter: who is therefore called the ſerpent, the old dragon, a lyar, and a murderer from the beginning. The word of God reveals to us the world of ſpirits holy, and unholy, of which otherwiſe we have no certain knowledge: Faith avails itſelf of this information: But unbelief rejects it to the contempt of God, and to the infidels irreparable damage: for nothing better anſwers the purpoſe of the powers of *darkneſs*, than to work in the *dark;* and none ſerve their intereſts more effectually than they who deny, and endeavour to diſprove their exiſtence; as we never can guard againſt the attacks of unſeen, unſuſpected enemies. But from the word of God faith learns that angels have ſinned, and kept not their firſt eſtate: That created of God holy and happy, they by tranſgreſſion forfeited the favour, and incurred the diſpleaſure of their Creator, and became unholy and miſerable; yea deſperate in the certain expectation of increaſing and everlaſting miſery. Still poſſeſſed of vaſt natural capacities of power, knowledge, and ſagacity, but filled with unbounded enmity, malice, envy, pride, ambition, and deceit; they maintain determined rebellion againſt their maker: and being very numerous, have eſtabliſhed a kingdom in oppoſition to his kingdom, under the dominion of the arch apoſtate, the Devil or Satan, ; and,

27 And all the days of Methuſelah were nine hundred ſixty and nine years: and he died.

28 And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a ſon.

29 And he called his name Noah, ſaying, This ſame ſhall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, becauſe of the ground which the LORD hath curſed.

30 And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat ſons and daughters.

31 And all the days of Lamech were ſeven hundred ſeventy and ſeven years: and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

CHAP.

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as far as they are permitted, are unwearied and inſatiable in miſchief; aiming at nothing leſs than reducing the whole creation to a ſtate of rebellion, anarchy and miſery; and rendering all creatures as vile and wretched as themſelves.

Doubtleſs the beauty of the new created world; and the glory of God, and the happineſs of man therein diſcernible, excited the envy, and rage of theſe evil ſpirits; and ſuggeſted to Satan the malicious deſign of reducing all to confuſion and miſery.—For this purpoſe, he with dark craftineſs *conceals himſelf* in the ſubtle ſerpent; and thus makes his unſuſpected attack upon the weaker ſex, and when alone: perhaps inſinuating, that, by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, the ſerpent had acquired the gift of reaſon, and ſpeech. And indeed we cannot well otherwiſe account for the woman's entering into converſation with this animal, without expreſſing either ſurpriſe or ſuſpicion.

Yea hath God ſaid?] Nothing can be conceived more artful: as if he had ſaid, "Can it be true, which I have "heard? Has the Creator given you appetites, and "placed gratifications before you, only to mock you? "—You muſt miſunderſtand his meaning: or ſome en-"vious being has counterfeited his authority: or at leaſt "it muſt be allowed a very capricious reſtraint." Such inſinuations were artfully couched in this inſidious queſtion: and ſuch objections are continually ſtarted by him, and his inſtruments againſt every reſtriction in the word of God, which calls for our ſelf-denial. And in both caſes it is obſervable, that no notice is taken of the largeneſs of the grant, but merely of its limitation.

V. 2. *The woman ſaid*, &c.] This was her firſt miſtake; ſhe ſhould not have liſtened for a moment to ſuch vile ſuggeſtions, nor entered into a parley with one, who aimed at exciting in her mind hard thoughts of God, and of his expreſs commands.

We may eat of, &c.] She mentions the grant, yet not in the ſtrong language in which it was made: "Of *every* "tree of the garden thou mayeſt freely eat."

V. 3. *Neither ſhall ye touch it.*] This is added to what is ſpoken in the foregoing chapter.—It is, however, an excellent caution; we ſhould not come within the attractive force of forbidden objects: yet it ſeems to come in here rather as an intimation of the ſeverity of the prohibition.

Leſt ye die.] It was ſaid in the foregoing chapter, "In "the day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die." But the *date*, and the *undoubted certainty* of the event, are here omitted.—Upon the whole, the poiſon evidently began to work; Eve makes too little of the liberal grant of the Creator, ſtates the prohibition in ſtrong terms of ſeverity, and falters as to the certain, and immediate execution of the threatening.

V. 4. *Ye ſhall not ſurely die.*] Perceiving his advantage, the tempter grows bolder, and gives a direct contradiction to the divine denunciation: and thus he ſtill tempts men to ſin, promiſing them impunity by his inward ſuggeſtions; and by his agents, in whom he lies concealed.

V. 5. *God doth know*, &c.] He confirms his bold aſſertions with an oath, and blaſphemouſly calls upon God to atteſt his daring falſhoods. We have here the author, and the firſt pattern of perjury, and a ſpecimen of its hortible conſequences, in this firſt aſſault of Satan upon the human ſpecies: and perjurers would do well to look in this glaſs to ſee their own picture, and contemplate their own character, and learn whoſe children they are, and whoſe conduct they imitate.

Your eyes ſhall be, &c.] He here promiſes the woman a vaſt advance in knowledge, and an independant felicity, without ſubjection to the will, or dread of the diſpleaſure of a ſuperior: hereby inſinuating, that God forbad them this fruit on purpoſe to keep them in ignorance, and in a mean ſtate of dependance and ſubjection. There is alſo an equivocation in the words: a latent truth, the very reverſe of the apparent meaning. "Your eyes," ſays Satan, "ſhall be opened;" that is, when you have eat the fruit, you will too late ſee your own folly: "Ye ſhall be "as gods." Revolting from God, and loſing his image, and favour, you, in the pride of your hearts, will, as it were, uſurp his throne, affect an independency, ſet up to be your own lords, and avengers; demand the homage of flattery, and commendation from others; aſpire at the pinnacle of pre-eminence, attempt to lord it over others, and graſp at the poſſeſſion of all around you: thus you will be left to make trial of your ability to contrive, effect, and ſecure a happineſs to yourſelves, "as if ye were gods," till you find death, and miſery ſeize upon you; "knowing good and "evil;" by loſing the good, and experiencing the evil.—Of ſuch a paraphraſe the words will admit; and ſuch have been the effects of eating the forbidden fruit: but nothing could be further from Eve's thoughts, than ſuch an interpretation.—Thus they reſembled the ancient heathen oracles, of which in one way, or other, this father of lies was the undiſputed author: theſe were generally couched in ſuch ambiguous language, as might afterwards be interpreted to predict the event, though oft in direct oppoſition to the diſappointed expectations of the deluded votaries.

V. 6.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1*st. Improper marriages of God's profeſſed people, the increaſe of wickedneſs, the notice God takes of it, his indignation, and the deſtruction which he determines upon, v.* 1—7. 2*d. Noah's being approved, warned of an approaching deluge, and inſtructed to prepare for it, v.* 8—21. 3*d. His implicit obedience, v.* 22.

AND it came to paſs, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them,

2 That the ſons of God ſaw the daughters of men, that they *were* fair; and they took them wives of all which they choſe.

3 And the LORD ſaid, My ſpirit ſhall not always ſtrive with man, for that he alſo *is* fleſh: yet his days ſhall be an hundred and twenty years.

4 There were giants in the earth in thoſe days; and alſo after that, when the ſons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare *children* to them; the ſame *became* mighty men, which *were* of old, men of renown.

5 And

V. 6. *Saw that the tree*, &c.] Here began the luſt of the eye, as introductory to the luſt of the fleſh. She looked upon the fruit, till ſhe fancied that there would be ſome very extraordinary pleaſure in the taſte of it. As her ear, formed to receive the truth of God, was juſt before opened to admit Satan's lies, and flattery: ſo now the eye, formed to behold his works, became an inlet to concupiſcence into the heart.—Now firſt the members became, and have ever ſince continued in unconverted men, "inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin." (See *Rom.* c. 6. v. 13—19.)

A tree to be deſired, &c.] For this ſhe had no teſtimony, but that of Satan concealed in the ſerpent; yet ſhe neither heſitated, nor ſuſpected any deluſion: how powerfully does this poiſon operate?

She took, &c.] Without conſulting Adam, or taking time for conſideration. We may be ſure that Satan is our concealed counſellor, when we are hurried on with ſuch precipitation, as to allow ourſelves no time for reflection, for prayer, or for conſulting grave, and prudent friends.—Thus ſhe liſtened to, and parleyed with the tempter, till ſhe was entangled in error, and unbelief: then ſuſpecting the divine veracity and goodneſs, ſhe conceived hopes of impunity in tranſgreſſion, and a gratification both of ambition, and of the ſenſual appetite thereby: and at length leaning to her own underſtanding, and truſting to her own heart, with confident preſumption ſhe takes the forbidden fruit and eats. In this manner was luſt at firſt conceived, then ſin brought forth, and ſin being finiſhed, brought forth death.—And though the ſeveral ſteps may not always be ſo diſcernible, yet there is the ſame concurrence and ſucceſſion in every temptation, by which we are overcome: and it may be pronounced a picture in miniature of all Satan's devices, and victories over man in all ages.—Still he inſinuates hard thoughts of God, and his commandments; ſtill he flatters men with hopes of impunity, in direct contradiction to the word of God: ſtill he enhances to the imagination the pleaſure, or advantage of ſinful indulgences: ſtill he pays court to the ſenſual appetite, and to the pride of the heart: and ſtill he entangles men in error, ſeduces them into unbelief, hurries them on with precipitation, and prevails with them to truſt in themſelves, and in their own darkened underſtanding and depraved hearts, to their deſtruction.

She gave, &c.] As yet Satan's ſucceſs was incomplete: had Adam refuſed to eat; the woman's tranſgreſſion would have remained with herſelf. But it was a great point gained, to win her over, whom Adam ſo tenderly loved, and who would employ all her faſcinating influence to prevail on him to follow her example.—Thus ever ſince he ſends his temptations by the hands of thoſe, whom we beſt love: and ever ſince have men and women been ſucceſsfully employed as tempters to each other: nor can men be content to ſin alone, but always endeavour to draw others to the ſame things, into which themſelves have been ſeduced.

Did eat.] Whether in preſumption, as not ſeeing death immediately inflicted on Eve, or in deſpair, as giving up all for loſt; or overcome by Eve's perſuaſions, does not clearly appear: But the Apoſtle intimates, (1 *Tim.* c. 2. v. 14.) that he was not deceived in the ſame manner and degree as the woman. Conſidering this ſin in all it's circumſtances, and with all it's aggravations, we may term it the prolific parent, and grand exemplar of all the tranſgreſſions committed on earth ever ſince.—Whatever there hath been in any ſin, of unbelief, ingratitude, apoſtacy, rebellion, robbery, contempt, defiance, hard thoughts of, and enmity againſt God: whatever there hath been of idolatry, as comprehending faith in, worſhip of, and obedience to Satan, the god and prince of this world: of exorbitant pride, ſelf-love, and ſelf-will, in affecting that independency, exaltation, and homage, which belong to God; and that inordinate love of the creatures, in ſeeking our happineſs in the poſſeſſion, and enjoyment of them: whatever of diſcontent, ſenſual luſt, covetouſneſs, murder, and miſchief, were ever yet contained in any one, or all the ſins, which have been committed upon earth, all concentred in this one tranſgreſſion.—Nor have they been wide of the truth, who have laboured to prove, that all the ten commandments extenſively, and ſpiritually expounded, were at once violated. And the more reaſonable the prohibition, and the more trifling the inducement were, the more aggravated was the offence.—In this manner ſin entered, and Satan triumphed in eſtabliſhing his uſurped authority; "for of "whom a man is overcome, of the ſame is he brought in "bondage." Thus man apoſtatized, God was provoked, the holy Spirit forſook his polluted temple, the unclean

ſpirit

5 And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.

6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air: for it repenteth me that I have made them.

8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

9 These

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spirit took possession, the Divine Image was defaced, and Satan's image substituted in it's place: hence the wickedness, and misery of man. "A lamentation it is and "should be:" "yet righteous art thou in all thy judg- "ments, O Lord;" let not the enemy further prevail against us, we beseech thee, by taking hence occasion to produce in our minds one hard thought of thee, or of thy mysterious judgments!

V. 7. *And their eyes*, &c.] Thus Satan's promises began to be accomplished.—Their eyes were open to see the snare, when they were already caught in it: they saw also misery before them, with horror and dismay; and their new discoveries were their torment.

Knew that they were naked.] Their bodily nakedness had not previously excited the sensation of shame.—But now stripped of their robe of innocence, despoiled of the ornament of the image of God, the defence of his protection, and the honour of his presence, they perceived that they were indeed made naked to their shame; and their outward nakedness appeared an indication of the exposed and shameful condition, to which they were reduced.

They sewed, &c.] This represents the fruitless pains and worthless expedients, which men employ to conceal their real character, and hide their sins from each other, and even from themselves; being more ashamed of being detected in, than of committing wickedness: whilst they can hide nothing from God, nor by such means elude his justice, or obtain his favour.

V. 8. *They heard the voice*, &c.] Here seems an intimation of some visible appearance of the Deity in human form, of which we shall hereafter find undeniable instances; and which are to be considered as anticipations of *his* incarnation, whose name is called "The Word of "God." Treating the phraseology of this passage as the language of inspiration, I see not what other satisfactory account can be given of it.

Cool of the day.] The time probably of their accustomed evening worship.

Adam and his wife hid, &c.] Doubtless they had welcomed such tokens of the divine presence with the same kind of exulting joy, that a dutiful child welcomes the approach of an indulgent parent.—But now conscious guilt inspires terror; and they desire to flee and hide themselves from God, as no longer their bounteous friend, but their dreaded enemy, and avenger. Ah! where is now the wisdom, which they were to derive from the forbidden fruit? They can only devise a foolish project of hiding themselves from the all-seeing eye of God, under the shade of a few trees. Thus the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; and "men professing themselves "wise become such fools," "as to say in their heart that "there is no God," or to act, as if there were none.

V. 9. *Where art thou?*] Words of more terror, perhaps, never sounded in man's ears, or shall till the day of judgment.—The command had been peremptory, the threatening absolute, the transgression undeniable; no escape, no resistance practicable: nor any mention, and probably no expectation of mercy. This *summons* will one day cite the sinner to the tribunal of his Judge: in the mean time, it is profitable to put it as a *question* to ourselves in various ways, and to enquire where we are? Are we in a state of safety? in the path of duty? or in the broad way of destruction? &c.

V. 10. *I heard thy voice*, &c.] Without humiliation before, or supplication to his offended Lord, Adam only in an evasive manner attempts to account for his flight, without acknowledging the real cause.

V. 11. *Who told thee*, &c.] This new sense of shame arises from conscious guilt: hast thou then dared to transgress my command? Thus shall every mouth be stopped, and every excuse silenced, when God ariseth to judgment.

V. 12. *The woman*, &c.] Adam could neither deny, nor excuse the transgression, yet instead of frankly confessing it, he throws the blame upon the woman; as if he were allowed to hearken to her rather than obey God. Nay he covertly charges the blame upon God himself, saying "the woman, whom THOU gavest me," &c.—Here we discern the resemblance of that pride, stubbornness, and stoutness of heart, which characterize that evil spirit, who had just set up his kingdom within him: and Adam's posterity have ever shewn a disposition to imitate his example; by making such excuses for their sin, as must ultimately throw the blame upon God himself.

V. 13. *And the woman said*, &c.] Here also we perceive the same self-justifying spirit, which forms a leading feature in the character of man; equally discernible in tender infancy, and in hoary hairs; not only amongst the moral and exemplary, but even down to the prostitute, the thief, and the murderer: and that without exception; unless as artfully concealed in a few; counteracted in some others by the grace of the Gospel; and surpassed in others by that proficiency in wickedness, which glories in those things, of which all ought to be ashamed; and therefore, like Satan in this instance, attempts no excuse.

V. 14.—15. *The serpent*, &c.] Probably before this the serpent was both beautiful, and harmless; and now first assumed the reptile form, and at the same time became noxious, and hateful: from that season serpents have been more shunned, and persecuted unto death, as enemies

9 These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God.

10 And Noah begat three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence.

12 And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt: for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13 And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them: and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14 Make

mies to the human race, than almost any other animal; and frequently have retaliated by their venomous bite: and by their proneness on the earth may be considered as eating all their food mingled with the dust. Thus the words of these verses may imply a visible punishment to be executed on the serpent, as the instrument in this temptation: but the curse was in reality intended for the invisible tempter himself.—Yet in this curse upon Satan, is implied the sum of all blessings, which a merciful God ever did, or ever shall bestow on sinful man.—It is a prophecy, and a promise; which have ever since been fulfilling, but have not yet received their full accomplishment.—It contains the whole Gospel, and a prophetical history of the opposition, with which it should meet, and the success, with which it should be crowned, in all ages, and countries to the end of time.—Christ himself is the seed of the woman, as the most illustrious of all, who have been born of woman: and in him all his genuine disciples are included, as members of his mystical body.—The devil, and his angels, and wicked men, are the serpent and his seed: "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the works "of your father, ye will do." God himself hath put enmity betwixt these two contending parties: the effect of his grace in the heart of true christians is enmity, not against the persons of sinners, but against their character, the image of Satan, which they bear; and the cause of Satan, which they favour: having that mind in them which was in Christ, "who was manifested to destroy "the works of the devil." *Their* character, and conduct also, and the opposition which they make unto, and the testimony, which they bear against the wickedness of the world; as well as the success, which the Lord vouchsafes them, excite the rage, envy, and malice of Satan, and of wicked men, whose pride they affront, whose consciences they disturb, whose real characters they detect, and whose iniquity they oppose.—Hence Satan and his seed by open violence, and cruel persecutions; by secret machinations, and base slanders, by artful temptations, and pernicious heresies, fight against the seed of the woman.—In doing this they bruise his heel; they once crucified the Lord of Glory himself, have massacred millions of his disciples, and by one means or other are always bringing inward or outward tribulations upon them: yet this is no mortal wound, nor hinders the final glorification of the whole multitude, who thus in succession have Satan bruised under their feet;—The seed of the woman, fighting under the Redeemer's standard, by the doctrine of truth, and the armour of righteousness; accompanied with prayers, and patience; in abhorrence of sin, and compassion for sinners, carry on their benevolent war; and gain their most illustrious victories, when the power of Satan is broken, and his deluded servants are converted unto, and list under the banners of Christ. But their victories are but the fruit of his severe conflict, and glorious triumph over the tempter, especially upon the cross: where, in human nature, giving himself a ransom for sinners, he broke the whole force of Satan's usurped empire: and rising from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of the father, all power in heaven and earth being vested in him as mediator between God and man; he employs it all, (in time and measure "according to the purpose of him, "who worketh all things after the counsel of his own "will, (*Eph.* c. 1. v. 11.)" in crushing the serpent's head. Already by his apostles and ministers he hath shaken the very foundations of his kingdom, and rescued millions of his wretched captives: but e'er long he will even here on earth gain a more decisive victory: and at last, as it were setting his foot on this serpent's head, will entirely crush his interests; deprive him of all further power to do mischief; and execute condign punishment upon him and all his seed, in the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels.

From this short explication, we may perceive, that the person, sufferings, glory, and triumphs of the Redeemer; the character, tribulations, and felicity of the redeemed; and the temporary successes, and final ruin of all the enemies of Christ, and his people; and indeed almost the whole history of the church, and of the world, through time, and to eternity, are compendiously delineated in this surprizing text: which stands, and will stand to the end of time, an internal demonstration that the Scripture was given by inspiration from God.

It is remarkable that this gracious revelation of a Saviour came unsolicited, and previous to any humiliation on the part of man. Without a revelation of mercy, inspiring *some hope of forgiveness*, the convinced sinner would sink into, and be hardened in desperation: this promise therefore formed that encouragement to hope, which was productive of true repentance, and true religion (as we suppose) in fallen Adam and Eve.

V. 16. *Unto the woman*, &c.] We have every reason to believe, that there would have been no degree of pain, or sorrow attending the conception, or birth of children, had not sin been committed: but now, in a world of suffering, the pains and sorrows of the female sex are indeed greatly multiplied, almost beyond expression: which was an additional burden laid upon the woman, as the first transgressor, and the tempter of her husband.

Thy desire, &c.] One would have expected that when such multiplied sorrows were foretold, as attendants on bearing children, the female sex would generally have preferred the single state: even so far, as to prevent the in-

14 Make thee an ark of gopher-wood: rooms ſhalt thou make in the ark, and ſhalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15 And this *is the faſhion* which thou ſhalt make it *of:* the length of the ark *ſhall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16 A window ſhalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit ſhalt thou finiſh it above; and the door of the ark ſhalt thou ſet in the ſide thereof: *with* lower, ſecond, and third *ſtories* ſhalt thou make it.

17 And behold, I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth to deſtroy all fleſh, wherein

creaſe of the human ſpecies: but God, according to the probable meaning of this expreſſion, hath ſo conſtituted the human heart, that marriage notwithſtanding is generally choſen even by the ſuffering ſex.

He ſhall rule, &c.] The authority of the huſband, when exerciſed uniformly with wiſdom and tenderneſs, would encreaſe the mutual felicity: but, by the entrance of ſin, it is too often converted into unreaſonable, and unfeeling deſpotiſm; and becomes an additional ſource of miſery to many unhappy females: and they too being ſinners, are equally apt to forget the duties of that relation, to the ſtill greater increaſe of miſery, and diſtraction. To prevent which, ſubmiſſion in things lawful is here commanded of God, notwithſtanding this change in the conduct of the huſband, which ſeems alſo to be predicted. "It is "well," ſays Mr. Henry on this paſſage, "that enmity "was not put between the man, and woman, in the manner "that it is betwixt her ſeed, and the ſerpent's."

V. 17. *Becauſe thou haſt*, &c.] That, which he had pleaded as an extenuation of his crime, is here adduced as the very reaſon of his puniſhment: that inſtead of hearkening to the voice of God, he had hearkened to her voice, whom God had appointed him to counſel, and command, not to obey. Thus the mouth of ſinners ſhall be ſtopped, and all their excuſes turned againſt them.

Curſed is the ground, &c.] In conſequence of this curſe, uſeleſs, and noxious weeds, and plants ſpring up ſpontaneouſly, and grow, and multiply with immenſe rapidity.—Theſe muſt be eradicated, and the ſoil prepared, and much labour beſtowed, before it's precious fruits can be obtained: hence inceſſant fatigue, pain, and penury are the lot of the bulk of mankind; which had not been the caſe in any degree, had not ſin occaſioned it. The weight of this part of the ſentence falls chiefly upon the man, to whom it is addreſſed; as of the former on the woman. But even this curſe prevents ſtill greater evil, than it occaſions, as things are circumſtanced; and in the event proves ſalutary to mankind.—Let it be noted, that men being condemned to hard labour as criminals, they, who live without any kind of uſeful employment, rebel againſt their ſentence.

Duſt thou art, &c.] Nothing ſhall terminate this ſcene of labour, and ſuffering, till death ſhall conſign the body to the earth again, to mingle with its original duſt.—As we feel that this ſentence, in every part, is in full force againſt the whole human ſpecies; it is abſurd to deny that we were all joined in the covenant with Adam, our common repreſentative. But let us alſo remember, that as the ſentence upon the ſerpent couched, under its outward meaning, the threatening of vengeance upon the inviſible tempter: ſo the death denounced againſt the body, which is but the inſtrument of unrighteouſneſs, comprehends alſo the awful puniſhment, prepared for the ſoul, which is the deviſer, contriver, and real agent in every ſin.—This is evinced by the ſinful propenſities of the human race (whoſe heart, too like the earth, which is curſed for his ſake, naturally produces only thorns and thiſtles; ſinful deſires, purpoſes, words, and actions); compared with the threatenings of wrath to come againſt every ſoul of man, that doeth evil. Thus we are ſo concluded under ſin, and wrath, that none but Jeſus, the mediator of another covenant, can deliver us.

V. 20. *Eve*, &c.] That is life, or living. This name ſeems to have been given her in faith: Adam thankfully accepted the reprieve, which was comprehended in the ſentence; and looked forward to the increaſe of the human ſpecies with ſubmiſſive ſatisfaction notwithſtanding its attendant miſeries; becauſe he embraced in faith the promiſe of that future ſeed of the woman, which ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head.

V. 21 *Coats of ſkins*, &c.] Some conjecture from this circumſtance, that a conſiderable time had elapſed between the creation and the fall, and that the animals had already began to increaſe, or there could not properly have been any ſpared to be ſlain: but it is mere conjecture, as are all other opinions upon this ſubject, in which God hath not been pleaſed to gratify our curioſity. It is much more obvious and uſeful to obſerve, that probably ſome beaſts, by God's command ſlain in ſacrifice, furniſhed theſe ſkins, with which they were clothed: and as Adam and Eve had never, we may be ſure, ſlain any animals for their uſe, before the fall; and as we have no reaſon to ſuppoſe that any died of themſelves; ſo it is hard to conceive in what other way theſe ſkins could be procured. This would very aptly typify the promiſed ſeed, who ſuffered for our ſins, that we might ſtand accepted with God in and by his righteouſneſs: and the circumſtance of the Lord God *making* theſe coats of ſkins, and *clothing* them, not only intimates the kind inſtruction and aſſiſtance, which he afforded them, in accommodating themſelves to their preſent ſituation: but repreſents to us, that the Saviour and ſalvation are of his providing, and that faith, which receives, and puts on Chriſt, is his gift; and muſt be ſought for and received from him.

V. 22. *As one of us.*] See Chap. I, V. 26. Alluding to their ambitious deſire, and vain expectation of being as gods; and to their woful diſappointment.

Leſt he put forth, &c.] As Adam had forfeited the bleſſing of *immortality*, it was very proper that he ſhould be deprived of the ſacramental pledge of it. But this by no means proves, that the fruit of the tree of life had any *inherent* efficacy of conferring immortality: But rather reflects

wherein *is* the breath of life, from under heaven: *and* every thing that *is* in the earth shall die.

18 But with thee will I establish my covenant: and thou shalt come into the ark; thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons wives with thee.

19 And of every living thing of all flesh, two

flects upon their folly, who had been deluded to believe that the fruit of the tree of knowledge possessed one of a similar nature.

V. 24. *Cherubims, and a flaming sword.*] Some august angelic guards, who with a visible appearance, and the similitude of a flaming sword, forbad all entrance into Eden, or access to the tree of life: And thereby was signified, that according to the *covenant*, which was sealed by that tree, God's favour and eternal life were henceforth for ever unattainable by man.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Altho' we have somewhat anticipated, yet we have by no means precluded this part of our intended plan.—In so important a portion of God's word the only difficulty lies in selection; for numbers of useful observations must be omitted, or postponed.—Perhaps the whole of revealed Religion, properly so called, might fairly be inferred from this sing'e chapter; but a few leading thoughts alone must here be adduced. The subject, which hath engaged our attention calls upon us to lament and mourn; not only for these primitive transgressors, but for ourselves, our children, and the whole human race, thus involved in one common ruin: Yet at the same time it calls upon us to rejoice in God our Saviour, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, from whom comes everlasting righteousness, and felicity. Still however should we rejoice with trembling, lest we should come short of, or be found to neglect such great salvation, thro' the deceitfulness of our hearts, and the sinfulness of the world: and above all thro' the subtlety of our watchful unwearied, and malicious enemies, the powers of darkness; who are still envious of our happiness, and covertly plotting our destruction. Whenever our pride is flattered, whenever we find discontent, ambition, affectation of independance, covetousness, or sensual lusts excited in our minds: Whenever we are ready to promise ourselves impunity in, or advantage from sin: Whenever hard thoughts of God, and his commandments; doubts about his veracity and faithfulness; or low apprehensions of the value of his favour, and of spiritual blessings are suggested; and whenever we are urged forward with precipitation, and self-confidence, contemning counsel, and not brooking opposition: Then we may be sure the old serpent is at work; then we are especially called to watch and pray; then our only safety consists in speedy flight, or vigorous resistance, stedfast in the faith. We should not only be upon our guard against avowed enemies, or wicked people; but simply believing the testimony, and reverencing the plain command of God, we must reject temptation to unbelief or disobedience, tho' sent by the hand of the most lovely, or beloved object upon earth; recognizing the tempter as concealed in that object, and with indignation answering, "get thee behind me satan," for so it is written.—Nay if our own senses, or understandings seem to testify, that those objects are good and desireable, which God hath forbidden, we must reject that testimony, if we would be safe and happy.—Nor let it be forgotten that the appetite for knowledge is no less liable to exorbitancy, than the sensual appetites; and when not subjected to, and restricted by the word of God, degenerates into bold curiosity, scepticism, and infidelity.—The triumphs of prosperous wickedness are short lived, and issue in redoubled vengeance; and agreement in sin oft produces the most bitter recriminations, and most implacable enmities.—Upon the face of this transaction it is manifest that we are capable of ruining, but not of saving ourselves: And that the contrivance and proposal *at least* of salvation, go before not only our deservings, and endeavours, but even our desires and expectations. Had not therefore the judge of men been previously revealed as the saviour of sinners, we must all at length self-convicted, and trembling have stood before him, to hear the awful sentence of everlasting condemnation. If notwithstanding the light of revelation, and the hope of salvation, the world ever since the fall hath been so full of darkness, sin and misery; what would it otherwise have been? And if temporal evils excite such lamentation, what will the wrath to come be? The believer is taught to consider the former as fatherly chastisements, tokens of love, light afflictions, and but for a moment; and is enabled to submit to them, and death itself with chearfulness; in the hope of everlasting glory. But the latter is reserved, as the portion of the enemies of God; from which to redeem his people the incarnate Saviour suffered agonies unknown—Hoping in his merits, and the blood of the everlasting covenant, of which he is the faithful surety, let us lay low before him in humiliation for sin, and gratitude for salvation; let us labour, and suffer patiently; resist temptation manfully, and obey his commandments chearfully; not only expecting that he will bruise satan under *our feet* shortly; but that he will in due time crush the serpents head completely, and fill the earth with truth, and righteousness.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. I. *I have gotten a man*, &c.] Some think she concluded that this was the promised seed, and called him, The MAN JEHOVAH: If so, she was wofully disappointed.

V. 3.—4.] This early use of sacrifices confirms the supposition that the appointment of them was a part of the gracious revelation, made to Adam after his transgression—It is indeed exceeding difficult in any other way, to account for the very general use of altars and sacrifices, in order to appease the anger of the offended deity; which at first sight appears so unreasonable. But if God commanded Adam after the fall, to shed the blood of *innocent* animals, and after their death to consume part, or the whole of their bodies

two of every *sort* shalt thou bring into the ark to keep *them* alive with thee: they shall be male and female.

20 Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind: two of every *sort* shall come unto thee, to keep *them* alive.

21 And

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dies by fire; with reference to that punishment which sinners merit: even the death of the body, and the wrath of God (of which fire is a well known emblem) after death; and in prefiguration of the sufferings of Christ: In this case the whole appears very natural; the original tradition was remembered and the method of expiation practiced, long after the meaning thereof was obscured, and forgotten.

V. 3. *Cain brought*, &c.] Thus he appears to have approached God in a way of his own devising, and despising that, which God had appointed: And in his own name, without the acknowledgment of his sinfulness, or dependance on the promised saviour; and not to supplicate mercy, but only to render his tribute to God for providential blessings. In so doing he manifested a proud, impenitent, unbelieving heart; and intimated his purpose of adhering to the covenant of works: And therefore he and his offering were rejected.

V. 4. *Brought of the firstlings*, &c.] He came as a sinner, according to God's appointment, by his sacrifice expressing his humility, sincerity, and believing obedience: Thus seeking for the benefit of the new covenant of mercy, thro' the promised seed, he was according to that covenant, accepted: And in consequence his sacrifice was distinguished by some manifest token of divine approbation; most probably it was consumed by fire from heaven: (See 1 *Kings*, c. 18 v. 24—29—38. 2 *Chron.* c. 7. v. 1.) Which seemed to intimate that the deserved vengeance fastening upon, and consuming the sacrifice, made way for the exercise of mercy to the offender. Certain we are that "by *faith* Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain," and equally certain that there have been in all ages, two such descriptions, of worshippers, as we suppose Cain and Abel to have been: namely, proud impenitent despisers of the Gospel method of salvation, who have attempted to please God in ways of their own devising; and humble believers, who have approached him in the way, which he hath revealed: and that the latter have ever been accepted of God, and distinguished by peculiar tokens of his favour; for which they have been by the others envied, hated, and persecuted unto death; which they have suffered with exemplary patience and meekness.

V. 5. *His countenance fell.*] Cain, instead of humbly examining wherefore he was rejected, indulged the most malignant resentment against Abel; and even harboured an evil spirit of discontent, rebellion, and enmity against God himself: which tormenting passions were, as they are wont to be, strongly marked upon his sullen, downcast countenance.

V. 6—7. *And the Lord said*, &c.] The Lord condescended to expostulate with his rebellious creature; and intimates to him, that he had no cause of dissatisfaction: that the hypocrisy of his heart, and the unwarranted method of his approach had indeed *deservedly* excluded him from sharing with Abel his gracious approbation: but that, if he would now come in another temper, and in the prescribed way, he also should meet with acceptance.

Sin lieth, &c.] Thus God further intimates to him, that he was about to be tempted to still greater crimes, which would expose him to severer punishments.

Unto thee, &c.] (See c. 3. v. 16.) As if he had said. Abel still loves thee, hath in no respect injured thee; and is as ready to submit to thee, his elder brother, as he was before: what cause then hast thou for discontent, or resentment?

V. 8. *Cain talked with Abel.*] Concealed his murderous hatred under the mask of familiar friendship and conversation.

When they were in the field.] At a distance from Adam and Eve, whither probably Abel went, at Cain's request.

He slew him.] Thus when lust is conceived, it bringeth forth sin: malice in the heart, is the embryo of murder in the outward conduct.

V. 9. *And the Lord said*, &c.] The whole conveys the idea of an *apparent* presence of the Lord, who thus cited Cain before him, as he had formerly done Adam and Eve.

I know not, &c.] This is consistent with what was before urged of the pride, impenitence, and unbelief of Cain; who here directly denies the crime, which he had just perpetrated, as if he could conceal it from God himself.

Am I my brother's keeper?] Nothing can be imagined more horribly insolent! Whether we are to consider it as an almost atheistical denial of God's omniscience, or a rejection of his authority, and defiance of his omnipotence; it plainly shews how sin hardens the heart, and blinds the understanding.

10. *What hast thou done?*] God calls upon him to reflect upon the horrid nature, and aggravated circumstances of his crime, and the vengeance due to him, to awaken remorse, and alarm his fears.—Here was in this one action, undeserved hatred, and unprovoked revenge producing premeditated murder, whilst men were yet few in number, and probably none had hitherto died: the murder of a brother, in cruel disregard to their common parents; for no other reason, but the excellency of his character, and God's acceptance of him; which evidenced a malignant hatred of holiness and a daring contempt of, and determined enmity to God himself.

The voice of thy, &c.] The justice and holiness of God, and his authority as governor of the universe, render it so suitable, and proper for him to punish offenders; that they, who suffer flagrant wrong, are often spoken of in Scripture, as loudly calling upon him, and as it were demanding of him, to execute vengeance upon their injurers.—And as he witnesses those secret crimes, which elude the justice of men; so those crimes themselves are represented as having a voice, which loudly calls upon the judge of all, to whom vengeance

21 And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather *it* to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.

22 Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.

CHAP.

vengeance belongs, to punish the perpetrators of them: which he accounts himself in honour bound to, and therefore most assuredly will do it.

V. 11. *Thou art cursed from the earth*, &c.] As if the very elements would rise up in arms against the perpetrator of so unnatural a crime, to be their Maker's instruments in his punishment.

12. *When thou tillest*, &c.] An additional barrenness of the earth should render his labours abortive, as in revenge for forcing her to drink the blood of Abel.—There is vast majesty, and energy in thus personifying the blood of Abel as crying for vengeance; and the earth as a willing instrument in the hands of God, for inflicting the deserved punishment.

A fugitive, &c.] He should be so dreaded, and detested by all others; and the very sight of him would be especially so grievous to Adam, and Eve; that he would be, as it were driven from society, in all places, whither he should go.—It appears that Adam, and Eve had many more children, than are mentioned by name; and that there were at this time a considerable number of inhabitants in the earth: probably Abel was not killed, till within a short time of the birth of Seth, which was when Adam was an hundred and thirty years of age; during which space mankind might be much increased.

V. 13. *My punishment*, &c.] Cain expresses no token of humiliation for the greatness of his sin, but only complains of the severity of his punishment: the universal effect of an impenitent heart.

14 *From thy face*, &c.] That is, be left destitute of the providential protection of God; as a kind of outlaw.

15 *Whosoever*, &c.] The Lord would not have him slain, but live a monument and witness of his abhorrence of murder.

And the Lord set, &c.] It is in vain for us to enquire what this mark was: it was doubtless well known to the parties concerned, both as a brand of infamy on Cain; and as a token from God that they should not kill him.

16 *And Cain went out*, &c.] He seems to have renounced entirely the ordinances of God, and the society of his worshippers, and those places, where there were some sensible tokens of his presence, and acceptance: and so became totally irreligious.

17 *Builded a city.*] He appears to have thus employed himself to divert his mind from serious reflections, and remorse of conscience; to attach to himself some adherents, and get a name in one way, as he had forfeited his reputation in another. Ungodly Cain was the first that we read of, who builded a city: and his posterity invented many useful and ingenious arts. (See v. 20. 21. 22.) The servants of God, who are most attentive to the one thing needful, are not *generally* the most eminent in natural ingenuity, and industry.

19 *Lamech took two wives.*] This is the first instance, which we have of polygamy*, and is not suited to impress us much in it's favour.

* Note. I use the word *polygamy* in the popular sense, for more wives than one at a time; though strictly speaking this is properly *bigamy*.

V. 23.—24. *I have slain*, &c.] Lamech appears either suspicious of his wives; or obviating *their* apprehensions for his safety: it seems plain that he was conscious of having many enemies, whose resentment he had provoked by injuries of one kind or other: whether therefore he speaks affirmatively, and acknowledges that he had killed a man, though not his own brother; or interrogatively, have I killed a man to my hurt? He evidently draws a comparison betwixt himself, and his ancestor Cain; and flatters himself that he is much less criminal; and therefore abuses the patience of God in sparing Cain, into an encouragement to himself to expect impunity in sin; and to dare and defy the vengeance of those, who hated him.

V. 25. *Another seed*, &c.] She probably had some intimation that this son was to be the progenitor of the promised seed.

V. 26 *To call upon*, &c.] Or to call themselves by the name of the Lord: that is, some persons by an open profession of true religion, began to protest against the prevailing impiety and wickedness of the world around them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The promises of God shall surely be accomplished; but the appointed season must be waited for: and hasty expectations often end in bitter disappointments. Acceptance with God cannot be obtained, but in the way of his own appointment; and unbelief, pride, and hypocrisy, in religion are as ruinous as open ungodliness itself. When we fail of success in our undertakings, or comfort in religious exercises, instead of indulging discontent, and envy; we should diligently search out, and then remove the sinful cause; for though we have failed in one instance, we may thus afterwards succeed: but if we give place to the devil by harbouring resentment, we know not whither we may be hurried.—What fatal effects were these of our first parent's transgression! and how must *their* hearts have been tortured with variegated anguish at such events! What now remains in Cain of the image and likeness of God? Was he very good? Nay have we not in him the very image of Satan; pride, envy, malice, murder, lies, enmity against, insolence towards, and final apostacy from God!—As the truth of God embraced in faith is the appointed means of our recovering, *from glory to glory*, the image of God: so Satan's lies, when believed, produce his very nature in the soul. But Abel being dead, yet speaketh: not only proclaiming the heinousness of murder, and warning us to stifle the first emotions of wrath: but also teaching us, that the believer's happiness is not in this world: that persecution must be expected by the righteous, and that on account of their righteousness: and that there is a future state, and an eternal recompence to be enjoyed by them, through faith in Christ, and his atoning sacrifice.—When "Cain who was of that wicked one, "slew his brother, because his own works were evil, "and his brother's righteous;" (1. *John* 3.—12.) then, in consequence of the enmity put betwixt the seed of the

CHAP. VII.

Contains 1st. The Lord's command to Noah to enter the ark, and to take of every ſpecies of the animal creation with him. v. 1.—4. 2*d. Noah's obedience, v.* 5.—9. 3*d. The commencement of the flood, v.* 10.—11. 4*th. It's progreſs, deſtructive prevalence, and continuance,* 12.—24.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy houſe into the ark: for thee have I ſeen righteous before me in this generation.

2 Of every clean beaſt thou ſhalt take to thee by ſevens, the male and his female: and of beaſts that *are* not clean by two, the male and his female.

3 Of fowls alſo of the air by ſeyens, the male and the female; to keep ſeed alive upon the face of all the earth.

4 For yet ſeven days, and I will cauſe it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights: and every living ſubſtance that I have made, will I deſtroy from off the face of the earth.

5 And

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woman and the ſeed of the ſerpent, the war broke out; which in one way or other, hath been waged ever ſince. In this war we are all concerned, none are neuter; for our captain hath declared, "he that is not with me, is *againſt* "me." Under his banners therefore let us enliſt, and not be fearful, and unbelieving, but take up our croſs, and follow him: and with all the forces we can muſter, decidedly, yet in meekneſs, ſupport the cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs, againſt Satan, and his ſervants; and ſhould we here meet with perſecution even unto death; he will certainly give us the crown of everlaſting life: for "to him that over-"cometh, will he give to ſit down with him upon his "throne, even as he hath overcome, and has ſat down "with his father upon his throne." Theſe are the better things, which the blood of Jeſus ſpeaketh, than did that of Abel; who was a type of him, both in the righteouſneſs of his life, and the manner of his death: but his blood called for vengeance upon him, who ſhed it; the blood of Chriſt pleads before the throne for pardon, and peace, grace and glory to thoſe, whoſe ſins were the procuring cauſe of his death.

NOTES

CHAP. V.] V. 2. *Called their name Adam.*] This is therefore not only the name of the firſt man, but that of the ſpecies: it is ſuppoſed to have been derived from the red colour of the earth, out of which his body was formed; and to have been given him, to remind him, and us, of the meanneſs of the original of our bodies in compariſon with our immortal ſouls.

V. 3 *In his own likeneſs*, &c.] The contraſt betwixt Adam created in the likeneſs of God; v. 1. and, Seth begotten in the likeneſs and after the image of Adam after the fall, is very remarkable.—Seth was not only the father of the holy ſeed before the flood, but of the whole human race ſince the flood; and conſequently the anceſtor of Chriſt. We have reaſon to conclude that Adam and Eve *perſonally* were pardoned, and recovered to holineſs; yet in this Adam acted not as a repreſentative, as he had done, when he tranſgreſſed the covenant: therefore he communicated to his poſterity that nature, which he had as a ſinner; not the new nature, which he had as a believer.—Seth himſelf alſo ſeems to have been a godly perſon; yet *not as born of Adam; but as born again of the Spirit.* And this appears to be noted eſpecially in him; leſt Cain's wickedneſs ſhould be aſcribed to other cauſes, and Abel's righteouſneſs attributed to the *goodneſs of his natural diſpoſition*, and not to the grace of God, as is common in ſimilar caſes.—But the character and conduct of all Seth's poſterity (Chriſt alone excepted) unleſs, or until *born of God*, plainly teſtify what that image was, in which he was begotten.

V. 22. *Walked with God.* This is a figurative deſcription of that intimate communion which ſubſiſts between a merciful God, and true believers; and it may be uſeful to give it in this place a brief conſideration. "Can "two walk together except they be agreed?" (*Amos*, c. 3. v. 3.) Without coincidence in ſentiment, judgment, and diſpoſition, there can be no cordial union, or harmony. But man naturally is propenſe to thoſe things, which God abhors, and forbids; and averſe to thoſe that God loves, and commands. His underſtanding is ſo darkened, his judgment is ſo perverted, his affections are ſo depraved, and his taſte is ſo vitiated by ſin; that in almoſt every thing his views, his choice, his deſires, and purſuits, are the very reverſe of thoſe, which the word of God propoſes to him. Thus *diſpoſed*, he departs from, and walks contrary to God, contracts guilt, and merits condemnation. A ſinner's walk with God, therefore, commences with the change of his judgment, and diſpoſition by divine grace: then he begins to abhor, and repent of his ſins; to deſpiſe the world in compariſon of the favour of God; to hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs; to ſeek forgiveneſs and acceptance with God, in the way of his appointment, and to devote himſelf to his love and ſervice, and the purſuit of holineſs: now reconciled to God, he walks with him in the continual exerciſe of repentance, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt: in an habitual realizing ſenſe of, and regard to the preſence of God in his whole conduct: in a daily dependance on his promiſe, providence, and grace for all things needful for ſoul and body: in a continual attention to his word; from thence to learn his truth, and will, and derive the peace, and comfort of his ſalvation: in pouring out the heart before the Lord in fervent prayer, and grateful praiſe: in a believing, reverential, and delightful attendance on all the ordinances of his worſhip; and an open profeſſion of his faith and love: in a conſcientious obedience to all his commandments, without regarding the praiſe or cenſure of men: in ſubmiſſion to his providential appointments: and finally, in an habitual endeavour by attention to every relative

5 And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.

6 And Noah *was* ſix hundred years old, when the flood of waters was upon the earth.

7 And

relative obligation, by a careful improvement of every talent, and by a circumſpect converſation, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and recommend religion to all around him. The Lord, on his part, anſwers the expectations of thoſe, who thus walk with him: in his providence he ſupplies their wants, interpoſes in their emergencies, and evidences his care of them: he meets them in his ordinances, teaches them from his word, anſwers their prayers, accepts their ſervices, communicates by his Spirit wiſdom, ſtrength, and conſolation to their ſouls, and is indeed their guide, companion, and counſellor through life: then meets them at death, and takes them into his preſence, where there is fulneſs of joy. Thus ends the walk of faith, and now they walk by ſight, and ſee him as he is, being for ever with him, and like him, in holineſs, and felicity.

V. 24. *He was not: for God took him*, &c.] "He was "tranſlated that he ſhould not ſee death." (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 5—6.) In the prime of life, according to thoſe times, he was taken from earth to Heaven, in the body, without feeling the pangs of death, having received this teſtimony, that he had pleaſed God.—Therefore he was not found on earth either by his friends, who ſought him from love; (See 2 *Kings*, c. 2. v. 16—18.) or by his enemies, who ſought him in the murderous rage of perſecution: for he was a preacher of righteouſneſs, and, (if we may judge by the ſpecimen in *Jude*, v. 14. 15.) his plain, bold, and alarming addreſs could not fail greatly to enrage thoſe daring ſinners, to whom he was ſent. But by taking him alive into Heaven, God effectually reſcued him from their malice, teſtified his approbation of his conduct, and gave a convincing proof of the inviſible world, and of the future ſtate of recompence.

V. 29. *Noah.*] Which ſignifies reſt, or refreſhing.

This ſame ſhall, &c.] Perhaps Lamech thought that he had obtained the promiſed ſeed.—But it is more likely that he ſpake by the Spirit of prophecy, which revealed to him that Noah would be an extraordinary perſon, and a great bleſſing to mankind; not without reference to the preſervation of the human ſpecies with him in the ark; which typified the ſalvation of ſinners by Jeſus Chriſt; our true, and only effectual comfort amidſt the toils, and miſeries of life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

This is nearly all the hiſtory, which God hath been pleaſed to tranſmit to us, of the antediluvian world, that ſubſiſted for the ſpace of 1656 years. Conſidering how long men lived, and had children before the flood, we may well ſuppoſe that the earth was filled with inhabitants: and we may with apparent probability conjecture, that there were many flouriſhing kingdoms amongſt them; many revolutions in ſtates, many mighty atchievements, and renowned characters, which are all buried in oblivion: whilſt nothing is recorded but of the holy ſeed, amongſt whom true religion was maintained; and who doubtleſs were deſpiſed and hated in their generation. In the judgment of God, the ſaints are the only excellent and eminent perſons, and true religion the only important concern on earth: compared with theſe, all things elſe are not worth mentioning.—We need not wonder that men at that time lived ſo long, nor enquire about the ſecond cauſes: for nothing but the power of God, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being," could preſerve the curious fabric of the human body in repair, for the few years which we live: and the ſame power ſuffices to preſerve them to the age of Methuſaleh, or for ever. Man lives as long as his Creator pleaſes, and no longer; which ſhould warn us not to provoke him, and teach us to make haſte to be at peace with him, and to live prepared for, and expecting our ſummons.—Nor need we regret the ſhortneſs of our preſent lives: Abel, and Enoch, the two moſt favoured characters, were the ſhorteſt lived of all thoſe before the flood, of whom we have any account.—Were the world leſs miſerable, it could be no loſs to die, and go to Heaven: nor can it ever be gain, to live, and treaſure up wrath by ſin; whilſt their length of life encouraged procraſtination, and increaſed preſumption; the ſhortneſs of our days may warn us, without delay, to hearken to the voice of God in the Goſpel.—But man, in his beſt eſtate, is altogether vanity: he is born, raiſes up a family, and dies! Theſe are his memoirs: all elſe is a cypher, or a blot, except he WALK WITH GOD.—The page of hiſtory records the ſplendid actions of the great, and illuſtrious: the report of the day proclaims the wealth which others have accumulated, left behind, and are gone to render an account of: the monuments of the dead are oft inſcribed with pompous titles and flattering commendations.—But may it be *with truth* engraved on my tomb-ſtone, or whiſpered in the obſcureſt corner, "He "walked with God, and was not, for God took him:" And ſo far from envying their diſtinctions, not even Enoch's privilege ſhall be anxiouſly deſired: but, as one expreſſes it,—Doddridge's Hymns, on *Gen.* c. 5. v. 22—24.

"I'll hail the ſharpeſt pangs of death,
"Which break my way to God."

We may alſo obſerve that they, who begin young to walk with God, may expect to walk with him long, comfortably, and uſefully: and the true chriſtian's *perſeverance* in holineſs, through many a year, till God takes him, will beſt evince, and illuſtrate that doctrine, which many oppoſe, and many abuſe.—But walking with God requires no Monkiſh celibacy, and ſolitude: it well conſiſts with the cares, and comforts; and much conſiſts in a conſcientious performance of the duties of ſocial, and relative life.—However, we need better comforters under our toil and ſorrow, than the deareſt relations, and moſt promiſing offſpring: may we ſeek and find the comforts of faith in Chriſt, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *The ſons of God*, &c.] All the true worſhippers of God are his ſons, and daughters: and ſometimes

7 And Noah went in, and his ſons, and his wife, and his ſons wives with him, into the ark, becauſe of the waters of the flood.

8 Of clean beaſts, and of beaſts that *are* not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth,

9 There

ſometimes the appellation is extended to all thoſe, who profeſs the true religion.—They, therefore, who were called by the name of the Lord, from unworthy motives, intermarried with thoſe, who were openly irreligious, here called the daughters of men; which produced, as it always hath done, an increaſe of wickedneſs, and an almoſt univerſal apoſtacy.

V. 3. *My Spirit*, &c.] This ſeems to mean, that the holy Spirit (from whoſe influences all, that is good, tends to good, or checks the torrent of ungodlineſs, is derived) ſhould at length finally leave them; being provoked by their obſtinate perſeverance in iniquity in deſpight, not only to their own conſciences, but his convictions: and that then becoming totally hardened in ſin, and ripe for deſtruction, God would no longer exerciſe patience towards them.

For that he alſo is fleſh.] Not only feeble, and unable to reſiſt, but corrupt and carnal; having proſtituted the powers of his rational ſoul, and ſacrificed every noble conſideration, to make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfill the luſts thereof.

An hundred and twenty years.] Thus long God would ſtill wait, and give men ſpace for repentance, before he proceeded to extremities.

V. 4. *Giants.*] Men of great ſtature and ſtrength, but of more enormous wickedneſs.

Mighty men,—men of renown.] As chieftains, and conquerors.

V. 5. *God ſaw*, &c.] The words of this verſe are very expreſſive—"God ſaw the wickedneſs of man to be "great in the earth." He ſaw it, who could not miſtake, or form a falſe eſtimate of it; that it was very great, that is open, daring, almoſt univerſal, of all men, all over the earth. Yet he ſaw the heart ſtill worſe:—"Every ima-"gination of the thoughts of the heart were only evil "continually:" that is, the workings of the fancy, the contrivances of the underſtanding, the purpoſes, deſires, and affections of the whole ſoul, were every one of them *evil, only evil*, without any intermixture of good.—Only evil continually, without interruption or ceſſation! Alas! how few perſons are aware that this is the caſe with themſelves, and with all men, as long as they remain deſtitute of the ſanctifying grace of God? Inattention, ignorance of the law of God, and ſelf-flattery, hide from men's minds, and prejudice them againſt this mortifying truth: the perception of which is eſſentially neceſſary, to a proper valuation of the ſalvation of the Goſpel.

V. 6. *It repented—it grieved*, &c.] Such expreſſions as theſe are made uſe of by the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture, in a gracious condeſcenſion to our low apprehenſions: and to accommodate heavenly things, as much as their nature will admit of, to the ſimilitude of earthly things: juſt as we ſpeak to children in an imitation of their language, and in accommodation to their capacities, that we may to better advantage convey our meaning into their minds.—"I "ſpeak after the manner of men, becauſe of the weak-"neſs of your fleſh." Metaphyſical truth is too refined and ſubtile for the inſtruction of mankind, and only fitted for the amuſement of a few ingenious, ſpeculative men: but the Scriptures were written to make even the poor, and illiterate wiſe unto ſalvation. To ſpeak to them of the *cauſe* from it's *ſenſible*, and *viſible* effects, more readily informs, and more deeply intereſts them: whilſt abundance of other paſſages guard the ſober enquirer from miſapprehenſion.—Should an artiſt, after beſtowing much pains upon, and manifeſting great ſkill about ſome curious piece of mechaniſm, daſh it all to pieces; we ſhould conclude *from this effect*, that he repented of having made it—Should a parent, after conferring great favours upon his child, be provoked by his miſconduct, finally to diſinherit him; we ſhould thence infer, that he was grieved at his heart, that he had beſtowed ſo much upon him. Thus the Creator, having formed the earth, and man upon it; having diſplayed ſo much his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs in the works, which he had made for, and the riches he had conferred upon man, in whom eſpecially his glory had ſhone: after all, now that the earth was filled with inhabitants, provoked by their wickedneſs, to deſtroy them all with a flood, was an effect, which ſeemed to flow from his *repenting* that he had made man, and to indicate, that he was grieved at his heart.—It is indeed impoſſible that God ſhould *really* be ſorry for, or repent of any thing that he hath done: but his change of conduct was ſuch, as in men ſprings from ſuch cauſes: and the expreſſion moſt emphatically denotes his extreme abhorrence of their crimes.

V. 8. *Noah found grace*, &c.] He was an exception to the general rule, a true believer, a partaker of the grace of God, and an object of his ſpecial favour.

V. 9. *Noah was a juſt man and perfect.*] Inwardly, ſincerely, unreſervedly religious; one that dared to be ſingular in that corrupt generation.

V. 11. *Filled with violence.*] Not only full of impiety, but of oppreſſion, cruelty, and bloodſhed.

V. 12. *All fleſh had corrupted*, &c.] Noah's godlineſs was juſt before mentioned as the effect of the grace of God: but the wickedneſs of the reſt is here aſcribed to themſelves. This is the Scripture diſtribution of this matter, and chriſtian ſimplicity will be ſatisfied with it, and enquire no farther.

V. 13. *With the earth.*] With all the animal tribes, and all the vegetable riches, with which it was repleniſhed; and with all the works of men, which had been planned, and finiſhed thereon, as cities, palaces, &c. ſo as to render the whole one univerſal deſolation.

V. 15. *Cubits.*] A cubit is ſuppoſed to be ſomewhat more than half a yard.

V. 16.] Without entering into any critical enquiries concerning the conſtruction of the ark, it muſt, at firſt ſight, appear that ſo large a veſſel thus conſtructed, and with ſo few perſons on board, was utterly unſuitable, to weather out ſuch a ſtorm; except as immediately under

9 There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah.

10 And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth.

11 In

the guidance, and protection of the Almighty. But it was to be built in faith, and for this very reason, was more suitable for the intended purpose.

V. 17. *And behold I, even I,* &c.] If it appear very difficult, and to all created power impossible: yet God himself here engages his Almighty arm to effect it, and that obviates all objections.—These were things not seen as yet, concerning which Noah was warned, and of which there was no human probability: and some have since, and perhaps some at that time would argue against the possibility of such a deluge. But Noah simply credited the word of God, and without hesitating at the improbability of the event predicted; or objecting to the justice, or goodness of God in the awful sentence; or shrinking from the immense labour, and expence of such a building, or from the reproach and ridicule to which it might expose him; or excepting to this mode of preservation: being moved with fear, reverencing the divine revelation, he prepared the ark, and gloried in it, and became a preacher of righteousness; and taking the warning, which had been given him, for his subject, and shewing his faith by his works, he called upon the inhabitants of the earth on every side, to repent of their sins.—Had they been disposed to pay attention, long before the expiration of the 120 years of God's long suffering, all the inhabitants of the world might have heard the report: and if a general repentance had taken place, perhaps a respite would have been granted; as there was afterwards, in like circumstances, to Nineveh.—And if individuals had repented, and in faith sought admission into the ark; doubtless it would have been opened to as many, as it could contain—And, for ought appears to the contrary, if others by faith moved with fear, had prepared arks, they might have been preserved also.

V. 22. *Thus did Noah,* &c.] He believed the warning, and feared; he believed the promise, and hoped; and therefore he obeyed the commandment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is scarce a more lamentable proof of a decay of vital godliness, or a more effectual means of hastening it's decrease, than intermarriages betwixt professors of true religion, and it's avowed enemies. There seems in all ages to have been a peculiar curse of God upon them; the evil example of the ungodly party, hath generally corrupted, or greatly hurt the other; family religion hath been put an end to; and the children almost universally have been trained up according to the maxims of, and have taken after that parent, who hath been destitute of the fear of God. If we profess ourselves to be the sons, and daughters of the Lord Almighty, (See 2 *Cor.* c. 6. v. 14—18.) we must not marry without his consent: and he will neither give his consent, nor blessing, if we prefer beauty, wit, wealth, or honourable alliance, to faith, and holiness.

Though the Lord is slow to anger, and of great kindness, yet his Spirit will not always strive with men; and, if they persist in sin in defiance of the word of God, and the convictions of their own consciences, he will at length be provoked totally to withdraw from them, and permit them to be hardened to their destruction.—They, whom the world admires, and applauds as men of renown, are often, in the judgment of God, and even of common sense, no better than the cruel tyrants, oppressors, and firebrands of the earth: let us then desire that honour, which cometh from God upon those, who do good in their generation; not that, which comes from man upon those, who do mischief. But what is become of the image and likeness of God? How doth man now merit the divine approbation of VERY GOOD? Alas! the old serpent, that proud, ambitious liar, and murderer, hath filled the earth with his detestable progeny! Yet, in the worst of times, God hath a remnant according to the election of grace: and they, who would please God, must dare to be singular. These will believe his truth, and obey his commandments: they will believe his warnings, and fear, but not despair; they will believe his promises, and hope, but not presume; they will stand in awe, and not find fault: they will expect safety in his appointed way, upon the warrant of his word; and in this expectation, will not refuse any obedience, however burthensome, expensive, self-denying, or exposing them to the cross. But in the warning given to Noah, there is a more solemn warning given to us, to "flee from the wrath to come," which, with more tremendous efficacy, will sweep the world of unbelievers into the pit of destruction. Christ (the true Noah, which same shall comfort us) hath, by his unknown sufferings, and at infinite expence, already prepared the ark, and kindly invites us by faith to enter in. Whilst the day of his patience continues, let us hear his voice, and thankfully sue for admission, which will readily be vouchsafed us.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *Come thou,* &c.] This command is given in the form of an invitation, because of the unmerited advantage to which he was thus admitted. And many of the commands of God, as given to sinners with reference to the Gospel, are for the same reason, put in the same form. They are commands, and as such inforced by divine authority, and cannot be neglected, without the most atrocious rebellion: But they are also invitations to partake of unmerited favours unspeakably precious; and as such are proposed by infinite mercy, and cannot be refused without the greatest folly, as well as ingratitude. They are therefore sometimes proposed in one form, sometimes in the other; and sometimes both seem combined—"See that ye *refuse* not him, that speaketh; for if they escaped not" &c. (*Heb* c. 12 v. 25.)

Righteous] Not by a personal righteousness commensurate with the extensive demands of the law of God;

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 In the self-same day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark:

14 They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort.

15 And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein *is* the breath of life.

16 And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in.

17 And

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but as "an heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 7.) That same principle of divine faith, which induced him to believe upon God's testimony, contrary to all human probability, that the deluge would come at the appointed season; would lead him, upon the same testimony, to expect the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, with which Enoch (See *Jude* v. 14. and 15.) before him, and doubtless he also was acquainted. This would move him to flee from the wrath to come, as well as prepare the ark. And as he was enabled to believe, that in the ark *alone*, he could be safe in the approaching deluge: so he would believe the revelation of a Saviour, and seek and expect salvation through him alone. Thus would he be justified by faith: and, as "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is "none of his," he would also receive that Spirit, "whose "fruit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth:" by his sanctifying influences, he would become *righteous* in his character, and conduct, by a personal righteousness; that is devoted to God, and walking before him in all holy obedience, with sincerity, though not in perfection.

V. 2. *Clean beasts.*] Such as were appointed to be offered in sacrifice.

By sevens.] The odd one for sacrifice, as is generally supposed.

V. 3. *Of fowls*, &c.] There must be a very extraordinary miracle in bringing two of every species of animals to Noah, and rendering them submissive to him, and peaceful with each other; yet it seems to have made no impression on the hardened spectators.

V. 5. *And Noah*, &c.] Still implicit faith produces as implicit obedience: but unbelief hardens the heart of the rest of the world in obstinate rebellion, and contemptuous defiance.

V. 7. *Sons wives.*] Though each of Noah's three sons were then about an hundred years old, and had none of them any children, and the whole earth was about to be desolated: yet there is no exception made to the original constitution of marriage, they *twain* shall be one flesh, (compare *Gen.* c. 2. v. 24. with *Matt.* c. 19, v. 4, 5, 6.) even on this emergency. A decisive proof that polygamy is injurious to man, and displeasing to God; and only connived at for a season, to prevent worse consequences, from the wickedness of man; as divorces also were

V. 10.] The long suffering of God had now waited the appointed time; and, as many think, these seven days above the 120 years. These were the days of his patience; "for he is slow to anger:" but as men were not led thereby to repentance, afterwards came the days of vengeance; "for he will by no means acquit the wicked."

V. 11—12.] As there was a peculiar exertion of Omnipotence in effecting the deluge: ("Behold I, even I, "do bring a flood of waters upon the earth") it is as vain, and presumptuous to attempt explaining the method of it, on principles of philosophy, or the agency of second causes; as it would be to endeavour, in the same manner, to explain how the dead shall arise, or to enquire with what bodies they shall come. By the Almighty power of God, both the waters from the ocean, and the waters above the firmament, were brought together to cover the earth: and why should it be thought a thing incredible with us, that God should drown the world; any more than that he should raise the dead?

V. 12. *Was upon the earth,*] Incessantly, and without the least intermission, or abatement.

V. 16. *Shut him in.*] In what manner this was done, God hath not been pleased to reveal, and it becomes not us to enquire. But the Lord thereby gave him a pledge, to assure him of his acceptance; and of his care of him: and by the same token he shut out all the rest, and sealed their condemnation.—But had Noah's preaching no effect? Were there no more believers upon the whole earth? Probably many had been previously taken away from the evil to come; Methusaleh died the year before, or in the very year of the flood. But it seems evident that there were no truly godly persons, amongst all the survivors, however some might have been alarmed, affected, or almost persuaded: for there was room enough in the ark; and we do not find that any were refused admittance.—Indeed our Lord hath informed us of the real state of the case, (*Luke*, c. 17. v. 27.) "They did eat, "they drank, they married wives, and were given in "marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, "and the flood came, and destroyed them all." Employed in their secular concerns, they treated the whole affair with contempt, or indifference; and hardened, and encouraged one another in disobedience: and if any were somewhat disposed to pay regard to it; they either procrastinated, or were afraid of being derided as singular. But what must have been their feelings, when, at the appointed

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17 And the flood was forty days upon the earth: and the waters increaſed, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.

18 And the waters prevailed, and were increaſed greatly upon the earth: and the ark went upon the face of the waters.

19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that *were* under the whole heaven, were covered.

20 Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.

21 And all fleſh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beaſt, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man.

22 All in whoſe noſtrils *was* the breath of life, of all that *was* in the dry *land*, died.

23 And every living ſubſtance was deſtroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were deſtroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained *alive*, and they that *were* with him in the ark.

24 And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.

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pointed time, it began to rain in ſo extraordinary a manner, and continued from week to week inceſſantly; the waters riſing, and following them to the eminences, whither they aſcended, &c.? How much ſoever they had before deſpiſed Noah's madneſs, and pitied his weakneſs; they would now remember his warning, curſe their own folly, admire his wiſdom, and envy his happineſs.

V. 20. *Fifteen cubits*, &c.] That is about eight yards above the tops of the higheſt mountains.

V. 21—22.] Every project, which any, or all of them, could form for their ſecurity, was fruſtrated: every advantage of ſituation was unavailing: ſome might eſcape longer than others; but firſt or laſt all, except thoſe in the ark, periſhed.

V. 23. *Noah only*, &c.] The faithful, and powerful protection of God was Noah's only ſecurity in this wild tumult of the elements: the preſence of God his only comfort in this dreary confinement, and in witneſſing this dire devaſtation of the earth and its inhabitants; and eſpecially of the human ſpecies, of his companions, his neighbours, his relatives; of thoſe, to whom he had preached, for whom he had prayed, and over whom he had wept; and even many, which had helped to build the ark.—But theſe were abundantly ſufficient to keep him in ſafety, and to fill him with conſolation. "Thou, "Lord, ſhalt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is "ſtayed upon thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How "men deſpiſe the riches of the goodneſs, and "forbearance, and long ſuffering of God, not knowing "that his goodneſs *leads* to repentance: but after their "hardneſs and impenitent heart treaſure up wrath againſt "the day of wrath!" (*Rom.* c. 2. v. 4—5.) until judgment come upon them to the uttermoſt! But in all this God's purpoſes are effected, his predictions accompliſhed, and his juſtice diſplayed. Soon will our ſhort ſpan of life come to a cloſe, even though we ſhould linger out our threeſcore years and ten: the laſt week, the laſt day, the laſt hour, will ſoon ſurpriſe us, if we are not ever watching, and ever ready; and with no leſs tremendous conſternation, and much more terrible deſtruction, than the deluge did thoſe in the days of Noah. If when the maſter of the houſe hath riſen up, and ſhut to the door, we be found without, it will be too late to knock for admittance.—God's threatenings will as certainly be fulfilled, as his promiſes, however now deſpiſed and derided: and there is a time coming, when they, who have moſt affected to pity, or deride the godly, will admire and envy them.—What a triumph was here of death, even over thoſe, who had not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion? And how the whole creation groaned under man's ſin! But though we may indulge the hope that the multitude of infants, who died without their own actual ſin, through the firſt Adam's tranſgreſſion; obtained life without their own actual faith, through the ſecond Adam's obedience: yet how awful to be conſtrained to admit, that the ſame deluge, which ſwept the reſt of that generation from the earth, ſwept their ſouls into the priſon of hell! (See 1 *Pet.* c. 3. v. 19—20.) How tremendous then will be the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men! and what will be their feelings, who treat the things, not ſeen as yet, as if they were unreal, (though revealed by the infallible teſtimony of God) when they ſhall at length be ſeen, but ſeen too late! Happy they, who are part of Chriſt's family, and ſafe with him in the ark; they may look forward without diſmay, and rejoice in the aſſurance, that they ſhall triumph, when a deluge of fire ſhall encircle the viſible creation. But unleſs we dare be ſingular, and renounce the favour, and venture the ſcorn, and hatred of the world; unleſs we are willing to ſubmit to ſelf-denial, and diligence, we can find no admiſſion into this ark. And even in the ark, whilſt in this world, we ſhall need faith and patience, and have much to exerciſe them. Though we ſhould lament, we need not wonder at the prevalence of impiety; nor need faithful miniſters deſpond, if their ſucceſs be not large as their expectations.—Ungodly children oft receive temporal mercies for their parents' ſake: but unleſs they themſelves are made partakers of faith and holineſs, they will not for their ſakes eſcape final deſtruction.—Finally, there is much difference of character among men, and we are apt to imagine ſome favourable diſtinctions in our own caſe; but if we *neglect*, *refuſe*, or *abuſe* the ſalvation of Chriſt, we ſhall, notwithſtanding ſuch imaginary advantages, be overwhelmed in the common deſtruction of an unbelieving world.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. God's remembrance of Noah, and his preparing for his releaſe, 1—3. 2d. The ark reſting on the mountains of Ararat, and the tops of the mountains ſeen, 4—5. 3d. The method Noah takes to gain intelligence, 6.—12. 4th. The earth dried, Noah leaving the ark, offering ſacrifices, and accepted and encouraged of God, 13—22.

AND God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that *was* with him in the ark: and God made a wind to paſs over the earth, and the waters aſſwaged.

2 The fountains alſo of the deep, and the windows of heaven were ſtopped, and the rain from heaven was reſtrained.

3 And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.

4 And the ark reſted in the ſeventh month, on the ſeventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat.

5 And the waters decreaſed continually until the tenth month: in the tenth *month*, on the firſt *day* of the month, were the tops of the mountains ſeen.

6 And it came to paſs at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.

7 And he ſent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.

8 Alſo he ſent forth a dove from him, to ſee if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground.

9 But the dove found no reſt for the ſole of her foot, and ſhe returned unto him into the ark: for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. Then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark.

10 And he ſtayed yet other ſeven days, and again he ſent forth the dove out of the ark.

11 And the dove came in to him in the evening, and lo, in her mouth *was* an olive leaf pluckt off: So Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth.

12 And he ſtayed yet other ſeven days, and ſent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.

13 And it came to paſs in the ſix hundredth and firſt year, in the firſt *month*, the firſt *day* of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the face of the ground was dry.

14 And in the ſecond month, on the ſeven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried.

15 And God ſpake unto Noah, ſaying,

16 Go

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1. *God remembered.*] That is, he manifeſted his regard to him, and care of him, by providing not only for his ſafety, but for his enlargement.

And all the cattle.] Nothing is beneath the condeſcending care, and kindneſs of God.

V. 2.—3. *The fountains*, &c.] Things returned to their old courſe according to the operation of ſecond cauſes; the miraculous interpoſition being removed.

V. 4 *Ararat.*] Suppoſed to be a mountain in Armenia.

V. 6. *Forty days*, &c.] That is, after the tops of the mountains were ſeen.

V. 7. *Raven.*] It's nature being to feed on fleſh, it wanted not to return again to the ark.

V. 8.—9. *Dove.*] Which was of a different nature, and accuſtomed to another mode of living.—Theſe two birds in this inſtance may be conſidered as an inſtructive emblem. The raven may repreſent the hypocrite, who, though profeſſedly one of God's people, yet retaining his reliſh for worldly things, and having none for ſpiritual, in time of temptation returns to, and remains ſatisfied with the world: The dove (the external ſymbol of that ſpirit, who deſcended, and reſted on Chriſt, and dwells in his people) is emblematical of the true chriſtian; who being ſpiritually minded, though through temptation he may, as it were quit the ark, and get into the world; yet finds no reſt, no ſatisfaction until he return to Chriſt, and be received by him.

V. 11. *An olive branch.*] A token that the fruitful plains were dried, and the vegetables preſerved. An olive branch, probably from ſome obſcure tradition of this event, has generally been the emblem of peace. Thus the ſpirit of Chriſt, the heavenly dove, brings by his holy conſolation to the broken-hearted believer the olive branch of peace, and reconciliation with God.

16 Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy ſons, and thy ſons wives with thee.

17 Bring forth with thee every living thing that *is* with thee, of all fleſh, *both* of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth.

18 And Noah went forth, and his ſons, and his wife, and his ſons wives with him:

19 Every beaſt, every creeping thing, and every fowl, *and* whatſoever creepeth upon the earth after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.

20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD, and took of every clean beaſt, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

21 And the LORD ſmelled a ſweet ſavour; and the LORD ſaid in his heart, I will not again curſe the ground any more for man's ſake; for the imagination of man's heart *is* evil from his youth: neither will I again ſmite any more every thing living, as I have done.

22 While the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt, and cold and heat, and ſummer and winter, and day and night ſhall not ceaſe.

V. 16 *Go forth*, &c.] Though Noah had been making obſervations on the ſtate of the earth, and preparations for leaving the ark; yet he waited God's command, before he actually quitted it.

V. 19 *Every beaſt.*] It ſeems that, by a peculiar providential interpoſition, there had no animal of any ſort died; though they had been ſhut up now above a year.

V. 20. *Builded an altar*, &c.] Thus in faith he aſcribed his deliverance to the mercy of God, through the promiſed Saviour: and not to his own righteouſneſs: thus he rendered his tribute of gratitude for his preſervation: thus he devoted himſelf, and family to God; and thus he ſought his further protection and bleſſing amidſt the deſolations, with which he was ſurrounded.

V. 21. *Smelled*, &c.] The ſmell of burning fleſh could no more pleaſe God, than the blood of bulls and goats; except as typical of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and expreſſive of Noah's humble faith and devotedneſs to God. (See *Eph.* c. 5. v. 2.) Some would have thought it very great waſte to have deſtroyed ſo many uſeful animals, when there was ſuch a ſcarcity; but that is never waſted, which is expended in God's ſervice, and according to his appointment.

Will not curſe.] That is after the manner of the flood. The original curſe was not removed, nor is it clear that it was mitigated.

For *the imagination*, &c.] Perhaps it might be better rendered, though the imagination, &c. Other methods of repreſſing wickedneſs ſhall be employed, but this ſhall not be repeated: The flood waſhed away that generation of wicked men, but it removed not depravity from man's nature; which conceived and born in ſin, thinks, contrives, deviſes and loves wickedneſs, even from his youth; and that as much ſince the flood as before.

V. 22 *While the earth*, &c.] *Partial* failures of ſeed time, and harveſt are not inconſiſtent with this gracious aſſurance: according to which the heavenly bodies have ever ſince preſerved their courſe, the ſeaſons their ſucceſſions, and the earth has produced it's increaſe for the uſe of man; notwithſtanding his ingratitude: and on this word we depend, that thus it ſhall be 'till the myſtery of God be finiſhed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord, not only knoweth how to reſerve the wicked unto the day of judgment to be puniſhed, however numerous, powerful, and haughty; but alſo to deliver the godly out of temptations in the beſt time and manner, however few, deſpiſed, and helpleſs they may be. Though for a time he *ſeemeth* to forget his afflicted children, and in unbelief they are prone to judge according to that appearance, yet he never doth in reality forget them, and in due time will make his kind and careful remembrance of them, manifeſtly appear to them, and to others. The devoted ſervant of God will not only make haſte to keep his commandment; but will patiently wait his time for deliverance, and for promiſed bleſſings. God's faithfulneſs is the beſt ſecurity; and that ſecurity is given to all them, that truſt in him: his glory is engaged for their ſalvation, as much as for Noah's preſervation. They, who are ſaved from deſtruction, muſt yet on earth witneſs the deſolations, which ſin makes, with aching hearts, and weeping eyes, and in many things ſhare in them. But the conſolations of God will counterbalance theſe ſorrows: and in heaven all tears ſhall be wiped away: ſo that even the deſtruction of the wicked will cauſe no interruption, or abatement of their perfect felicity: but the mercy of God, the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and the grace of the Holy Spirit are the real cauſes of the difference betwixt thoſe, who are ſaved, and thoſe who periſh. The firſt uſe, which we ſhould make of deliverances from trouble, ſhould be to return thanks to God for his mercy, ſolemnly to devote ourſelves tohim and his ſervice, and ſeek renewedly his providential protection, and gracious bleſſing. Finally, the divine authority of the Scriptures, as well as the faithfulneſs of God, is demonſtrated in the regular courſe of the ſeaſons of the year. May we therefore admire his goodneſs, truſt his providence, receive all from his love, and uſe all to his glory.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The bleſſing, which God pronounced upon Noah, and his family, v. 1—3—7. *2d. The prohibition of eating blood, v.* 4. *3d. Murder prohibited, v.* 5—6. *4th. God's covenant with Noah and his poſterity, of which the rainbow is conſtituted a pledge, v.* 8—17. *5th. Noah's family and employment, v.* 18—19—20. *6th. His drunkenneſs, and the behaviour of his ſons,* 21—23. *7th. His prophecy, age, and death,* 21—29.

AND God bleſſed Noah and his ſons, and ſaid unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and repleniſh the earth.

2 And the fear of you, and the dread of you ſhall be upon every beaſt of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fiſhes of the ſea; into your hand are they delivered.

3 Every moving thing that liveth ſhall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.

4 But fleſh with the life thereof, *which is* the blood thereof, ſhall you not eat.

5 And ſurely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beaſt will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6 Whoſo ſheddeth mans blood, by man ſhall his blood be ſhed: for in the image of God made he man.

7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

8 And God ſpake unto Noah, and to his ſons with him, ſaying,

9 And I, behold I eſtabliſh my covenant with you, and with your ſeed after you;

10 And with every living creature that *is* with

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 2 *Fear of you*, &c.] It ſeems probable that the ſubjection of the animals, before the fall, was more voluntary, and ſprang from love of man, who was then by inſtinct regarded as a friend: but ſince that event, it hath been more the reſult of fear; moſt of them regarding him as a very potent enemy, whom they are naturally diſpoſed to dread, ſubmit to, or flee from. We ſee the fulfilment of this promiſe every day, and on every ſide, amongſt creatures of all ſorts. The eaſe, with which horſes are managed, notwithſtanding their ſtrength, and ſpirit; and the ſeverity, with which they are treated: the eaſe, and ſafety, wherewith large droves of oxen are driven, and goaded forward, frequently by a ſingle youth, who conſcious of his ſuperiority, fears not them, but they ſtand in awe of him: would be deemed very wonderful, were they not ſo common: but they are ſeldom conſidered as the effects of God's power, and proofs of his truth and goodneſs. Even the moſt ſavage of the wild beaſts have been, and are tamed of man, and have an inſtinctive dread of him, ſhunning populous places; and retreating into foreſts and deſarts; laying ſtill all the day, whilſt man is abroad; and roaming abroad, when he is retired to reſt; and ſeldom injuring him, unleſs pinched by hunger, or provoked by oppoſition. Were this inſtinctive fear removed; and ſhould the animals conſcious of their force, riſe in general rebellion, what confuſion, and devaſtation muſt enſue!

V. 3 *Shall be meat*, &c.] This grant of the animals for food fully warrants our uſe of them, but not the abuſe of them by intemperance; ſtill leſs by cruelty: we ought to do nothing to embitter their lives whilſt they live; nor to put them to needleſs pain, when we take away their lives.

Every, &c.] It ſeems evident from this expreſſion, that the diſtinction of clean and unclean beaſts had reference to the uſe of them in ſacrifice, not in food; for the allowance here is general and unlimited.

V. 4 *The blood.*] Though the main reaſon of prohibiting the eating of blood, as we afterwards find, was it's uſe in ſacrifice, as typical of the great atonement; yet it ſeems here intended as a check to cruelty; leſt men inured to ſhed, and feed upon the blood of animals, ſhould not only grow unfeeling to them; but be leſs ſhocked at the idea of ſhedding human blood.

V. 5—6.] From this energetic declaration it certainly follows that wilful murder ought invariably in all communities to be puniſhed with death; whatever form it aſſumes, or however it may, by ſpecious but deluſive pretences, be extenuated: and that God will himſelf require it of thoſe, who ſuffer the murderer to eſcape. It is matter of ſerious enquiry to all, who are cordially affected to the welfare of theſe nations, how far it can be juſtified before God; how far national guilt may, or may not be contracted; when ſo many are ſuffered to elude juſtice, who commit wilful deliberate murder in duels: whilſt ſuch numbers of thieves are put to death; which God never commanded, perhaps does not approve?

For in the image, &c.] Though the moral image be defaced, in which he was at firſt created, the natural image remains: and it is the moſt daring act of rebellion againſt God to aſſault his viſible image on earth, and deſtroy the life, which he communicated. It is obſervable that this reaſon, given for the puniſhment of the murderer with death, is taken from the affront which it offers to God; not from the injury, which it does to man.

V. 9 *I eſtabliſh my covenant.*] This word ſometimes means a reciprocal agreement betwixt two, or more parties;

with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beaſt of the earth with you, from all that go out of the ark, to every beaſt of the earth.

11 And I will eſtabliſh my covenant with you; neither ſhall all fleſh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood: neither ſhall there any more be a flood to deſtroy the earth.

12 And God ſaid, This *is* the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations:

13 I do ſet my bow in the cloud, and it ſhall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth.

14 And it ſhall come to paſs, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow ſhall be ſeen in the cloud:

15 And I will remember my covenant which *is* between me and you, and every living creature of all fleſh; and the waters ſhall no more become a flood to deſtroy all fleſh.

16 And the bow ſhall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlaſting covenant between God and every living creature of all fleſh that *is* upon the earth.

17 And God ſaid unto Noah, This *is* the token of the covenant, which I have eſtabliſhed between me and all fleſh that *is* upon the earth.

18 And the ſons of Noah that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham *is* the father of Canaan.

19 Theſe *are* the three ſons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overſpread.

20 And Noah began *to be* an huſbandman, and he planted a vineyard.

21 And he drank of the wine, and was drunken, and he was uncovered within his tent.

22 And Ham the father of Canaan ſaw the nakedneſs of his father, and told his two brethren without.

23 And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both their ſhoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedneſs of their father; and their faces *were* backward, and they ſaw not their father's nakedneſs.

24 And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger ſon had done unto him.

25 And he ſaid, Curſed *be* Canaan; a ſervant of ſervants ſhall he be unto his brethren.

26 And

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ties: at other times a poſitive engagement on one ſide, without any reſtipulation on the other.—This covenant is of the latter ſort: to obviate man's fears, the Lord engages that he will drown the earth no more, even notwithſtanding man's wickedneſs; and we have a continued proof of his faithfulneſs to this engagement.

V. 13 *My bow*, &c.] Though probably the rainbow had appeared before the flood, being the effect of natural cauſes: yet it was now appointed to a new uſe, and made a ſeal, and pledge of that particular engagement, that God would not any more drown the earth.

V. 16. *Everlaſting covenant.*] That is, a covenant which ſhall never be aboliſhed.

V. 19. *Of them.*] This precludes their conjecture, who has ſuppoſed that Noah himſelf had many other children after the flood.

V. 20. *Began to be*, &c.] Noah after the flood began again to cultivate the earth.

V. 21. *Was drunken.*] Some have ſuppoſed that wine was now firſt made of grapes; and that Noah, not aware of it's effects, was ſurpriſed into drunkenneſs; but it is only conjecture. Rather it is recorded by the inſpired hiſtorian, with that perfect impartiality, which is peculiar to the Scripture, as an inſtance, and evidence of human frailty, and imperfection; and to ſhew that the beſt of men cannot ſtand upright, without they are kept dependant upon, and upheld by divine grace: nor ſtand in judgment before him, without an intereſt in his pardoning mercy, by faith in the great Redeemer.

V. 22. *Ham——ſaw his nakedneſs*, &c.] Ham ſeems to have been of bad character, and probably rejoiced in finding his father in this unbecoming ſituation; that, by expoſing him, he might retaliate upon him for ſuch reproofs, as he had received from him, in the exerciſe of his parental authority.

Father of Canaan.] Canaan perhaps firſt diſcovered Noah's ſituation, and told it to Ham. This muſt have happened ſeveral years after the flood: as there were but eight perſons in the ark, conſequently Ham had no children at that time.

V. 23.] Their conduct was the very reverſe of Ham's.

V. 25. *Curſed be Canaan*, &c.] Some have been inclined to render theſe words, curſed be Ham the father of Canaan: and however that be determined, two things are evident, 1ſt. that Ham's poſterity by Canaan were *peculiarly* intended in this curſe, and not only have been *almoſt* entirely excluded from the church of God in all ages; but were *almoſt* totally extirpated by the deſcendants of Abraham,

26 And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.

28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years.

29 And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.

Abraham, when they took possession of the land of Canaan, and in their subsequent wars. And perhaps Moses, under the direction of God, records this prophecy in this form for the encouragement of the Israelites, when they were about to enter upon those wars. 2d. That the other descendants of Ham were also included in some measure. It would take me too far to enter upon a particular discussion of this comprehensive prophecy: the reader may see a concise, but satisfactory explication of it in Bishop Newton's Dissertations on Prophecy, Vol. the First, Dissertation the First,—from which I will insert a short extract:—"The whole continent of Africa was peopled "principally by the descendants of Ham: and for how "many ages have the better parts of that country lain "under the dominion of the Romans, and then of the "Saracens, and now of the Turks? In what wickedness, ignorance, barbarity, slavery, misery, live most "of the inhabitants? And of the poor negroes, how "many hundreds every year are sold and bought, like "beasts in the market, and conveyed from one quarter "of the world to do the work of beasts in another?"—But we must observe, that this in no measure vindicates the covetous, and barbarous oppression of those, who thus enrich themselves with the products of their sweat and blood.—God has not commanded us to enslave negroes, as he commanded Israel to extirpate the Canaanites: and therefore, without doubt, will severely punish such cruel injustice.

V. 26. *Blessed be*, &c.] It may be rendered, Blessed be Shem of the Lord God. Accordingly the descendants of Shem, in the line of Abraham, extirpated or enslaved the seven nations of Canaan; and almost entirely, and alone enjoyed the blessings of true religion, until the coming of Christ, who was descended from him. And from the other branches of his family, in the eastern parts of Asia, many flourishing kingdoms have descended; to their lot most fruitful countries have fallen; and they have enjoyed a far greater degree of civilization, and its blessings, than the descendants of Ham.

V. 27. *God shall enlarge Japheth*, &c.] Japheth seems to have been the progenitor of by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants of the earth; almost all Europe, perhaps all America, and a great part of Asia, seem to have descended from him.

He shall dwell in the tents of Shem.] The calling of the Gentiles, and the spread of christianity, have been especially amongst his posterity.—The extraordinary accomplishment of this prediction, which contains almost a prophetic history of the world, vindicates Noah from the suspicion of having uttered it, from any personal resentment: and though the matter of fact demonstrates that children actually do suffer for their parents' crimes; and this sentence would be a sensible mortification to Ham, and Canaan: yet we are not only to consider it as a punishment of Ham's offence; but also to note that the Spirit of God took occasion from thence, to reveal his secret purposes, for a very important benefit to posterity, even to this day.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The blessing of God is the real cause of prosperity, personal, relative, and national; and on him our dependance should be placed, and to him our gratitude for it is due. With what thankfulness should we receive that immense advantage, ease, and pleasure, which result from the labour of the domestic animals; and which the flesh of so many creatures affords us! nor ought we to be less thankful for the security we enjoy from the assaults of the noxious, and ferocious, through the fear and dread of man, which God hath impressed upon them.—But though we are masters, God will call us to awful account, if we act as tyrants; and avenge the cause of his oppressed creatures upon their oppressors. How much more should we dread murder, and all those passions, which produce that enormous crime! Though the murderer may escape, or bribe, or outbrave human justice, yet, except he repent, he shall never escape the vengeance of God. How careful the Lord is to obviate the fears, and remove the anxiety of such as trust in him!—But what is man in his best estate?—Let him, that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall: nor let him, who has triumphed over great temptations, be secure even in lesser; nor he, who has behaved well in the worst of company, and amongst the worst examples, think himself safe even in solitude. Let us watch and pray, and not be high-minded, but fear.—And remember that drunkenness is a sin especially to be shunned, as it both so exposes to shame, and is an occasion of further wickedness in ourselves and others.—But though the righteous fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: nor is a single act of sin inadvertently committed, to be looked upon in the same light as allowed and habitual transgression: the former consists with the character of a saint, the latter is the brand of the hypocrite. And not only in honouring parents, but all other honourable characters, we ought to imitate the example of Shem and Japheth; not only respecting their wisdom and goodness, but covering their incidental blemishes, and failures. The blessing of God peculiarly attends on those, who honour; and his curse lights especially on those, who dishonour their parents. But let us not neglect to observe, how these prophecies, so evidently fulfilling in all nations, and ages, evidence the divine original of the Bible.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. An account of Noah's family in general, and of the posterity of Japheth, v. 1—5. 2d. Of the posterity of Ham, and of Nimrod in particular, v. 6—14. 3d. Of the descendants of Ham by Canaan, v. 15—20. 4th. Of the posterity of Shem, v. 21—32.

NOW these *are* the generations of the sons of Noah; Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.

2 The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras.

3 And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah.

4 And the sons of Javan; Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim.

5 By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.

6 And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan.

7 And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtecha: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan.

8 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

10 And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

11 Out of that land went forth Ashur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah.

12 And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same *is* a great city.

13 And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim,

14 And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim) and Caphtorim.

15 And Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth,

16 And the Jebusite, and the Emorite, and the Girgashite,

17 And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite,

18 And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad.

19 And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest unto Sodom and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha.

20 These *are* the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, *and* in their nations.

21 Unto Shem also the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were *children* born.

22 The children of Shem; Elam, and Ashur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram.

23 And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash.

24 And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber.

25 And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* Peleg, for in his days

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NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 2.] Many learned men have, with great diligence, and some appearance of probability, from this chapter shewed, which of the nations of the earth have descended from each of the three sons of Noah. The chief use of this enquiry seems to be, the illustration of the foregoing prophecy, and it's accomplishment. But to those writers I must refer the reader for particulars.

V. 8—9. *Nimrod.*] Probably Nimrod was at first eminent as an hunter, which was not then so much a diversion, as an useful method of preventing the hurtful increase of wild beasts: this employment would require much courage, and address, and expose to much danger, and hardship; and thus afford a field for ambition to aspire after pre-eminence; and gradually attach a number of valiant men under one leader. Probably from such a beginning Nimrod began to claim authority, enforce subjection; then he would take occasion to wage war, to extend his conquests, and enlarge his acquisitions by violence, and blood. Thus in a daring manner casting off the fear of God, and acting in defiance of his late prohibition of shedding human blood, he rendered himself notorious, and his name became a proverb.

V. 21. *Of all the children of Eber.*] Of all the Hebrews, and many other nations, who were the descendants of Shem by this branch.

was the earth divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan.

26 And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah,

27 And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah,

28 And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba,

29 And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all theſe *were* the ſons of Joktan.

30 And their dwelling was from Meſha, as thou goeſt unto Sephar, a mount of the eaſt.

31 Theſe *are* the ſons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.

32 Theſe *are* the families of the ſons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by theſe were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. The project formed of building a city and tower, v. 1---4. 2d. The counſel, and judgment of God, to diſappoint this project, by confounding their language, v. 5---7. 3d. The conſequent confuſion and diſperſion of the builders, v. 8---9. 4th. Shem's deſcendants in lineal ſucceſſion to Abram, v. 10---27. 5th. Some account of him, and his family, and removal from his native country, v. 28---32.

AND the whole earth was of one language, and of one ſpeech.

2 And it came to paſs as they journeyed from the eaſt, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

3 And they ſaid one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick for ſtone, and ſlime had they for mortar.

4 And they ſaid, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whoſe top *may reach* unto heaven, and let us make us a name, leſt we be ſcattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

5 And the LORD came down to ſee the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.

6 And the LORD ſaid, Behold, the people *is* one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be reſtrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

7 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not underſtand one another's ſpeech.

8 So the LORD ſcattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

9 Therefore is the name of it called Babel, becauſe the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD ſcatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

10 Theſe

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Under the bleſſing of God ſmall beginnings may, in proceſs of time, proceed to a vaſt increaſe. As all mankind are of one family, ſo nearly related in Adam and Noah, how reaſonable is it, that we ſhould love and do good to each other! Whenever I behold a human being, whatever be his language, and garb, or wherever he was born, I ſhould recognize a near relation, and behave to him accordingly. In this view how unnatural, and abſurd is that prejudice againſt foreigners, and that contempt of them, which ſo generally prevails! And how can it conſiſt with love to our neighbours, our brethren, bone of our bone, and fleſh of our fleſh, to treat them with rigour, or hold them in unwilling ſlavery? But whence then come wars and fightings amongſt us? But from that firſt murderer, who ſo early ſtirred up in fallen man the vile luſts of pride, ambition, covetouſneſs, revenge, and cruelty; armed brethren againſt each other in horrid war, and in all ages hath filled the earth with ſlaughter, and devaſtation; which one would think could gratify none but himſelf. Even the very exiſtence of war, and the neceſſity, which there is, of always being ready for it, and ſometimes of waging it, too plainly proves man's depravity, and Satan's influence. Well, bleſſed be God, the days are coming, when they ſhall beat their ſwords into ploughſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more: and then conquerors will no more be adjudged, as in man's partial hiſtories, illuſtrious characters; but branded with infamy, as in the impartial records of the Bible.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 3. *Go to, let us*, &c.] They not only conſult, but combine together, and excite and encourage one another in this daring attempt, and in encountering the difficulties which they met with.

Brick Slime.] The plain yielded no quarries of ſtone, but quantities of a bitumen, which formed a natural mortar: and their ingenuity, and reſolution ſuggeſted a me-

10 These *are* the generations of Shem: Shem *was* an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood.

11 And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

12 And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah.

13 And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

14 And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber.

15 And Salah lived after he begat Eber, four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters.

16 And Eber lived four and thirty years and begat Peleg.

17 And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters.

18 And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu.

19 And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters.

20 And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug.

21 And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters.

22 And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor.

23 And

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thod of removing the other hindrance, by burning clay into bricks.

V. 4. *A city, and a tower.*] We are informed in the foregoing chapter, v. 10. "that the beginning of Nimrod's kingdom was Babel," we have therefore reason to conclude that he was at the head of this rebellious enterprise, though his name be not mentioned. They intended both a city to dwell in, and a tower in that city for purposes afterwards mentioned.

Whose top, &c.] That is, may be exceeding high, beyond any thing which hath yet been erected. Had they erected this enormous building to secure themselves against a future deluge, in forgetfulness or disbelief of the promise of God, or in defiance of his vengeance, they would probably have chosen some high mountain for that purpose.

Let us make us a name.] They proposed to themselves the acquisition of renown; they wanted to do somewhat in order to be admired, and talked of; they sought their own glory, not the glory of God.—It is remarkable that though this enterprize was undertaken purposely to make themselves a name, yet we have not recorded in any history so much as the name of one of these Babel builders, except that obscure intimation respecting Nimrod, before alluded to.

Lest we be scattered, &c.] God's purpose was, that they should be dispersed, and form many nations, under separate governments, and people all lands, and fill the earth: this his blessing upon Noah intimated. (See c. 9. v. 1.) Accordingly some regular division of the earth amongst the descendants of Noah's three sons seems to have taken place, about the time of the birth of Peleg. (See c. 10. v. 25.) That is about an hundred years after the deluge; probably under the direction of Noah, and his sons; and perhaps by divine appointment. In contempt of the divine blessing, and appointment; and in opposition to his counsel; the bulk of mankind some years afterwards, united together to build a city, and tower as a bond of union, to prevent their division; and probably, their chieftains at least, intended it to be the metropolis, and bulwark of that universal dominion, of which they seem to have been ambitious. Whether they immediately intended this tower for an idolatrous temple also, is not certain: but idolatry was early introduced, and this soon became one of its chief residences.

V. 5 *The Lord came down*, &c.] That is, he took particular notice of their enterprise: which when men do, they come to the spot to examine for themselves.

Children of men.] In opposition to the professing church of God, who are called the sons of God. For still this distinction takes place. Nor can we conceive that Noah, Shem, Eber, &c. or any, who professed godliness, were any ways concerned in this ambitious, rebellious project.

V. 6 *Nothing will be restrained.*] Ever since Adam broke through the fence of the divine prohibition, and would not be restrained from eating the forbidden fruit: men will not be restrained from any thing, which they set their hearts upon, but by a strong hand.

V. 7 *Go to, let us go*, &c.] The language of counsel, and determination, in contempt of, and opposition to that of these builders. See *Gen.* 1. v. 26.

Confound their language.] The differences of languages all over the earth corroborates this matter of fact; and establishes our translation of this passage. Almighty power was employed, to effect it; and nothing could be more effectually devised to break their wicked combination, and confound their counsels: and though it was a severe rebuke; and of awful consequences, in still more entirely excluding them from communion with the visible church, and separating them from it; yet considering their daring crimes, it was not only in justice, but in mercy.

V. 9 *Babel.*] That is confusion.—This city was afterwards called Babylon, the head quarters for ages of idolatry, and the type of the New Testament mystical Babylon, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth; which is, or will be *confusion* also.

V. 27

23 And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters.

24 And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah.

25 And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters.

26 And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor and Haran.

27 Now these *are* the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot.

28 And Haran died before his father Terah, in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Caldees.

29 And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abrams wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahors wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah.

30 But Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Caldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there.

32 And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1st. The Lord's calling Abram, v. 1—3. 2d. Abram's obedience, v. 4—5. 3d. The Lord's appearance to him in Canaan, and Abram's worship of him, v. 6—9. 4th. Abram's going down to Egypt, v. 10. 5th. His denial of his wife, calling her his sister, v. 11—13. 6th. Sarai's danger, and deliverance, v. 14—17. 7th. Abram rebuked, and safely dismissed by Pharaoh, v. 18—20.

NOW the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.

2 And

V. 27 *Terah begat Abram*, &c.] Though Abram be first mentioned, he seems to have been Terah's youngest son, and not born till he was an hundred and thirty years of age.—For Terah lived two hundred and five years. See v. 32. And Abram, who left not Haran till after his death, was only seventy-five when he departed thence. There are other ways indeed of solving this difficulty, but this seems the most probable.—On computation we find that the original revelation made to Adam might be conveyed down to Abram at two thousand years distance, through only three intermediate hands.—Enos, the son of Adam, lived till Noah was seventy-four years old.—Shem the son of Noah lived almost as long as Abram.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How soon men forget the most tremendous judgments, and return to their former crimes! Along with the increase of the human race, tho' the desolations of the deluge were before their eyes; though they sprang from the stock of righteous Noah, and even during his life time; wickedness increases and multiplies in proportion. So ineffectual is every thing, except the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, to remove the obliquity of the human will, and the depravity of the human heart! Arduous undertakings can only be accomplished by counsel, harmony and mutual encouragement: which we often find in the enterprises of daring sinners against the cause, and counsel of God: and which too often is wanting in the endeavours of God's servants to promote his glory.—Be sure of it an enemy hath done this.—However there is no counsel, nor wisdom against the Lord.—Whilst men on earth are plotting to defeat his purposes, he sitteth in heaven, and laugheth them to scorn, yea the Lord will have them in derision.—The efforts of sinners to honour themselves will all at last issue in shame, and confusion. In the difficulty, with which our intercourse with foreign nations is carried on, and in the labour, with which learning is acquired, we experience the effects of this transaction. Nay before the coming of Christ, and in these latter ages, one great impediment to the spread of true religion hath originated from it. "Yet righteous, art thou in all thy judgments O "Lord; when it was thy sovereign purpose to spread the "Gospel amongst the nations, which thou hast dispersed, "how easily didst thou by the gift of tongues remove this "impediment.—Oh! remove all other impediments, and "fill the earth with truth, and righteousness.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. *Had said.*] Some time before; as is intimated in the foregoing Chapter: In consequence of which he had set out with Terah his father, and travelled from Ur of the Chaldees to Haran, where he was stopped probably by the infirmities of his aged parent, and until he died.—We learn from Joshua, (see Joshua c. 24, v 2.) that they had all served other gods before this call: Whence we may form a judgment how very early and generally idolatry prevailed in the world. To prevent it's universal prevalence; (whilst the Lord suffered other nations to walk in their own ways;) that he might reserve a remnant to himself, among whom his true worship might be maintained,

2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bleſs thee, and make thy name great; and thou ſhalt be a bleſſing.

3 And I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe him that curſeth thee: and in thee ſhall all families of the earth be bleſſed.

4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had ſpoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram *was* ſeventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's ſon, and all their ſubſtance that they had gathered, and the ſouls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.

6 And Abram paſſed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite *was* then in the land.

7 And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and ſaid, Unto thy ſeed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

8 And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the eaſt of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, *having* Beth-el on the weſt, and Hai on the eaſt: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.

9 And Abram journeyed, going on ſtill toward the ſouth.

10 And

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maintained, to whom his oracles might be delivered, and with whom his ordinances might be eſtabliſhed, till the coming of Chriſt: In his wiſe ſovereignty he made choice of Abram, and ſingled him out from amongſt his fellow idolaters. Thus evidently was it all of grace, and not the reward of his merit. In conſequence of this choice, the God of Glory appeared to him, (See *Acts*, c. 7. v. 2.) probably by ſome viſible manifeſtation, as frequently afterwards; and having made himſelf known unto him, and ſatisfied him, that he was the true God, and that this was a divine revelation, he ſpake to him as follows.

Out of thy country.] Where idolatry ſeems to have been very prevalent; and it might be much eaſier for him to keep clear of it amongſt ſtrangers, than amongſt his former aſſociates. But Abram, who was choſen to be the father of the faithful, and the exemplar of believers in all future ages, as well as the repoſitory of the promiſes, was to repreſent in his call and conduct that ſeparation from the world and ſin, with which the walk with God, and the life of faith commences.

Thy kindred.] All that would not accompany him in his pilgrimage.

V. 2. *I will bleſs thee.*] Perſonally, both in things temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal; and relatively in thy poſterity.

Thy name great.] This hath been ſurpriſingly accompliſhed. Throughout the viſible church Abram's name has ever been held in the higheſt veneration: and many nations in the eaſt exceedingly revere his memory, and glory in their real, or pretended relation to him. Perhaps no mere man, who ever lived, has been ſo widely, and ſo durably held in honour.

Thou ſhalt be a bleſſing.] To the lateſt ages important bleſſings ſhall for thy ſake be vouchſafed to thy poſterity: and thy example ſhall be eminently uſeful to numbers, both during thy life, and after thy death, till the end of time.

V. 3. *In thee.*] In one deſcended from thee all bleſſings ſhall centre, and through and from him they ſhall be communicated to millions; till all nations ſhall be made glad in him, and by faith in Jeſus become Abram's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe. (See *Gal.* c. 3. v. 29.)

So Abram departed, &c.] By faith Abram obeyed, and he went out, not knowing whither he went. See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 8. He was fully ſatisfied that the call, promiſe, and command were from the true God; he believed that his teſtimony was true, and his promiſe faithful, and he able to fulfil it: and he was aſſured that the bleſſing of the Almighty was ſufficient to compenſate for all, that he could loſe, or leave behind; to countervail all trials, to ſupply all his wants, and to anſwer, and exceed all his deſires and expectations: and he was alſo convinced that nothing but miſery could enſue upon diſobedience. This was the faith which produced obedience: though natural reluctance might be ſtrong; and numbers would ſcorn, and deride him as a viſionary, and a madman, to leave all behind him without ſo much as being able to inform his curious neighbours, or expoſtulating relatives, whither he was going. By this he was juſtified, as it intereſted him in the merits, and atonement of the promiſed ſeed; and the conſequent obedience proved his faith genuine, and his profeſſion ſincere.

Lot went, &c.] Being through his inſtrumentality partaker of the ſame faith.

Souls.] Their ſervants, who were their property.

Into the land of Canaan they came.] They neither loitered, nor turned back, nor ſtopped ſhort, as many do who *ſeem to* ſet out well; nor meet with any unſurmountable obſtacle; which none do, who *indeed* ſet out well.

V. 7 *The Lord appeared.*] In the ſame manner probably as before. By this appearance he teſtified his acceptance of Abram's faith, and obedience, and greatly encouraged him; at the ſame time that he pointed out to him, and welcomed him to the promiſed land; which he aſſures him ſhould be the poſſeſſion of his poſterity; though he then had no child; though the Canaanites dwelt therein;

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to ſojourn there; for the famine *was* grievous in the land.

11 And it came to paſs, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he ſaid unto Sarai his wife, Behold now I know that thou *art* a fair woman to look upon.

12 Therefore it ſhall come to paſs, when the Egyptians ſhall ſee thee, that they ſhall ſay, This *is* his wife: and they will kill me, but they will ſave thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou *art* my ſiſter: that it may be well with me for thy ſake; and my ſoul ſhall live becauſe of thee.

14 And it came to paſs that when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman, that ſhe *was* very fair.

15 The princes alſo of Pharaoh ſaw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's houſe.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her ſake: and he had ſheep, and oxen, and he-aſſes, and men-ſervants and maid-ſervants, and ſhe-aſſes, and camels.

17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his houſe with great plagues, becauſe of Sarai Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and ſaid, what *is* this *that* thou haſt done unto me? Why didſt thou not tell me that ſhe *was* thy wife?

19 Why ſaidſt thou, She *is* my ſiſter? ſo I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore, behold thy wife, take *her*, and go thy way.

20 And Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him: and they ſent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.

CHAP.

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therein; and though he could only ſojourn there as a ſtranger upon ſufferance.

Builded an altar.] Not content with ſecret communion with God, he made an open profeſſion of his religion; maintained the public worſhip of the true God; avowed his faith in, and expectations from the promiſed ſeed, in prefiguration of whoſe atonement, theſe ſacrifices were inſtituted; and probably, both with his family, and with any of his neighbours, who might be induced to join with him, he obſerved the ſabbaths with ſacred ſolemnity.

V. 8 *Bethel.*] Many of theſe names were given long afterwards: but Moſes ſpeaks of them, as they were called in his time.

Called upon, &c.] That is, he joined public adoration with his ſacrifice: or as ſome render it, "preached concerning the name of the Lord;" as joining alſo public inſtructions.

V. 10 *Went down into Egypt.*] He did not return back as weary of his pilgrimage, or out of love with the promiſed land; but retired for a ſeaſon into Egypt.

V. 11—12—13 *He ſaid unto Sarai*, &c.] Here we ſee much to blame in Abram, and much to admire in the impartiality of the inſpired hiſtorian. In Abram's counſel to Sarah we diſcern unbelief, the root of all ſin: had not God juſt promiſed a numerous offspring? And would he ſuffer him to be deſtroyed, whilſt childleſs? Had he not promiſed to bleſs him? and would he immediately deſert him? From this diſtruſt ſpring baſe prevarication; perſuaſion of Sarai to unite in the ſin; expoſing her chaſtity to imminent peril; and temptations thrown in the ways of others; all which would be likely to prejudice them againſt true religion: Is this Abram?

V. 17 *Plagued*, &c.] Some diſorder, which both prevented Sarai's defilement, and made Pharaoh ſenſible, for what cauſe they were plagued.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The walk of faith originates from God's graciouſly making himſelf known unto a ſinner, by his revealed word, and convincing ſpirit: thus he calls him to forſake his ſinful and worldly purſuits and connections, to deny himſelf, and become the ſpiritual worſhipper, and devoted ſervant of the Lord: allured by his exceeding great and precious promiſes, drawn by ſtrong deſires, and expectations, and convinced of the ruin, which attends diſobedience, the ſinner through grace obeys the call. He, who truly believes the word of God, and values duly the promiſed bleſſings, will yield a prompt and unreſerved obedience to the command, however nature may ſtart and recoil at it: and nothing but true faith will produce this ſelf-denying, world-renouncing obedience. Such believers, being juſtified by faith, have peace with God, and will be bleſſed themſelves, and bleſſings unto others, to relatives, to friends, and to neighbours; by their example, influence, and prayers, living and dying: and as their friends will be rewarded, ſo their enemies will be puniſhed of the Lord: and though their name may not be great on earth, it ſhall be great in heaven: and ſome who have lived long in ſin, become afterwards very eminent in faith and holineſs. We muſt not neglect the call of God to oblige any relation; but we ſhould endeavour to prevail with them to aſſociate with us in the ſervice of God; and we ſhall not generally be altogether unſucceſsful. Wherever we go, or are, the Lord is there; and profeſſing his truth, attending on his worſhip, and enjoying communion with him, we cannot but be ſafe, reſpectable, and happy. Whatever difficulties and dangers we meet with, we muſt never think of turning back, but muſt ſtill be preſſing forward: but there is no ſtate on earth free from trials, nor character from blemiſhes: famine in Caanan, the glory of all lands,

and

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CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. Abram's, and Lot's Departure with great riches from Egypt, and their progress to the place, where an altar had been built, and Abram's worship there, 1—5. *2d. A contention, which arose between Abram's herdsmen, and those of Lot,* 6—7. *3d. Abram's mild, pious, and prudent behaviour in terminating it,* 8—9. *4th. Lot's imprudent choice, and departure from Abram,* 10—13. *5th. The Lord's appearance, and promises to Abram, and his worship,* 14—18.

AND Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south.

2 And Abram *was* very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.

3 And he went on his journeys from the south, even to Beth-el, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Beth-el and Hai,

4 Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.

5 And Lot also which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents.

6 And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.

7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: And the Canaanite, and the Perizzite dwelled there in the land.

8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen: for we *be* brethren.

9 *Is* not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if *thou wilt take* the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if *thou depart* to the right hand, then I will go to the left.

10 And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, *even* as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar.

11 Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other.

12 Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched *his* tent toward Sodom.

13 But

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and unbelief with all it's consequent evils in Abram, the father of the faithful. Only in heaven perfect felicity, and purity dwell.

Magistrates are exalted in God's providence to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them, that do well: but too often they are slaves to their own lusts, and sacrifice every nobler consideration, to make provision for the flesh; of which they must one day give an account to God. And when courtiers degrade themselves by becoming caterers to the lusts of their superiors; they forfeit the honourable appellation of princes, and merit the most opprobrious epithets. But yet even in the worst of times and places we meet with more honour, and conscience, than we perhaps expected, and find our unbelieving fears were groundless. God protects his people, even notwithstanding their infirmities; takes better care of them, than they do of themselves, and over-rules all things for their good: yet they shall not escape rebuke, even from those, who are in other respects their inferiors, when they act inconsistent with their character, and profession.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1 *South.*] The southern part of Canaan; for it lay north-east of Egypt.

V. 2. *Very rich.*] Abram's riches had been much increased by his journey into Egypt, and even through his misconduct: God so over-ruling it, entirely besides Abram's expectation, or intention.

V. 6 *The Land,* &c.] The former possessors would occupy much of the best land, and the remainder could not in one district support such large flocks, and herds.

V. 7 *The Canaanite and Perizzite,* &c.] Who being estranged from true religion, would strictly scrutinize, and severely animadvert upon the conduct of those, who so openly professed themselves the servants, and worshippers of the Lord.

V. 8 *Abram said.*] Abram was the elder man, the superior relation, and the more eminent servant of God; yet for the sake of peace, and for the credit of his religion, he foregoes every personal consideration, and with great temper and prudence, supplicates his nephew, allows him his choice, and rests satisfied with the remainder. This is worthy of the friend of God, and the father of the faithful!

V. 10 *Lot lifted up,* &c.] We wonder that he expresses no reluctance at leaving Abram's family, and the benefit of his conversation, counsel, example, worship, and instructions: and that he does not so much as remit to Abram the privilege of the first choice. But if this

was

13 But the men of Sodom *were* wicked, and ſinners before the LORD exceedingly.

14 And the Lord ſaid unto Abram, after that Lot was ſeparated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, north-ward, and ſouth-ward, and eaſt-ward, and weſt-ward.

15 For all the land which thou ſeeſt, to thee will I give it, and to thy ſeed for ever.

16 And I will make thy ſeed as the duſt of the earth: ſo that if a man can number the duſt of the earth, *then* ſhall thy ſeed alſo be numbered.

17 Ariſe, walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it: for I will give it unto thee.

18 Then Abram removed *his* tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre which *is* in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1ſt. A war waged againſt the king of Sodom, and his allies, who are conquered, and plundered, v. 1—11. 2d. Lot's captivity, v. 12. 3d. Abram's purſuit, and conqueſt, and Lot's releaſe. v. 13—16. 4th. Abram's return, and his conference with Melchizedec, king of Salem, and with the king of Sodom, v. 20—24.

AND it came to paſs in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellaſar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations;

2 *That theſe* made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birſha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar.

3 All theſe were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the ſalt-ſea.

4 Twelve years they ſerved Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 And

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was faulty; it was ſtill worſe to chuſe merely from the luſt of the eye, a well-watered fruitful land, without any higher conſideration, than an expectation, that his ſubſtance already too much, would there grow much more.

V. 13 *Sinners before the Lord*, &c.] Notorious and daring, peculiarly deſpiſing him, and eſpecially marked by him for vengeance.

V. 15 *For ever.*] This expreſſion, when ſpeaking of outward things, frequently means, for ages to come. But the heavenly Canaan was typified, which is indeed given to the ſpiritual ſeed of Abram for ever.

V. 16 *As the duſt of the earth*, &c.] This was a great trial of his faith; for as yet he had no child.

V. 17 *Ariſe*, &c.] Survey thine inheritance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though neceſſity may ſometimes compel us into places of temptation, we muſt not continue in them, when the neceſſity ceaſes. The poſſeſſion of riches, though dangerous, is not abſolutely incompatible with the life of faith, and walk with God: when they are neither anxiouſly coveted, nor eagerly purſued, nor improperly confided in, nor inordinately loved: but when they come by God's bleſſing, are thankfully received, moderately enjoyed, and carefully improved, they may become an ornament of godlineſs, and a means of uſefulneſs. Yet even then, they are generally incumbrances to the poſſeſſor; and ſources of contention, ſeparation between brethren, excluſion from comfortable ſociety, and from many ſpiritual advantages. When they are increaſed, thoſe are increaſed, that eat them, which generally increaſes uneaſineſs, and renders the poſſeſſion of the bleſſings of peace more precarious. Let the poor then learn contentment, and the wealthy caution, and moderation from this example. Surrounded as we are with ſpies and enemies, how careful ſhould we be, who profeſs to be brethren in Chriſt, to preſerve union, and to avoid all appearance of evil; which may prejudice their minds, or open their mouths againſt us; and to renounce every perſonal intereſt and to make every conceſſion for the ſake of peace. If the real ſervants of God ſo loſe themſelves, as to renounce, for temporal advantages, the ſociety of the faithful, and to eſtrange themſelves from God's ordinances, by removing to dark, and wicked places, we ſhall ſhortly hear of their ſmarting ſeverely for it: whilſt the Lord will compenſate, perhaps in outward bleſſings, certainly in ſpiritual conſolations, pledges of his love, and earneſts of glory, thoſe who give up any thing for his ſake and the Goſpel's. And in outward difficulties it is very profitable for the true believer to meditate frequently, and intenſely on the glorious inheritance which the Lord hath in reſerve for him at laſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1. This is the moſt ancient war recorded in any hiſtory; and probably, like many others, would have been paſſed over in ſilence, and buried in oblivion, had not Abram and Lot been concerned in it: edification, not the gratifying of curioſity, being the object of the inſpired hiſtorians.

V. 3. *Which is the ſalt ſea.*] This was at that time a moſt fruitful valley, but by the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah it became a large lake, called the ſalt ſea, or the dead ſea.

V. 4. *Twelve years*, &c.] After having ſubmitted for twelve years, they formed an alliance to ſhake off the yoke of this foreign prince.

5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that *were* with him, and ſmote the Rephaims in Aſhteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim,

6 And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which *is* by the wilderneſs.

7 And they returned, and came to Enmiſhpat, which *is* Kadeſh, and ſmote all the country of the Amalekites, and alſo the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.

8 And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, (the ſame *is* Zoar) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim;

9 With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellaſar: four kings with five.

10 And the vale of Siddim *was full of* ſlime-pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there: and they that remained fled to the mountain.

11 And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way.

12 And they took Lot Abram's brother's ſon, (who dwelt in Sodom) and his goods, and departed.

13 And there came one that had eſcaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eſhcol, and brother of Aner: and theſe *were* confederate with Abram.

14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained *ſervants*, born in his own houſe, three hundred and eighteen, and purſued *them* unto Dan.

15 And he divided himſelf againſt them, he and his ſervants by night, and ſmote them, and purſued them unto Hobah, which *is* on the left hand of Damaſcus.

16 And he brought back all the goods, and alſo brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women alſo, and the people.

17 And the king of Sodom went out to meet him (after his return from the ſlaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that *were* with him) at the valley of Shaveh, which is the King's dale.

18 And Melchizedek king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: and he *was* the prieſt of the moſt high God.

19 And

V. 5—6—7.] This ancient conqueror having ſubdued all the neighbouring petty princes, and ravaged their territories, came with his victorious army to ſubjugate the king of Sodom, and his allies.

V. 12. *They took Lot*, &c.] This is particularly noted: out of covetouſneſs he ſettled in fruitful, but wicked Sodom; whoſe inhabitants were of all the ſeed of accurſed Canaan, the ripeſt for vengeance: ſpeedily their wealth tempted plunderers, and he was ſtript of all, and carried captive. Had not Lot been taken, the conquerors might have gone off with their booty: but he was God's ſervant, though he had offended; a rebuke he needed, but he muſt not be ruined: eſpecially as he was brother's ſon to Abram the bleſſed, and the bleſſing to all, who were related to him.

V. 13. *Confederate.*] Abram had prudently formed an alliance with them for mutual defence, amidſt all this violence, and depredation.

V. 14. *When Abram heard*, &c.] Abram might have found many pretences to excuſe himſelf from ſuch a dangerous enterpriſe; and eſpecially he might have pleaded the impropriety of Lot's conduct: but he forgets all, he makes nothing of the difficulty and danger, and fears not the numerous, and victorious forces of the combined kings: and having ſo good a cauſe, as the relief of a brother in diſtreſs, in dependance on God, he boldly, and without heſitation, purſues them with his ſmall company.

Trained ſervants] Though averſe to war, in which he never engaged before, or after, that we find; yet he had trained his domeſtics for it, and put himſelf in a poſture of defence: ſome indeed underſtand it that he had trained them up in the faith and fear of God, and conſcientious obedience to him; which would render them the beſt ſoldiers for ſuch an expedition.

Purſued them unto Dan.] Abram, in company with his confederates, followed them as far as the place, on the north border of Canaan, where the city Dan was afterwards built. (See *Judges*, c. 19. v. 29.) Probably in this, and ſome other places, thoſe who took care to have correct copies of the Bible, as Ezra and others, inſerted the new names, by which the places were then called, inſtead of their old ones, to render them more intelligible.

V. 15. *And he divided*, &c.] He employed both courage, and policy, attacked them in the night, and by ſurprize; and God ſo ordering it, he totally intimidated, ſubdued, and diſperſed them; recovered all, and took a great booty.

V. 18. *Melchizedek.*] Various have been the opinions

19 And he bleſſed him, and ſaid, Bleſſed *be* Abram of the moſt high God, poſſeſſor of heaven and earth:

20 And bleſſed be the moſt high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

21 And the king of Sodom ſaid unto Abram, Give me the perſons, and take the goods to thyſelf.

22 And Abram ſaid to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the moſt high God, the poſſeſſor of heaven and earth,

23 That I will not take from a thread even to a ſhoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that *is* thine, leſt thou ſhouldſt ſay, I have made Abram rich:

24 Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eſhcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.

CHAP.

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of expoſitors reſpecting this extraordinary perſon; ſome have conjectured that it was Shem; who, as Abram's venerable progenitor, was intitled to this reſpect. Others have ſuppoſed that it was the Son of God himſelf, as conceiving it impoſſible that any mere man ſhould be ſuperior to Abram. But it is not probable, that the Apoſtle ſhould ſay that Melchizedek was made "like unto the Son "of God, if it were he himſelf:" or that Chriſt ſhould be a prieſt after the order of Melchizedek, that is, after the order of himſelf: or that he ſhould be a type of himſelf. (*Heb.* c. 7.) Moreover he is ſpoken of as king of Salem, the ſame place which is afterwards called Jeruſalem; and not as an appearance to Abram, ſuch as are recorded in other inſtances. But we have reaſon to be ſatisfied that the holy Spirit hath purpoſely involved the matter in obſcurity, and that it is not for us to develope it. Probably he was a mere man; but from which of Noah's ſons he ſprang, who was his immediate parents, or predeceſſors, or ſucceſſors, the Lord hath not thought good to inform us; nay, hath purpoſely concealed them; and we have no buſineſs to enquire. He was, without doubt, an aged perſon, and venerable for ſanctity; who ruled over his ſubjects in righteouſneſs, whilſt they lived under him in peace: which, when oppreſſion, and violence prevailed amongſt their neighbours, perhaps gave a name both to him, and to his city: he alſo kept up the worſhip of the true God, and, though a king, officiated as his prieſt.—In all theſe things, and many others, he was a remarkable type of Chriſt; as will be more fully ſhewn in another place. (See *Hebrews*, c. 7.) In reverence to his age, rank, piety, and prieſtly character, Abram ſhewed him great honour, received his benediction, and gave him tythes of all his ſpoils, as God's prieſt and repreſentative; influenced hereto at leaſt by ſome ſecret divine monition; perhaps being led to ſee, in this typical character, his future Lord, and Saviour. However the Spirit of God intended to inſtruct Abram's deſcendants, by this action, that a better prieſt ſhould ariſe, than thoſe of the family of Aaron.—Nor can we conclude any thing from Melchizedek's not being mentioned elſewhere; or from it's being recorded that Abram viſited him either before or after: we are not ſure that Abram never converſed with Shem, who lived almoſt as long as he, though we are never told that he did. And it might purpoſely be omitted in this caſe, for the abovementioned reaſon.

Bread and wine.] A ſuitable refreſhment for his weary followers: and it is remarkable that Chriſt hath appointed the ſame as the memorials of his body and blood, which are meat and drink indeed.

V. 21. *Give me*, &c.] That is, releaſe the priſoners; and take not only the ſpoil of the kings, but of Sodom too, as the reward of the victory.

V. 22. *Lift up*, &c.] I have ſolemnly ſworn, and vowed before God, that I will not.—Probably Abram ſolemnly vowed, before he ſet out on this expedition, that he would not take any thing, which had belonged to the vanquiſhed kings: that for the credit of his profeſſion, it might appear that he engaged in war upon the moſt liberal, and diſintereſted principles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Sinners may for a ſeaſon proſper, though the wrath of God abide upon them: but reſpites are not pardons; and proſperity only hardens and ripens men for deſtruction. After four hundred years, the curſe denounced on Canaan begins to take effect. Let *us* hear, and fear, and flee from the wrath to come. Avarice, ambition, and the thirſt of dominion are inſatiable, render men ſavage and brutal, and have in all ages filled the earth with miſery and deſtruction; yet God executes his righteous purpoſes, even by means of the unrighteouſneſs of men.—We might have expected to hear of ſome chaſtiſement befalling Lot, after what we before read: and we may expect the ſame conſequences, if we imitate his example. But the Lord, though he rebuke, yet will not forſake his offending children; and therefore we muſt be ready to forgive, and haſten to the relief of our offending brethren.—Though war can never be deſirable, yet in the preſent ſtate of things it may be lawful, and even adviſeable; and never more ſo, than in order to deliver the oppreſſed. They who ſerve God, whatever means they employ, will not depend on an arm of fleſh: and when they truſt in him, and have a good cauſe, and a good conſcience, it becomes them to be bold as a lion, and not to flinch at difficulties in the path of duty: nor is any courage worthy admiration, or imitation; or in the leaſt rational; but that which ſprings from a believing dependance upon God, and a firm perſuaſion that we are prepared for life and death; and are in that place, and doing that work, which he has aſſigned us. It is a great advantage

CHAP. XV.

Cntains, 1st. A gracious visit, and encouraging assurances, which the Lord made to Abram, v. 1. 2d. Abram's complaint of being childless, v. 2—3. 3d. Explicit promises of a numerous seed, v. 4—5. 4th. Abram's faith, v. 6. 5th. The pledge, which Abram requests, and with which God indulges him, v. 7—11. 17. 6th. A prophetic vision, v. 12—16. 7th. The covenant, which the Lord made with him, v. 18—21.

AFTER these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I *am* thy shield, *and* thy exceeding great reward.

2 And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house *is* this Eliezer of Damascus?

3 And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir.

4 And behold, the word of the LORD *came* unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.

5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: And he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.

6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

7 And he said unto him, I *am* the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.

8 And he said, Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?

9 And

advantage to stand related to those, who are the friends of God, and followers of him.—By their means, and in answer to their prayers, such will be oft preserved. The Lord is the most high God, the possessor of Heaven, and earth; therefore our substance is all his, and we must acknowledge his right to it, and seek his blessing on it, by consecrating a portion to his immediate service: and the tenth was early deemed, and has long continued to be considered as a very moderate proportion.—Oaths may lawfully be taken, but with great solemnity, as an act of sacred worship, and must be observed with great punctuality: and nothing better becomes a profession of godliness, than a noble spirit of disinterestedness; and in our whole conduct we should study to avoid, not only evil, but the very appearance of it; especially in those things, which at first glance seem unsuitable to our profession: as the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, they, who belong to him, have no occasion to grasp at temporal advantages; for as far as riches are good for them, he will surely give them; and further they ought not to desire them. However, we should without censure allow many things to others, which our profession and character may render it expedient for us to deny ourselves.—But what hath become of Lot? Alas! he is gone back to Sodom; for indulged corruptions are not mortified but by severe discipline. Finally, let us remember our king of righteousness, and king of peace, our priest upon his throne: let us rejoice in his equitable and peaceful administration; and declare war against his and our enemies, Sin, the World, and Satan. Invisibly he will assist us in each conflict, and manifest himself to us after every victory; refresh us with his gracious provisions, and bless us with the earnests of his love.—And shortly, when the final victory is won, and he hath made us more than conquerors, he will applaud our atchievements, accept and reward our poor services, and place us with himself upon his throne; whilst we rejoice in his love, and give him all the glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1. *Word of the Lord came.*] Some suppose that the expression the "word of the Lord" is personal, and is intended to denote him, whose name is elsewhere called, *the Word of God.* At least it seems to have been a visible appearance, which will be afterwards spoken of to better advantage.

Fear not, Abram] He might be tempted to fear, lest the remains of the potent enemies, whom he had exasperated, would return with larger forces, and take vengeance on him.

Thy shield.] Thy defence against all enemies.

Exceeding great reward.] To recompense his generous behaviour to Lot, and his disinterested contempt of wealth, in his conduct towards the king of Sodom.

V. 2—3. *Lord God what?* &c.] As if he had said, "As to temporal blessings I have all, and abound, and "ask no more; for at present I have none to inherit my "wealth, but this stranger.—The posterity thou didst in-"timate to me, and the blessings which are to come to all "the families of the earth, through the promised seed, "lay nearest my heart, and nothing else can satisfy "me."

V. 6. *He believed,* &c.] Notwithstanding difficulties, and delays, depending on the divine veracity, and power, he believed that it would really come to pass according to the promise. (See Note on *Gen.* c. 6. v. 17.) This faith also had a special reference to Christ; and the seed particularly intended in all the promises to him; (See *Gal.* c. 3. v. 16.) interested him in his merits; and it was therefore accounted to him, as if he had been perfectly righteous.

V. 8. *Whereby shall I,* &c.] He desired a sign, and a covenant security, for the confirmation of his faith.

V. 9—10.

9 And he ſaid unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a ſhe-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.

10 And he took unto him all theſe, and divided them in the midſt, and laid each piece one againſt another: but the birds divided he not.

11 And when the fowls came down upon the carcaſes, Abram drove them away.

12 And when the ſun was going down, a deep ſleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkneſs fell upon him.

13 And he ſaid unto Abram, Know of a ſurety that thy ſeed ſhall be a ſtranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and ſhall ſerve them; and they ſhall afflict them four hundred years.

14 And alſo that nation whom they ſhall ſerve, will I judge: and afterward ſhall they come out with great ſubſtance.

15 And thou ſhalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou ſhalt be buried in a good old age.

16 But in the fourth generation they ſhall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full.

17 And it came to paſs, that when the ſun went down, and it was dark, behold a ſmoaking furnace, and a burning lamp that paſſed between thoſe pieces.

18 In that ſame day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, ſaying, Unto thy ſeed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates:

19 The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites,

20 And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims,

21 And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgaſhites, and the Jebuſites.

CHAP.

V. 9—10. *Take me an heifer*, &c.] The heathen nations had ſimilar forms of entering into ſolemn covenant, by cutting animals aſunder, and the covenanting parties paſſing through the midſt of them: (See *Jer.* c. 34. v. 18, 19.) probably derived from this, and denoting that he, who brake the covenant, might expect to be in like manner cut aſunder by divine juſtice.

V. 11. *Drove them away.*] He carefully watched the ſacrifice, and patiently waited the event.

V. 12. *Sun going down.*] Abram ſeems to have employed the whole day, from very early in the morning, before the ſtars diſappeared, (See v. 5.) until very late at night, about this ſolemnity, and in watching and prayer.

Horror of darkneſs, &c.] Emblematical of the diſtreſs of his poſterity in Egypt; and perhaps of the comparative darkneſs of the diſpenſation, under which they were afterwards to continue.

Four hundred years.] About four hundred years were to intervene betwixt the preſent time, and their deliverance from Egypt: exactly 430 from Abram's call, (See *Exodus*, c. 12. v. 40, 41.) as it is generally computed.

V. 16. *Is not full.*] They are not yet ripe for vengeance.

V. 17. *A ſmoaking furnace, and a burning lamp.*] Repreſenting the Iſraelites' ſevere trials; but gracious ſupports, and joyful deliverance. This was the token of God's acceptance of the ſacrifice; the ſymbol of God's preſence; and the confirmation of the covenant. Probably the ſacrifices were thereby conſumed.

V. 18. *In that day.*] Thus the promiſes were rendered more explicit, and ratified into a covenant; which God pledged himſelf to fulfill.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who fear, ſerve, and truſt in God, need not fear any enemies; for they have an omnipreſent, and omnipotent protector.---Nor need they heſitate to renounce the moſt valuable perſonal advantages for his ſake; for he will abundantly recompence them: yea, he himſelf will be their ſhield, and portion; their exceeding great, and everlaſting reward.---Yet hope deferred maketh the heart ſick; the ſtrongeſt faith has it's miſgivings, the moſt courageous ſpirit has it's fears, and the moſt reſigned believer has his complaints: theſe the Lord graciouſly notes, pardons, pities, and relieves. He, who in one inſtance upon the ſingle teſtimony of God, ſtedfaſtly expects things exceeding difficult and improbable, in the Lord's time and manner; will believe all, that God hath revealed, when he becomes acquainted with it; and will embrace and expect whatever he propoſes: and this man's faith ſhall be accounted to him for righteouſneſs. (See *Rom.* c. 4. v. 18. to the end) Yet will he ſeek, and God will grant further tokens of his love, to confirm and ſtrengthen his faith: and he will be encouraged to conſider former mercies, as earneſts of future bleſſings. The covenant of God with ſinners, is always with, and through ſacrifice, and the ſhedding of blood: and in attendance on his ordinances, we muſt wait for the confirmation of our faith; and guard againſt all intruſion upon our devotions. The knowledge of future events would ſeldom add to our comfort: in the moſt favoured families, and moſt happy lives, there are ſuch chequered ſcenes, and ſo many afflictions; that it is merciful in God to conceal from us what will befall us and ours; and we are very fooliſh if we eagerly covet ſuch information;

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. Sarai's barrenneſs, and Abram's marriage to Hagar, v. 1—3. 2d. Hagar's contempt of Sarai, v. 4. 3d. Sarai's reſentment, and complaint, v. 5. 4th. Abram's ſurrender of Hagar to Sarai's will, her hard uſage of Hagar, and Hagar's flight, v. 6. 5th. Hagar met by an angel, and ordered to return, v. 7—9. 6th. The prophetical promiſe made to her, v. 10.—12. 7th. Her obſervations on this viſion, the birth of Iſhmael, and the age of Abram, v. 13—16.

NOW Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and ſhe had an hand-maid an Egyptian, whoſe name *was* Hagar.

2 And Sarai ſaid unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath reſtrained me from bearing: I pray thee go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her: and Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her huſband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and ſhe conceived: And when ſhe ſaw that ſhe had conceived, her miſtreſs was deſpiſed in her eyes.

5 And Sarai ſaid unto Abram, My wrong *be* upon thee: I have given my maid into thy boſom; and when ſhe ſaw that ſhe had conceived, I was deſpiſed in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram ſaid unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid *is* in thy hand; do to her as it pleaſeth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, ſhe fled from her face.

7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderneſs, by the fountain in the way to Shur.

8 And

formation; which would not only anticipate the troubles of Life, but even diſtreſs us about ſuch things, as will not take place, 'till we are in the ſilent grave, or rather in the eternal world: if we are but partakers of Abram's faith, we need not covet this his information. God waits 'till iniquity be ripe, e're he puniſhes, and in the mean time gives ſpace to repent: let the ſinner then count his long-ſuffering to be ſalvation, and improve it. And let believers alſo wait for their mercies, 'till they are prepared for them. Finally, the growing chriſtian will daily obtain fuller aſſurances, and more explicit knowledge of the bleſſings of the covenant which God hath ratified with him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1. *Now Sarai*, &c.] Ten years had now elapſed ſince Abram was called, a numerous poſterity had repeatedly been promiſed, amongſt whom eſpecially was that ſeed to ariſe, in whom all the families of the earth were to be bleſſed: but there were no appearances of the fulfilment of theſe promiſes. Sarai, though amiable, and faithful, ſtill continued childleſs, and was now growing old, being ſeventy-five years of age. The reſtriction had not been made expreſsly to her; and though we never before read of a godly perſon marrying a ſecond wife; yet ſuch marriages appear to have been common, and perhaps in no bad repute in the world. Not only the natural deſire of children, but the fulfilment of thoſe promiſes, in which all bleſſings centre, was concerned in this matter; means are to be uſed, all means appointed, or allowed. It ſeemed now in vain to expect children by Sarai any longer; unbelief worked: God's almighty power was forgotten; carnal policy crept in: it occurred to Sarai firſt, that other means may be tried, ſhe was willing to forego all further expectation of being the mother of the promiſed ſeed, and to be ſatisfied with the adoptive relation; and with ſeeing the promiſe accompliſhed to Abram. In this view the propoſal was made, and haſtily adopted and executed, without aſking counſel at the mouth of the Lord. But it was a bad example, a fatal precedent, and a ſource of manifold uneaſineſs.

An hand-maid.] Probably one, whom Pharaoh had given Abram, and who waited on Sarai.

V. 2. *The Lord hath reſtrained*, &c.] She acknowledges the hand of the Lord in the trial, and acquieſces therein.

V. 3. *Her miſtreſs was deſpiſed.*] Hagar was lifted up with pride, and ſelf-preference; forgetting that the Lord had made the difference, and flattering herſelf that ſhe now ſhould ſecure Abram's affections to herſelf.

V. 5. *And Sarai ſaid*, &c.] Inſtead of blaming herſelf for what ſhe had done, ſhe ſeems to claim merit from it, unreaſonably blames Abram, as if he had encouraged Hagar's inſolence, and needleſsly appeals from him to the Lord. In all this we ſee much paſſion, and peeviſhneſs, and a very uneaſy frame of mind.

V. 6. *Behold thy maid*, &c.] Abram acted wiſely in ſo readily relinquiſhing Hagar; and ſhewed that he had not acted from carnal affection in the affair. But he conceded too far in leaving Hagar, whom he was bound to protect, ſo entirely in the power of Sarai, whoſe mind was too embittered by paſſion, to act with entire equity and impartiality.

Dealt hardly.] She exacted her former ſervice more rigorouſly and harſhly, which in her ſituation was unjuſtifiable.

Fled.] Her haughty ſpirit could not endure the treatment of a ſlave, when ſhe expected the privilege of a wife.

8 And he ſaid, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence cameſt thou? and whither wilt thou go? And ſhe ſaid, I flee from the face of my miſtreſs Sarai.

9 And the angel of the LORD ſaid unto her, Return to thy miſtreſs, and ſubmit thyſelf under her hands.

10 And the angel of the LORD ſaid unto her, I will multiply thy ſeed exceedingly, that it ſhall not be numbered for multitude.

11 And the angel of the LORD ſaid unto her, Behold, thou *art* with child, and ſhalt bear a ſon, and ſhalt call his name Iſhmael; becauſe the LORD hath heard thy affliction.

12 And he will be a wild man; his hand *will be* againſt every man, and every man's hand againſt him: and he ſhall dwell in the preſence of all his brethren.

13 And ſhe called the name of the LORD that ſpake unto her, Thou God ſeeſt me: for ſhe ſaid, Have I alſo here looked after him that ſeeth me?

14 Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, *it is* between Kadeſh and Bered.

15 And Hagar bare Abram a ſon: and Abram called his ſon's name, which Hagar bare, Iſhmael.

16 And Abram *was* fourſcore and ſix years old, when Hagar bare Iſhmael to Abram.

CHAP.

Found.] Probably ſhe ſet out to return to her native country, Egypt; but ſcarce able to proceed, ſhe ſat down fatigued, and overwhelmed with diſtreſs by a fountain of water.

V. 8. *Hagar, Sarai's maid.*] Not Hagar, Abram's wife. The relation ſeems diſallowed, as unhallowed; and moreover ſhe was already too proud; and this would tend to humble her, and to convince her of her ſin in deſpiſing, and fleeing from her miſtreſs.

Whence cameſt thou? and whither, &c?] As if he had ſaid, art thou not leaving thy proper ſtation; acting inconſiſtent with thy duty, and intereſt; forſaking thy own mercies; and ruſhing on deſtruction?

V. 9. *Return to thy miſtreſs*, &c.] Thou haſt brought theſe conſequences upon thyſelf by ſin, therefore return and ſubmit to them.

V. 10. *The* angel *of the Lord ſaid*, I *will*, &c.] Hence we learn who this angel was: the angel Jehovah, as it may be rendered: He who is Jehovah himſelf, yet the meſſenger, or angel of the covenant; the eternal word, and Son of God. We ſhall have many inſtances of this hereafter.

V. 11. *Iſhmael.*] That is, the Lord will hear; he hath heard, and therefore will hear.

Thy Affliction.] Not thy prayer; intimating that the relief was not only unmerited, but unſolicited.

V. 12. *And he will be a wild man.*] This perhaps was Iſhmael's character; but his poſterity are principally intended, (See v. 10). The numerous tribes of the Arabians, Saracens, and others deſcended from Iſhmael, have in all ages to the preſent day, been a hardy, untamed race of free booters; and have chiefly ſubſiſted by plundering their neighbours and travellers, as appears by the united teſtimony of all the hiſtorians, and travellers, who have wrote of thoſe countries.

His hand, &c.] They have accordingly provoked the enmity of all the neighbouring nations, and have lived in a ſtate of hoſtility with all men ever ſince.

Shall dwell, &c.] Yet have they ſet at defiance the mightieſt conquerors of all ages, and have ſtood their ground againſt them all. Eſpecially they lived in the neighbourhood of the Iſraelites, and Edomites, and other deſcendants of Abram, and were never ſubjugated by any of them. They, who would ſee this prophecy more particularly explained may conſult Biſhop Newton's Diſſertations, vol. 1. Thus in every age the fulfilling of prophecies forms a ſtanding miracle in proof of the divine authority of the Scriptures; which demands our attentive conſideration.

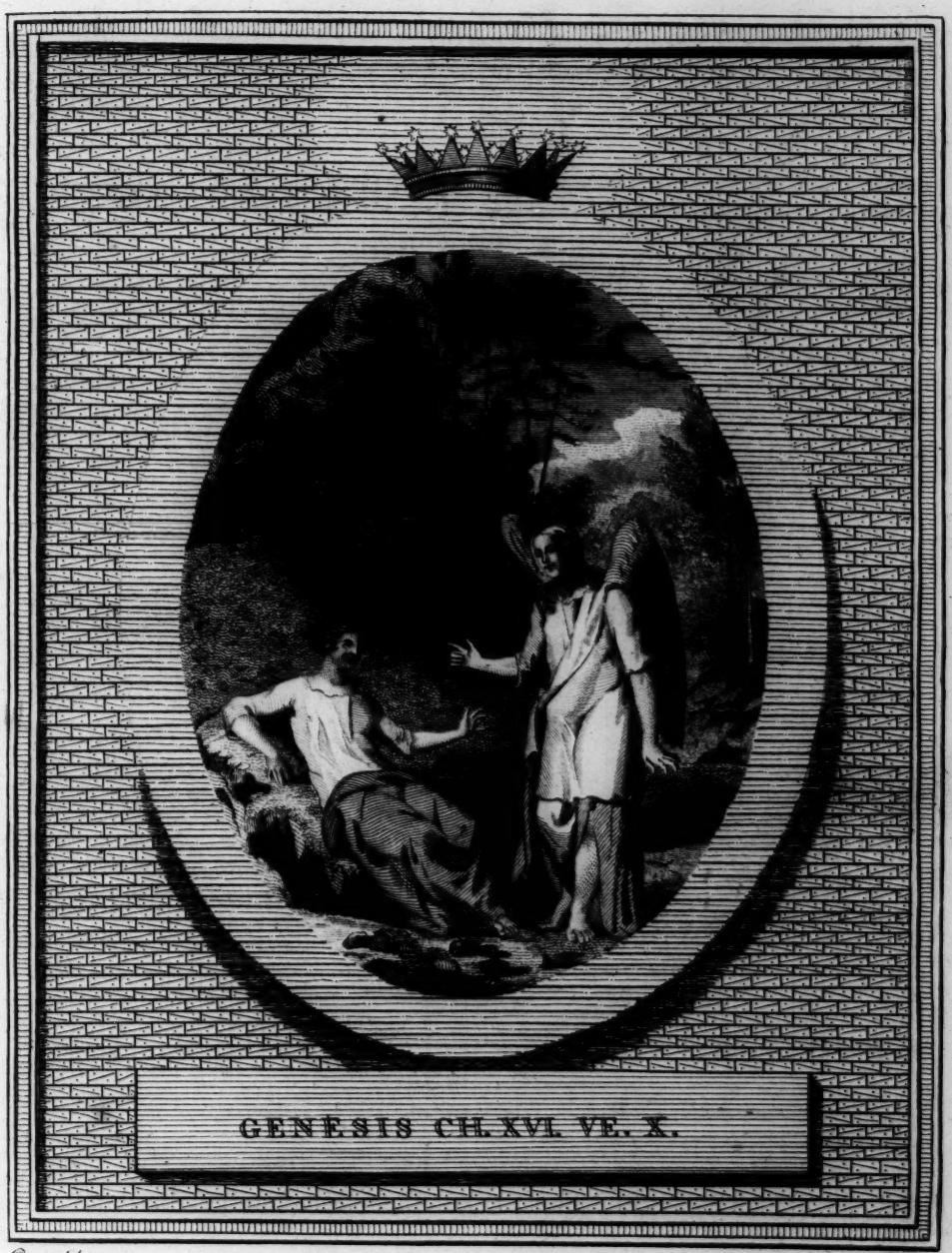
V. 12. *The name of the Lord*, &c.] We ſee here what Moſes thought of this angel, whom he calls Jehovah: and what Hagar thought, who called his name, "Thou God ſeeſt me."

Have I here *alſo looked*, &c?] Have *I*, who am ſo unworthy, *here* in this deſert, out of the path of duty, and at a diſtance from the ordinances of God, been favoured with ſuch a gracious and condeſcending viſit?

V. 14. *Beer-lahai-roi.*] The well of him, that liveth and ſeeth me. It ſeems ſhe was now reduced to better temper, returned home, and by proper behaviour mollified Sarai into more gentle treatment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In every relation and ſituation in life there is ſome croſs for us to bear: much of the exerciſe of faith conſiſts in patiently ſubmitting to it, in waiting the Lord's time, and uſing thoſe means, and thoſe only, which he appoints, and authorizes, for it's removal. Much of the working of unbelief conſiſts in impatience, and haſtily uſing unhallowed means of obtaining thoſe things, which we inordinately deſire. Very bad things may be ſanctioned by the example of very good men, may appear in very plauſible colours, may be ſupported by ſome ſhew of reaſon and ſuggeſted by thoſe, who are juſtly dear to us: but never have we more cauſe to be upon our guard, than when Satan thus comes transformed into an angel of light: then to the Law and to the Teſtimony muſt be our appeal: "What hath God ſaid?" Then ſhould we act with deliberation; ſhould be afraid of leaning to our own underſtanding: and ſeek counſel of the Lord by inſtant prayer. In Hagar's inſolence, in Sarai's impatience, and in



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CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. Another appearance of the Lord to Abram, ratifying the covenant, changing his name into Abraham, and Sarai's into Sarah, and instituting circumcision, v. 1—15. 2d. A son promised by Sarah; Abraham's laughter, his prayer for Ishmael, and the Lord's gracious answer, v. 16—21. 3d. The time fixt for the birth of Isaac, v. 21. 4th. Abraham's prompt obedience, v. 23—27.

AND when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I *am* the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.

3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,

4 As for me, behold my covenant *is* with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.

5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram; but thy name shall be Abraham, for a father of many nations have I made thee.

6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee; and kings shall come out of thee.

7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations for an everlasting covenant;

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in Abram's uneasiness; and again in Sarai's severity, and in Hagar's flight and distress, we see the effects of such carnal projects, and of deviating from the original institution of marriage. They, that consent together in sin, shall be chastened together, and oft correct each other. Though 'tis good to give place unto wrath: yet even peace may be bought too dear; and we ought not to allow, even for peace sake, the injurious treatment of those, who are entitled to our protection. But, tis seldom safe to quit our situation under the influence of pride, impatience, and resentment: Though a haughty spirit will disdain contradiction; yet it is best to endure it, and to consider that yielding pacifieth great offences. Much wisdom is contained in a proper answer to such questions, as are here proposed and implied. Recollecting who we are would teach us our duty, and suggest motives for quietly attending to it. Seriously enquiring in many cases whence we came? may shew us our sin, and folly. And considering, whither we will go? may oft discover our danger, and misery, before it be too late; and prepare us to listen to his counsel, who calls upon us to return and repent of that, which we have done in pride and passion. How free from fear and care, how conscientious in duty, watchful against sin, and resolute in resisting temptation should we be, if we always were suitably impressed with this thought, "Thou God seest me!" The good Lord, who always sees us, and despises not the meanest, but hears the affliction, even before it vent itself into prayer, help us to realize his presence, to trust in his goodness, to submit to his will, and with admiring humble gratitude to acknowledge his mercies to us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *Ninety and nine.*] Near fourteen years after his marriage with Hagar. So long was this gracious intercourse interrupted, and his faith sharply tried with this tedious delay; which perhaps implied a rebuke for his misconduct in that transaction.

I am the Almighty God.] All sufficient, able to surmount all obstacles, aud supply all thy wants.

Walk before me.] Be not discouraged in, or weary of so doing.

Be perfect.] Waver not, decline not, be constantly, consistently, and entirely dependant on me, and devoted to me.

V. 3. *Abram fell.*] Humbly adoring the divine glory, now manifested before him.

Talked with him.] In that posture in a way of personal conversation.

V. 4. *As for me.*] I am firm to my word, and will never shrink from it.

My covenant is with thee.] Already established, now to be further ratified, and sealed, and certainly to be accomplished, notwithstanding delays and difficulties. It is necessary here to enquire what covenant this was? It is plain it was not the covenant of works; nor was it the Sinai covenant made with Israel, as a people; of which in due time. (See *Gal.* c. 3. v. 14—18.) Nor was it merely a personal covenant with Abram concerning the multiplication of his seed, and their possessing Canaan. This is totally contrary to St. Paul's reasoning in the aforecited Scripture. Nor was it merely a covenant, which respected his own salvation; though both these last be implied. We read in many Scriptures of the covenant and oath made with, and sworn to Abram, being fulfilled to all believers, as his children. (See *Luke*, c. 1. v. 72—73: *Heb.* c. 6. v. 12—18.) It was then the very covenant of grace made of God in Christ, (See *Gal.* c. 3.) with him as the representative of the whole family of true believers. The promised seed was Christ, and christians in him: Canaan typified Heaven; and all was communicated to him through the righteousness of faith, which was sealed in circumcision. And all, who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abram, being partakers of the same covenant blessings, secured by the same oath and promise.

V 5. *Neither shall thy name*, &c.] Abram signifies a high father, Abraham the high father of a multitude, or the father of mighty nations.

V. 7. *A God unto thee*, &c.] As if he had said, By my grace I will enable thee to chuse me as thy portion, and devote

nant; to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

9 And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations.

10 This *is* my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee; every man-child among you shall be circumcised.

11 And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your fore-skin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

12 And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger which *is* not of thy seed.

13 He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.

14 And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his fore-skin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant.

15 And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah *shall* her name *be*.

16 And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* of nations; kings of people shall be of her.

17 Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?

18 And

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devote thyself to my worship and service; and I will answer thy expectations in becoming thy everlasting felicity. The same is the blessedness of all the true children of Abraham: and his posterity, according to the flesh, had his oracles committed to them, his prophets sent amongst them, and his ordinances established with them; which were vast advantages every way. (See *Rom.* c. 3. v. 1—2.)

V. 9. *Shalt keep.*] Thou shalt observe this rite of circumcision, as a token of thy submission to my will, and acceptance of my covenant; a profession of thy faith, and a valued pledge of thy relation to me.

V. 11. *Circumcise.*] This part of the human body was to be cut off, as intimating that depravity was communicated with the human nature, and propagated with our species; and that this depravity, called the *old man*, (*Eph.* c. 4. v. 22.) which is corrupt, must be put off, that is mortified and destroyed by true believers. In them the heart is circumcised to love the Lord, and the perverseness, rebellion, and enmity, are gradually destroyed out of it by sanctifying grace. Circumcision sealed the righteousness of faith: (See *Rom.* c. 4. v. 11.) for wherever the circumcision of the heart is wrought, it is an inward seal, that the sinner is justified by the righteousness of faith, as Abraham was. Circumcision was a bloody and painful ordinance: for the sanctification of the spirit comes to sinners through the blood of Christ; and the mortification of sin is painful to the flesh: and until the blood of Christ had been shed once for all, the ordinances of God were generally attended with the shedding of blood: but none since that time are so. Not only Abraham, and Isaac, and his posterity by Isaac, were to be circumcised; but Ishmael, and his very bond-servants: for it sealed not only the covenant of the land of Canaan to Isaac's posterity, but of Heaven through Christ to the whole church of God: and the outward sign is for the whole visible church, the inward seal of the Spirit is peculiar to those, whom God knows, and he alone can know them, to be believers. Infants were to be circumcised; because a part of the visible church; and because it was a proper profession of their parents' faith; and a pledge for the religious education of their children, thus early devoted to God. Males only were capable of circumcision: but in Christ there is no more distinction betwixt male, or female, than betwixt Jew and Gentile. The Gentile, who embraced the Jewish religion, was circumcised adult; but his future offspring at eight days old. The uncircumcised were to be cut off; because it was a rejection of the covenant: and the uncircumcised in heart will be excluded Heaven, and separated from God's people for ever.

V. 13. *My covenant shall be in your flesh.*] That is, the seal and badge of it; in the use of which, you shall be distinguished from other people.

V. 15. Sarai, signifies my Princess; Sarah, a Princess, to others as well as to me —Implying how honourable her name would be in the whole Church of God, as well as in Abraham's family.

V. 17. *Fell on his face.*] In reverential worship.

Laughed.] In admiring faith, and joyful gratitude,

Unto him, &c.] He himself was born when Terah was 130 years old; as is generally calculated, (See note on c. 11. v. 26.) but in the course of the last 100 years it seems to have become very uncommon for men to have children at so advanced an age. And he had been so long married to Sarah, and she was now so far advanced in years, continuing barren, that it seems he had given up all expectation of having seed by her; and previous to this

18 And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!

19 And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his seed after him.

20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

21 But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, whom Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.

22 And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their fore-skin, in the self-same day, as God had said unto him.

24 And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin.

25 And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his fore-skin.

26 In the self-same day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son.

27 And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.

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this explicit promise, thought that the promises, were to be fulfilled in Ishmael.

V. 18. *O that Ishmael.* &c.] Tho' he *staggered* not at the promise thro' unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God, &c. (See *Rom.* c. 4. v. 20.....21.) Yet he seems here to have a struggle with unbelief, in which he came off victorious, thro' the following repeated assurance, which the Lord gave him. However it may be interpreted as a natural desire that Ishmael might have a blessing also, tho' the promised seed were not to descend from him; to which desire also the Lord graciously replies.

V. 19, *I will establish,* &c.] From Isaac by Jacob Christ was to descend; amongst his posterity true religion was chiefly to be supported; to them Canaan, the type of heaven was granted, and they were to represent the spiritual seed of Abraham.—Yet Ishmael and others, after this limitation, being at that time a part of the visible Church, were commanded to be circumcised.

V. 22. *Left off talking,* &c.] The whole gives us the idea of a personal conference, and leaves little room in the attentive unprejudiced mind, to doubt, but that he, who here calls himself the Almighty God, was the same who afterwards in human nature said, "I, and the Father are "one; and he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father."

V. 23. Here was immediate obedience in a painful appointment, liable to many objections, and even seeming to counteract the accomplishment of the promise sealed by it: and this obedience was not peculiar to Abraham; but imitated by his houshold, who seem to have made no objection and we hope were also many of them partakers of his faith.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Altho' the Lord may from time to time vouchsafe to his servants peculiar manifestations of his presence, and favour; yet their daily walk with him must be by that faith, which sees him, who is invisible: and they, who thus walk with him in his ordinances, and commandments, shall neither be destitute of daily support, nor of seasons of refreshment from his presence. With whatever long delays, and great discouragements their faith may be tried, he who tries it, will strengthen it: and they who walk before him, trust in him, and wait for him, shall never be ashamed. We have only to look to our own temper and conduct, and to leave all in his hands, who is all sufficient, and Almighty; and who, for the purposes of his own glory, oft does not interpose till expectation from every other quarter fails.—God's gracious condescensions should excite our reverence, and not lead us to forget who he is, and what we are. Not only the doctrines of revelation, but the very seals of his covenant remind us that we are guilty, and polluted; point out our need of atoning blood, point to the promised Saviour, and teach us to exercise faith in him; and that without regeneration, and sanctification by his spirit, and the mortification of our corrupt and carnal inclinations, we cannot bear a covenant relation to him.—But let us remember that the true circumcision is that of the heart by the spirit: (See Rom. c. 2. v. 28—29.) "That they are the true circumcision who worship God "in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confi- "dence in the flesh:" (See Phil. c. 3 v. 3.) And that, both under the old, and new dispensations, many have had the external profession, and the external seal, who were never sealed by the holy Spirit of promise. But true faith evidences itself by prompt unreserved obedience in the most difficult instances: and if our faith be of this stamp, we may be confident, that God is our God, and our everlasting portion, and that the everlasting covenant is confirmed even to us, by the oath that was sworn, and the security which was vouchsafed to Abraham: And that he, who hath given us this new heart, hath also given us a new name, which no man knoweth, save he, who receiveth it. (*Rev.* c. 3. v. 17.) And whilst we thankfully receive the pledges of his love, and make open profession of our faith: let us not forget to seek the same blessings for our children, and servants, and all connected with us.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Another appearance of the Lord to Abraham, with the circumſtances of it, v. 1.—8. *2d. Enquiries after, and promiſes to Sarah, with her ſubſequent conduct, v.* 9.—15. *3d. The Lord's diſcovery of his intended vengeance upon Sodom,* 16.—22. *4th. Abraham's interceſſion, v.* 23.—33.

AND the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he ſat in the tent-door in the heat of the day.

2 And he lift up his eyes and looked, and lo, three men ſtood by him: and when he ſaw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent-door, and bowed himſelf toward the ground,

3 And ſaid, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy ſight, paſs not away, I pray thee, from thy ſervant.

4 Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and waſh your feet, and reſt yourſelves under the tree.

5 And I will fetch a morſel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that you ſhall paſs on: for therefore are ye come to your ſervant. And they ſaid, So do as thou haſt ſaid.

6 And Abraham haſtened into the tent unto Sarah, and ſaid, Make ready quickly three meaſures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

7 And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he haſted to dreſs it.

8 And he took butter and milk, and the calf which he had dreſſed, and ſet *it* before them; and he ſtood by them under the tree, and they did eat.

9 And they ſaid unto him, Where *is* Sarah thy wife? And he ſaid, Behold, in the tent.

10 And he ſaid, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and lo, Sarah thy wife ſhall have a ſon. And Sarah heard *it* in the tent-door, which *was* behind him.

11 Now Abraham and Sarah *were* old, *and* well ſtricken in age: *and* it ceaſed to be with Sarah after the manner of women.

12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herſelf, ſaying, After I am waxed old, ſhall I have pleaſure, my lord being old alſo?

13 And the LORD ſaid unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, ſaying, Shall I of a ſurety bear a child, which am old?

14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed will I return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah ſhall have a ſon.

15 Then

NOTES

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *The Lord appeared*, &c.] It is here expreſsly ſaid that this was an appearance of Jehovah to Abraham: and the manner of this appearance is afterwards related; by which it is probable, that there was more of familiarity, and leſs of viſible glory, and majeſty therein, than in former appearances; eſpecially in that, with which he had been favoured juſt before. (See Ch. 17.)

And he ſat, &c.] He ſeems to have been waiting for an opportunity of exerciſing hoſpitality, by entertaining any weary traveller, who might need refreſhment and a cooling ſhade; for inns were not then to be met with, as with us.

V. 2. *Lo! three men.*] Three perſons appearing as men.

V. 3. *And ſaid, my Lord.*] Abraham's ſpeech is addreſſed to one of the three, who appeared to have the pre-eminence, and whom we conclude to have been the Son of God; (See the foregoing Ch.) and who was attended by two created angels in the form of men.

V. 4. *Waſh your feet.*] This was cuſtomary and neceſſary in thoſe hot climates, where they wore only ſandals.

V. 8. *And he ſtood*, &c.] It doth not appear whether Abraham as yet knew his gueſts, or whether his bowing (v. 3.) was from civil reſpect; or an act of adoration.

V. 9, *Where is Sarah thy wife?*] Thus the Lord gradually manifeſted who he was, and his attention to Abraham's concerns.

Behold in the tent.] Juſt at hand, in her proper place, occupied about her domeſtic concerns.

V. 10. *And he ſaid*, &c.] By thus ſpeaking with divine authority, and by repeating that promiſe *as his own*, and engaging himſelf for it's accompliſhment, which in the foregoing chapter, was ſpoken by him, who ſaid, I am the Almighty God, he fully diſcovered who he was.

V. 11.] The accompliſhment had been delayed, until it had become, according to general obſervation, unprecedented; and would therefore be deemed impoſſible.

V. 12. *Sarah Laughed.*] We perhaps might not have diſcerned a difference between Sarah's laughter, and Abraham's: but he who ſearches the heart, ſaw the one to ſpring from unbelief, and the other from faith.

V. 13. *And the Lord ſaid*, &c.] Here the ſpeaker is expreſsly called Jehovah.

V. 17.

15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not: for she was afraid. And he said, Nay, but thou didst laugh.

16 And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way.

17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

18 Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?

19 For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.

20 And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous;

21 I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.

22 And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD.

23 And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?

24 Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that *are* therein?

25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

26 And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.

27 And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which *am but* dust and ashes.

28 Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for *lack* of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy *it*.

29 And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do *it* for forty's sake.

30. And he said *unto him*, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do *it*, if I find thirty there.

31 And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy *it* for twenty's sake.

32 And

V. 17. *Shall I hide?*] The Lord would not conceal his intention of destroying these cities from Abraham his servant and friend: for he was concerned in that event, both on account of Lot, and as having the inheritance of the adjacent countries covenanted to his posterity. He will also give him an opportunity to intercede for them; and would shew him the reasons of his conduct, that he might afterwards approve of it, and glorify him on that account.

V. 19. *He will command*, &c.] That is, not only instruct, pray for, and set a good example to his family; but use his authority to promote godliness amongst them: of which he had just given a notable proof in their circumcision.

That the Lord, &c.] The Lord would make use of these things, as the means of fulfilling his purposes of love to his posterity.

V. 21. *Will go down now*, &c.] This is spoken after the manner of men; the just judge will not pronounce sentence upon mere rumour; but will bestow pains to ascertain the criminal's guilt, before he executes vengeance.

V. 22. *The men.*] The two, whom we suppose to have been created angels: accordingly two entered Sodom at evening, whilst the one, who is called Jehovah, still continued with Abraham.

Stood yet *before the Lord.*] Before the same person, with whom he had hitherto been communing: for there is no change intimated.

V. 23.—25. *Wilt thou also*, &c.] Abraham here assumes it as an unquestionable truth, that the judge of all the earth would do right; and upon that grounds his plea: but knowing also how much the *righteous* Lord is inclined to mercy, he not only pleads for the preserving of the righteous from the common destruction; but for sparing the rest for their sakes.

V. 26 *Fifty righteous.*] That is, real godly people. (See note on c. 7. v. 1.)

V. 27. *But dust and ashes.*] A poor mean, and dying; because sinful man.

32 And he ſaid, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will ſpeak yet but this once: Peradventure ten ſhall be found there. And he ſaid, I will not deſtroy *it* for tens ſake.

33 And the LORD went his way, as ſoon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1ſt. Lot in Sodom viſited by two angels, whom he entertains, v. 1—3. 2d. The baſe behaviour of the Sodomites, and Lot's conduct on the occaſion, v. 4—10. 3d. The Sodomites ſmitten with blindneſs, v. 12. 4th. Lot warned, and in vain warning his ſons in law; and his eſcape from Sodom, v. 12—23. 5th. Sodom, and Gomorrah, &c. deſtroyed, v. 24—25. 6th. Lot's wife looking back, and ſtruck dead, v. 26. 7th. Abraham's ſurvey of the deſtruction of Sodom, &c. v. 27—29. 8th. Lot's drunkenneſs and inceſt, v. 30—38.

AND there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot ſat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot ſeeing *them*, roſe up to meet them; and he bowed himſelf with his face toward the ground;

2 And he ſaid, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your ſervant's houſe, and tarry all night, and waſh your feet, and ye ſhall riſe up early, and go on your ways. And they ſaid, Nay; but we will abide in the ſtreet all night.

3 And he preſſed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his houſe: and he made them a feaſt, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, *even* the men of Sodom, compaſſed the houſe round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter.

5 And they called unto Lot, and ſaid unto him, Where *are* the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

6 And Lot went out at the door unto them, and ſhut the door after him,

7 And

V. 32. *Peradventure ten*, &c.] Probably Abraham now thought he had got within the limits of Lot's family; and that amongſt his children and ſervants there were ten true believers: however if there were not that ſmall number in Sodom, and it's dependencies, he muſt allow the juſtice of the ſentence.

V. 33. *The Lord went his way.*] Surely this is calculated to convey to us the idea of a perſonal conference, and viſible appearance. But "no man hath ſeen God at "any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the boſom "of the Father, he hath declared him." Thence we infer that this was an anticipation of the future incarnation of the Son of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhould not be forgetful to entertain ſtrangers; for thereby ſome have entertained angels unawares; nay, the Lord of angels himſelf: as indeed we always do, when for his ſake we entertain one of the leaſt of his brethren. Chearful, and ready liberality, and an obliging manner in ſhewing kindneſs, are great ornaments to true piety: and wealth, thus uſed, becomes indeed a bleſſing to the poſſeſſor, and to numbers. Though our condeſcending Lord vouchſafes not to us his perſonal viſits; yet ſtill by his word and Spirit he ſtands at the door and knocks; and when we are inclined to open, he deigns to enter; and by his gracious conſolations provides a rich entertainment, "on which he ſups with us, and we with him." (See *Rev.* c. 3. v. 20.) Even the ſtrongeſt believers need repeated confirmations of their faith, and in trying circumſtances at ſome times ſtagger through unbelief. (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 11.) One ſin is a common introduction to another; and it is hardly to be expected that we ſhould ſtrictly adhere to truth ourſelves, when we allow ourſelves to queſtion the divine veracity: but whom the Lord loves, he will rebuke, convict, ſilence, and bring to repentance, if they ſin againſt him. The ſame action may be either good, or bad, as it ſprings from oppoſite internal principles:—and our diſcouragements would be much removed, and temptations prevented, did we more realize the Almighty power of God, as engaged to fulfil his largeſt promiſes. The ſecret of the Lord is with them, that fear him; and whether he be pleaſed to ſhew them what he does, and intends to do, or not; he will cauſe them to underſtand, and adore the juſtice, and reaſonableneſs of his diſpenſations, and ſhew them the glory of his works. To uſe our authority in ſupporting religion in our families, is highly acceptable to God, and tends to bring down his bleſſing on our poſterity: whilſt the neglect of it cuts off the entail, as in the caſes of Lot, and of Eli.—Although the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, and God often grants all they aſk; and they ceaſe to requeſt more, before he begins to deny them: yet their prayers will not prevent the deſtruction of thoſe, who are hardened in impenitence; but will return into their own boſom. However we need not fear that the Lord ſhould be angry with thoſe prayers, which are offered in humility, faith, and love: he is well pleaſed with them, and will anſwer them, as far as is for his glory, and our real good.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1. *And Lot ſat*, &c.] We have heard nothing of Lot for many years; and we here have no

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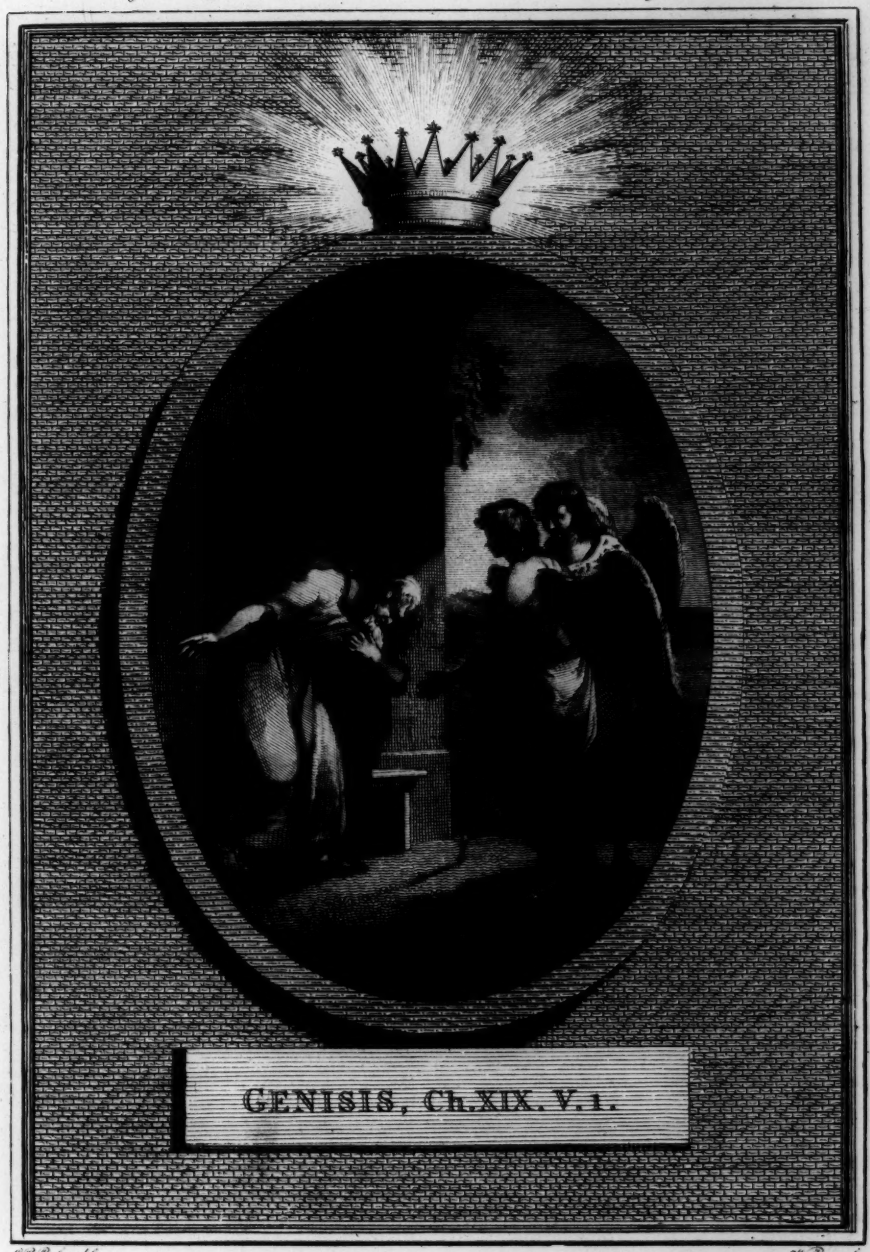

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BRITISH
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MUSEUM

7 And ſaid, I pray you, brethren, do not ſo wickedly.

8 Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as *is* good in your eyes: only unto theſe men do nothing: for therefore came they under the ſhadow of my roof.

9 And they ſaid, Stand back. And they ſaid *again*, This one *fellow* came in to ſojourn, and he will needs be a judge: Now will we deal worſe with thee, than with them. And they preſſed ſore upon the man, *even* Lot, and came near to break the door.

10 But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the houſe to them, and ſhut to the door.

11 And they ſmote the men that *were* at the door of the houſe with blindneſs, both ſmall and great: ſo that they wearied themſelves to find the door.

12 And the men ſaid unto Lot, Haſt thou here any beſides? ſon in law, and thy ſons, and thy daughters, and whatſoever thou haſt in the city, bring *them* out of this place.

13 For we will deſtroy this place: becauſe the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD hath ſent us to deſtroy it.

14 And Lot went out, and ſpake unto his ſons in law, which married his daughters, and ſaid, Up, get ye out of this place; for the LORD will deſtroy this city: but he ſeemed as one that mocked unto his ſons in law.

15 And when the morning aroſe, then the angels haſtened Lot, ſaying, Ariſe, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; leſt thou be conſumed in the iniquity of the city.

16 And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and ſet him without the city.

17 And it came to paſs, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he ſaid, Eſcape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither ſtay thou in all the plain: eſcape to the mountain, leſt thou be conſumed.

18 And Lot ſaid unto them, Oh not ſo, my Lord.

19 Behold now, thy ſervant hath found grace in thy ſight, and thou haſt magnified thy mercy, which thou haſt ſhewed unto me in ſaving my life: and I cannot eſcape to the mountain, leſt ſome evil take me, and I die.

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no very pleaſing tidings concerning him: the Holy Ghoſt by St. Peter informs us that he was a righteous man, (2 *Peter*, c. 2. v. 7—8.) and was vexed with the filthy converſation of the wicked, amongſt whom he lived, and that day by day, and in his very ſoul: and we may ſuppoſe that upon the whole his example was good, and his warnings ſalutary. But he wanted firmneſs, as we eaſily ſee in this chapter: he was not fit for ſuch a ſituation, not able to ſet his face like a flint againſt the wicked inhabitants of Sodom: moreover he came thither from unworthy motives, and ſtaid there with unwarrantable pertinacity: accordingly he ſeems to have done them no good, and to have got much harm himſelf amongſt them, and his family ſtill more.

Lot ſat in the gate, &c.] Thus far he imitated Abraham, and, in the midſt of triumphant abominations, ſet a good example.

V. 2. *Nay, but we will*, &c.] In order to evince the cordiality of his invitations.

V. 3. *And he preſſed upon them greatly.*] Being aware what inſults awaited them without.

V. 4—5. *The men of the city*, &c.] This ſimple narration conveys more forcibly into our minds an idea of the extreme, and unparalleled wickedneſs of this city, than the moſt laboured deſcriptions, and rhetorical declamations could have done: and is a moſt beautiful example of diſcourſing upon practices, too ſhameful to be mentioned, in language, which excites no other ſenſation but horror, and indignation.

V. 8. *Behold now*, &c.] Although Lot ſhews a becoming ſenſe of the rights of hoſpitality, yet his propoſal was very criminal. We muſt by no means do evil, that good may come: nor commit a leſſer ſin to prevent others from committing a greater: but committing ourſelves to the divine care, muſt determine to endure the extremeſt hardſhips, rather than ſin againſt God.

V. 11. *Wearied*, &c.] Probably not ſenſible of the cauſe. (See 2 *Kings*, c. 6. v. 18—20.)

We will—the Lord hath ſent us, &c.] This is the language of ſervants obeying orders; compare it with the language of the foregoing chapter, v. 10. and 14.

V. 14. *Sons in law.*] Who had married other daughters of Lot; who either were dead, or periſhed in the ruin of the city.

V. 17. *Look not behind thee.*] As if he were reluctant to leave his whole ſubſtance.

In all the plain.] That fertile plain, which had ſo enſnared him.

20 Behold now, this city *is* near to flee unto, and it *is* a little one: Oh let me eſcape thither, (*is* it not a little one?) and my ſoul ſhall live.

21 And he ſaid unto him, See I have accepted thee concerning this thing alſo, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou haſt ſpoken.

22 Haſte thee, eſcape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither: therefore the name of the city was called Zoar.

23 The ſun was riſen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.

24 Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimſtone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.

25 And he overthrew thoſe cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

26 But his wife looked back from behind him, and ſhe became a pillar of ſalt.

27 And Abraham gat up early in the morning, to the place where he ſtood before the LORD.

28 And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the ſmoke of the country went up as the ſmoke of a furnace.

29 And it came to paſs, when God deſtroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and ſent Lot out of the midſt of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities, in the which Lot dwelt.

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.

31 And the firſt-born ſaid unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth.

32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preſerve ſeed of our father.

33 And

V. 22. *I cannot do any thing*, &c.] I cannot proceed to execute my commiſſion, till thou art arrived at a place of ſafety. It is not clear whether the third perſon, who tarried with Abraham, had not now rejoined the other two; as ſeems to be intimated by the ſingular number in this paſſage, and by the remarkable language of the twenty-fourth verſe: "*The Lord rained—from the Lord out of* "*Heaven.*"

Called Zoar.] Which ſignifies little. The name before was Bela; and it was the only one of the five mentioned, (chap. 14. v. 2.) which was not conſumed: and being ſpared, becauſe it was little, it was afterwards called by that name.

V. 24—25. *Rained upon Sodom*, &c.] This judgment came as a deſtruction from the Almighty, and we need not enquire how he effected it. But the cities and all their inhabitants were totally deſolated; and the place, whereon the cities ſtood, was converted into a great lake, called the dead ſea; wherein travellers ſay no creature lives, and whoſe waters are ſo adheſive, as ſcarce to be agitated by the wind.

V. 26. *Looked back.*] Contrary to expreſs command, probably in unbelief, and love to Sodom, and it's riches, and regretting what was left behind, and in a diſpoſition to return. Some think ſhe actually attempted to return, and that the word implies as much. (See *Luke*, c. 17. v. 31. 32. *Let him not* return *back; remember Lot's wife.*)

Pillar of ſalt.] She was inſtantaneouſly ſtruck dead, and petrified, and thus remained to after ages a viſible monument of the divine diſpleaſure.

V. 27. *Abraham gat up*, &c.] To enquire after the ſucceſs of his prayers, and probably to renew them.

V. 29. *God remembered Abraham—and ſent Lot out*, &c.] More in anſwer to his prayers, than approving of Lot's behaviour.

V. 30. *Lot went up out of Zoar.*] The place he had choſen for himſelf: perhaps he found it as wicked as Sodom; and that conſideration, joined to the inundating of the neigbouring plain by the obſtructed waters of Jordan, might excite apprehenſions for his ſafety.

Dwelt in the mountain.] Whither he was at firſt commanded to flee.—But what hindered his return to Abraham? Doubtleſs he would have received him, now ſtript of all, and a wretched outcaſt. We can ſcarce help attributing it to a certain ſtoutneſs of ſpirit, pride of heart, and fear of contempt, when he ſhould appear ſo degraded amongſt thoſe, who had known him in more proſperous days.—Whatever were his reaſons, he ſeems to have forſaken his own mercies.

He and his two daughters,] It ſeems his herdmen, as well as his herds, had periſhed in Sodom's overthrow.—What a different opinion muſt this give us of the character of Lot's domeſtics, from that, which we are led to frame of Abraham's!

V. 31—38. *And the firſt-born ſaid*, &c.] Many conjectures have been formed of the motives which induced Lot's daughters to ſuch a ſtrange conduct. But the truth ſeems to be, that they had learned no good in Sodom; and had been accuſtomed to hear and witneſs wickedneſs, till their judgments were perverted, their conſcience become unfeeling,

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33 And they made their father drink wine that night: and the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

34 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, *and* lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.

35 And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose.

36 Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.

37 And the first-born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.

38 And the younger she also bare a son, and called his name Ben-ammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

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unfeeling, and the sense of shame blunted; and that no excuse can be made either for them, or for Lot; or scarce any account given of this affair, but this, "that the "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wick-"ed, who can know it?" After this we read no more either of Lot, or of his daughters. Peter's testimony satisfies us, that he lived to repent of his sin; which there is no proof that his daughters did.—But he died under a dark cloud.—All his substance, and part of his family perished in Sodom: his wife in looking back lost her life.—And one would almost have wished the others had been taken away too, to have prevented his, and their sin, and shame; for though he was not written childless; his posterity were the monuments of his reproach.—How unlike Abraham's! (See c. 18. v. 18—19.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When Angels entered Sodom they soon found out, and conforted with the only righteous man there: thus still they invisibly encamp round them, that fear the Lord: And thus ought we to seek out, and associate with the righteous in every place, to which we go.—Nor shall we find it hard to distinguish them; by their fruits ye shall know them, and by the hatred, which the wicked bear them. Hospitality prudently shewn for the Lord's sake, will engage his protection, and a gracious recompense. To what a pitch of wickedness do some sinners arrive! and who does not allow the justice of God in the destruction of abandoned Sodom? Could our eyes at once behold all that wickedness, which the Lord every moment witnesses in other cities, and countries, we should probably expect that they would share Sodom's doom.—"And except the "Lord of Hosts had left *us* a very small remnant, even we "of this land should ere this have been like unto Sodom and "Gomorrah."—The good Lord increase that remnant.—But when at the day of judgment God shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and manifest the counsels of all hearts; and when the wicked shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; (See *Jude* v. 7.) Then we shall see that the Lord hath not without cause denounced this sentence; but shall wonder at his patience and long suffering towards them. Nothing marks sinners more ripe for destruction, than when mad upon their lusts, they resent the least check, and will bear no controul; "For he that being of-"ten reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be de-"stroyed, and that without remedy." They who treat the friendly warnings of God's servants and Ministers as idle tales, and groundless fears, will be awfully convinced of their mistake by the event.—But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: being merciful to them he warns them, and suffers them not to neglect the warning, nor leaves them to the effect of their procrastinating folly, but by the mixed influence of hopes and fears, disposes them to leave all for the salvation of their souls; and even condescends to pity, and accommodate himself to their infirmities. But how awful his severity on apostates! Let us remember Lot's wife; let us not allow one hankering wish after forbidden, or forsaken objects, and let us be much afraid, lest "after having escaped the corruption, which is in the "world, through the knowledge of Christ, we should "be again entangled and overcome thereby."—Yea, tho' the Lord will not forsake his people, the severity of his multiplied chastisements needs to fill our souls with holy awe. And if he pursue his children with the rod even to the grave; what will be the dreadful doom of his enemies? It is grievous to observe that chastisement seems, in some cases, to lose it's effect; and that for a time they, who are corrected, sin more and more; and that those, who have escaped contamination amongst bad examples, are sometimes overcome in solitude, and remain unimpressed by the awful judgments, which they have witnessed.—These may expect to suffer more and more, and to die in uncertainty and dishonour: and it is an evident fact, that their children after them suffer for their parents sin. Let us then watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation; and especially guard against covetousness and drunkenness, which are inlets to all other sins.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1ſt. Abraham's going to ſojourn in Gerar, v. 1. *2d. His denial of Sarah, who was taken into Abimelech's houſe, v.* 2. *3d. Abimelech warned of God in a dream, v.* 3—7. *4th. Reſtoring Sarah, and expoſtulating with Abraham, v.* 8—13. *5th. His kindneſs to Abraham and Sarah, with a mild rebuke of the latter,* 14—16. *6th. Abraham's prayer, and the effects of it, v.* 17—18.

AND Abraham journeyed from thence toward the ſouth-country, and dwelled between Kadeſh and Shur, and ſojourned in Gerar.

2 And Abraham ſaid of Sarah his wife, She *is* my ſiſter: And Abimelech king of Gerar ſent, and took Sarah.

3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and ſaid to him, Behold, thou *art but* a dead man, for the woman which thou haſt taken: for ſhe *is* a man's wife.

4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he ſaid, LORD, wilt thou ſlay alſo a righteous nation?

5 Said he not unto me, She *is* my ſiſter? and ſhe, even ſhe herſelf ſaid, He *is* my brother: in the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this.

6 And God ſaid unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didſt this in the integrity of thy heart; for I alſo withheld thee from ſinning againſt me: therefore ſuffered I thee not to touch her.

7 Now therefore reſtore the man *his* wife; for he *is* a prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee, and thou ſhalt live: and if thou reſtore *her* not, know thou that thou ſhalt ſurely die, thou, and all that *are* thine.

8 Therefore Abimelech roſe early in the morning, and called all his ſervants, and told all theſe things in their ears: and the men were ſore afraid.

9 Then Abimelech called Abraham, and ſaid unto him, What haſt thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou haſt brought on me, and on my kingdom a great ſin? thou haſt done deeds unto me that ought not to be done.

10 And Abimelech ſaid unto Abraham, What ſaweſt thou, that thou haſt done this thing?

11 And Abraham ſaid, Becauſe I thought, Surely the fear of God *is* not in this place; and they will ſlay me for my wife's ſake.

12 And yet indeed *ſhe is* my ſiſter; ſhe *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother: and ſhe became my wife.

13 And it came to paſs, when God cauſed me to wander from my father's houſe, that I ſaid unto her, This *is* thy kindneſs which thou ſhalt ſhew unto me; At every place whither we ſhall come, ſay of me, He *is* my brother.

14 And Abimelech took ſheep, and oxen, and men-ſervants, and women-ſervants, and gave *them* unto Abraham, and reſtored him Sarah his wife.

15 And

CHAP. XX.] V. 1. *Gerar.*] Afterwards the country of the Philiſtines.

V. 2. *And took Sarah.*] With intent to eſpouſe her, though he had already one wife, or more. (See v. 17.) It ſeems ſhe ſtill retained her beauty; which is ſtrange to us, now the life of man has been for ſo many ages confined within ſuch narrow limits; but might not be ſo at that time. We have reaſon to think that Sarah was now pregnant, though not diſcernibly, which would encreaſe the anxiety both of her, and of Abraham; as it was alſo an aggravation of their ſin.

V. 3. *In a dream.*] This method of becoming acquainted with the will of God was common, before revelation by the written word was afforded, and completed: (See *Job.* c. 4. v. 14. &c. c. 33. v. 15.) but every impreſſion of that kind, and indeed all other ſuppoſed information of the divine will, muſt now be tried, by the infallible, and perfect ſtandard of the holy Scriptures: and no farther regarded than they are agreeable to, and warranted by them.

A dead man.] That is, except he reſtored Sarah, he ſhould certainly and ſpeedily die.

V. 4. *Wilt thou ſlay,* &c.] Referring to the late deſtruction of Sodom, which doubtleſs produced much conſternation, and ſome reformation in the neighbouring places, probably he and his people were not only free from Sodom's abominations, but had ſome remains of true religion amongſt them.

V. 7. *Prophet.*] One peculiarly favoured with communion with God, and communications from him, for his own benefit, and that of others.

15 And Abimelech said, Behold, my land *is* before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee.

16 And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand *pieces* of silver: behold, he *is* to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that *are* with thee, and with all *other*: thus she was reproved.

17 So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants; and they bare *children*.

18 For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1st. The birth, and Circumcision of Isaac, and the joy on that occasion, v. 1—7. 2d. The weaning of Isaac, and the mocking of Ishmael, v. 8—9. 3d. Hagar, and Ishmael cast out, v. 10—13. 4th. Their distress and deliverance; with the prosperity, and marriage of Ishmael, v. 14—21. 5th. The covenant betwixt Abimelech, and Abraham, v. 22—32. 6th. Abraham's sojourning, and conduct in the Philistine's land, v. 33—34.

AND the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken.

2 For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him.

3 And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac.

4 And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him.

5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him.

6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, *so that* all that hear will laugh with me.

7 And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born *him* a son in his old age.

8 And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the *same* day that Isaac was weaned.

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar, the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

10 Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bond-woman, and her son: for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, *even* with Isaac.

11 And

V. 16. *Thy brother—he is to thee a covering.*] He, whom thou hast sinfully called thy brother, is thy husband, and thou shouldst have avowed the relation, and appeared with a veil, or other distinguishing tokens of the married state; that others might have been kept from looking upon, and being tempted to covet another man's wife.

V. 17.—18.] God had inflicted these disorders on Abimelech, and his family, both to restrain him from defiling Sarah, and to warn him to restore her, and to put an honour upon Abraham, and upon prayer, thus to promote the knowledge of himself, and the glory of his name.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We see much here to blame even in the father of the faithful: with concern we mark his distrust of God, his undue solicitude about life, his equivocation with intent to deceive; his relapse into his former sin, his drawing in Sarah into a share of the guilt, exposing her honour and chastity; and even endangering a question about the legitimacy of his promised Isaac: his throwing temptation into Abimelech's way, occasioning affliction to him and his family, exposing himself and Sarah to just rebukes, and yet vainly attempting an excuse, which at least did not at all mend the matter. Shall we commend, or imitate Abraham in these things? By no means. They are written for our warning, that whilst we think we stand, we may take heed lest we fall. Even Abraham hath not whereof to glory; for he cannot be justified by his works; but must be indebted for justification to that righteousness, which is *upon all*, and *unto all* them, that believe. We see here plainly that we must not condemn all as hypocrites who relapse into sin, even with aggravation; if they do not continue in it; nor need ourselves despair, if we are humbly conscious of having done so. But let the unhumbled and impenitent take heed that they do not sin on, that grace may abound. Although on the other hand we cannot but blame some things in Abimelech, and observe that indulgence gives force to all our passions, and where men transcend the rule of God's word, they will never know where to stop: yet we must commend, and should imitate him in the calmness, and mildness of his reproof; his ready return of good for evil, and the good counsel, which he gave to Sarah: and are pleased to find that he mentions adultery as an horrible crime, and being led into a sin, as a great injury; and so seriously expostulates with Abraham about his misconduct, in that respect. Though we are all sinners, and cannot be justified before God, according to his holy law: yet in particular instances, we may be so conscious of *integrity*, as with propriety to appeal to God himself respecting it; who will allow our plea:

11 And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's ſight, becauſe of his ſon.

12 And God ſaid unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy ſight, becauſe of the lad, and becauſe of thy bond-woman; in all that Sarah hath ſaid unto thee, hearken unto her voice: for in Iſaac ſhall thy ſeed be called.

13 And alſo of the ſon of the bond-woman will I make a nation, becauſe he *is* thy ſeed.

14 And Abraham roſe up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave *it* unto Hagar (putting *it* on her ſhoulder) and the child, and ſent her away: and ſhe departed and wandered in the wilderneſs of Beer-ſheba.

15 And the water was ſpent in the bottle, and ſhe caſt the child under one of the ſhrubs.

16 And ſhe went, and ſat her down over againſt *him*, a good way off, as it were a bow-ſhot: for ſhe ſaid, Let me not ſee the death of the child. And ſhe ſat over againſt *him*, and lift up her voice and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and ſaid unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he *is*.

18 Ariſe, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand: for I will make him a great nation.

19 And

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yet is it hard, under divine rebukes, to vindicate ourſelves, without ſeeming to reflect upon his righteouſneſs. We oft diſquiet ourſelves, and even are led into temptation and ſin by groundleſs ſuſpicions; and find the fear of God, where we expected it not. Combinations to deceive generally iſſue in ſhame and ſorrow: and reſtraints from ſin, though by ſuffering, ſhould thankfully be acknowledged. But though the Lord rebuke, yet he will pardon and deliver his people, and for his own glory put honour upon them and their prayers; will give them favour in the ſight of thoſe, with whom they ſojourn; and over-rule even their very infirmities, when they are humbled for them, for good to themſelves, and others.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *Viſited.*] This word is uſed to denote the viſible effects of God's preſence and power, either in mercy, or in judgment: here it ſignifies his gracious attention to Sarah, manifeſted by his faithful accompliſhment of his promiſe to her, when in the natural courſe of things her conception could never have been expected.

V. 3. *Iſaac.*] Which ſignifies laughter: this was done in obedience to God's command, in remembrance of his believing, and Sarah's unbelieving laughter, and as an expreſſion of joy, and gratitude.

V. 9. *And Sarah ſaw*, &c.] Iſhmael was at this time fifteen or ſixteen years of age; and it appears (See *Gal.* c. 4. v. 29.) that his mocking was in deriſion of Iſaac, as the child of promiſe; and a ſpecies of perſecution, being done in profane contempt of the covenant and promiſe, and in oppoſition to the purpoſe of God, and with ſome indications of malice againſt Iſaac.

V. 10. *Caſt out*, &c.] We have reaſon to think that there was a mixture of ſinful diſdain, and reſentment in this requiſition: yet was ſhe ſecretly led to utter words, which imply a great myſtery, and which were afterwards to be made uſe of, to illuſtrate an important part of divine truth; which will be treated on in it's proper place.

V. 11. *Becauſe of his ſon.*] He was grieved that he ſhould ſo miſbehave; and that Sarah ſhould require ſo ſevere a puniſhment; and was in great perplexity how to reconcile the duty, which he owed to his ſon, with his affection to his wife.

V. 12. *For in Iſaac*, &c.] That is, from him the Meſſiah ſhall deſcend, in his line ſhall true religion be maintained; and his poſterity ſhall typify the ſpiritual ſeed, the believing children of Abraham.

V. 14. *Bread—and a bottle of water.*] That is, neceſſaries for their journey, probably into Egypt to her relations.

The child.] The lad, who was about ſixteen years of age. The proviſions were put upon her ſhoulder, as more inured to labour, and the lad committed to her care.

Wandered.] That is, ſhe loſt her way, which accounts for their diſtreſs.

The water was ſpent.] It is not ſaid the proviſions were conſumed, nor that Abraham ſent them away without money; but that the water was ſpent, which it ſoon would be; and they having loſt their way in that hot climate, Iſhmael was ſoon overcome with fatigue and thirſt, and ready to die.

Caſt the child.] The tranſlation of this paſſage is calculated to give us a falſe, and abſurd idea of this tranſaction. The expreſſion implies no more, than that Hagar aſſiſted Iſhmael in getting under the ſhade of ſome ſhrubs, and laying down in the beſt manner, of which his circumſtances would admit.

V. 17. *The voice of the lad.*] Of his groaning, perhaps of his prayer.

What aileth thee Hagar? Fear not.] Intimating that the promiſe, which was made to her before, (See chap. 16. v. 10—13.) was a full ſecurity that Iſhmael ſhould not die at this time, and that therefore her anguiſh was needleſs, and her fear groundleſs.

V. 18. *Ariſe*, &c.] Do all thou canſt for him, by ſupporting him in his fainting.

V. 19.

Dayes del. Taylor Sc.

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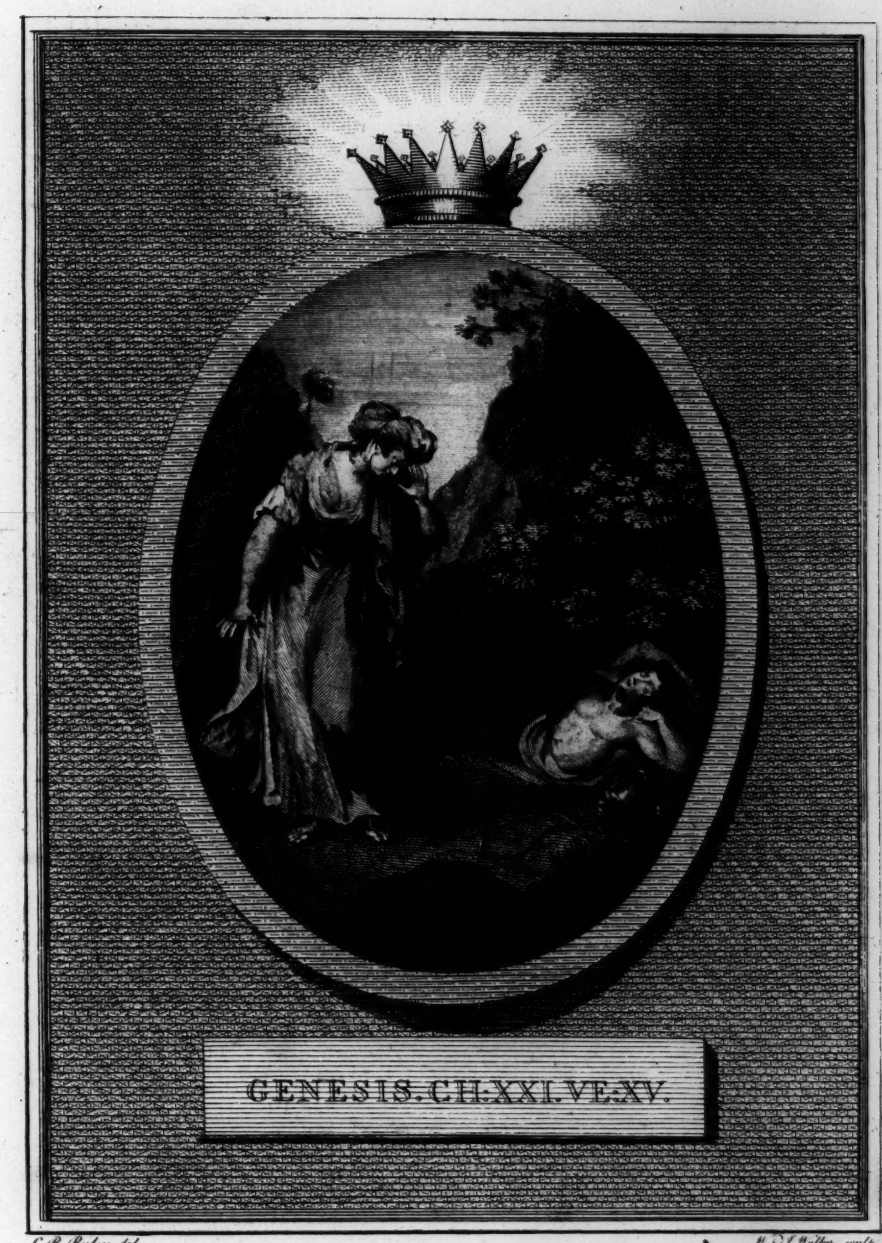

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19 And God opened her eyes and ſhe ſaw a well of water: and ſhe went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink.

20 And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderneſs, and became an archer.

21 And he dwelt in the wilderneſs of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.

22 And it came to paſs at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his hoſt ſpake unto Abraham, ſaying, God *is* with thee in all that thou doeſt.

23 Now therefore ſwear unto me here by God, that thou wilt not deal falſely with me, nor with my ſon, nor with my ſon's ſon: *but* according to the kindneſs that I have done unto thee, thou ſhalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou haſt ſojourned.

24 And Abraham ſaid, I will ſwear.

25 And Abraham reproved Abimelech becauſe of a well of water, which Abimelech's ſervants had violently taken away.

26 And Abimelech ſaid, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didſt thou tell me, neither yet heard I *of it* but to day.

27 And Abraham took ſheep, and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech: and both of them made a covenant.

28 And Abraham ſet ſeven ewe-lambs of the flock by themſelves.

29 And Abimelech ſaid unto Abraham, What mean theſe ſeven ewe-lambs which thou haſt ſet by themſelves?

30 And he ſaid, For *theſe* ſeven ewe-lambs ſhalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witneſs unto me, that I have digged this well.

31 Wherefore he called that place Beerſheba: becauſe there they ſware both of them.

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beerſheba: then Abimelech roſe up and Phichol the chief captain of his hoſt, and they returned into the land of the Philiſtines.

33 And *Abraham* planted a grove in Beerſheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlaſting God.

34 And Abraham ſojourned in the Philiſtines land many days. CHAP.

V. 19. *God opened*, &c.] By directing her attention to a relief, which was near at hand, but not before obſerved by her.

V. 20. *God was with Iſhmael.*] That is, God proſpered him in his providence: and I know not that we can poſitively conclude either from his miſbehaviour, general character, or the typical meaning of his expulſion from Abraham's family, that he lived and died deſtitute of the ſpecial grace, and favour of God.

Became an archer.] Thus in his perſon the prophecy began to be accompliſhed, as it hath been ever ſince in his poſterity. (See c. 16. v. 12.)

V. 22—23. Abimelech was convinced that the promiſes of God would be fulfilled to Abraham, and he was therefore deſirous of ſecuring his friendſhip, and the benefit of it to himſelf and to his poſterity: and we are inclined to hope, that this was the effect of faith in Abimelech alſo. (See a ſimilar inſtance, 1 *Sam.* c. 20. v. 12—17.)

V. 25. *A well of water.*] Wells of water being ſcarce, were conſequently very valuable in thoſe countries.

V. 31. *Beer-ſheba.*] The well of the oath.

V. 33. *Planted a grove.*] Perhaps to ſhelter his tent; and to form a ſhade for the performance of ſacred worſhip, which was at that time uſually performed in the open air.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bleſſed are they, whoſe hope is in the Lord, and who patiently wait for him: their expectations ſhall certainly be anſwered, and even exceeded; and though the delay may ſeem long, and the exerciſe of their faith and patience ſharp; yet they ſhall know, and acknowledge, that their bleſſings were only delayed, that *they* might have them with additional comfort, by perceiving more plainly the Lord's power, love, and faithfulneſs in them; and that *he* might have all the glory. Although the Lord does not relieve, and comfort at the times which we are apt to preſcribe for him; yet he will always obſerve his own ſet time, which is the beſt, that infinite wiſdom can ſelect: and they, who uprightly ſerve him, ſhall never be aſhamed of any thing, but of their mixtures of unbelief, and of the ſcantineſs of their expectation; which ſhame ſhall be ſwallowed up in their thankful joy for the largeneſs of his performances.—And if he keep his ſet time in giving bleſſings, we muſt obſerve our ſet time for performing his commandments, and not ſuffer any conſideration to influence us to omit, or defer our obedience. But grievous things follow cloſe after joyous in this world, and the effect of former miſcarriages oft interrupts the joy of preſent proſperity.—Even children are more certain cares than comforts: their ill behaviour, and contentions, and the fear or pain of parting with them, much alloy the comfort, which we might otherwiſe take in them. But in all our anxieties we ſhould ſee the direction, obey the commandment, and depend on the promiſe, and providence of God; and thus caſting our care upon him, our minds will be kept in peace, and he will take care of thoſe, whom we love, when we are not longer able to do it.—Let us not, however, at preſent totally omit to notice the ſecret work

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CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1st. Abraham's faith tried by the command to sacrifice his son Isaac, v. 1—2. 2d. His prompt and exact obedience, v. 3—11. 3d. Abraham prevented from slaying his son, and a ram appointed, and offerred in his stead, 12—13. 4th. The name given to the place in consequence, v. 14. 5th. The covenant renewed with Abraham, v. 15—19. 6th. Some account of Nahor's family, v. 20—24.

AND it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said, unto him, Abraham. And he said, behold, *here* I *am*.

2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

3 And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him.

4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes, and saw the place afar off.

5 And

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ing of the Lord in this domestic transaction; nor overlook the instruction therein given to us, not to rest in external privileges, or in our own performances, lest we be outcasts with Ishmael; but to seek the blessings of the new covenant, by faith in it's divine surety; and that grace, and spirit of adoption, which mark the children and heirs of God, and enable them to walk at liberty in his commandments, and chearfully to expect the fulfilment of his promises.—Let us further recollect, that all our despondencies, and complaints arise from forgetfulness of God's word; and that relief is often nearer than we perceive: and that the Lord always hears the prayer of faith, and frequently the very cry of distress.—It is our wisdom to connect ourselves with those, who are blessed of God: and it is becoming to make requitals of kindness, and assurances of our good intentions to those, who have been kind to us.—Punctuality in agreements guards against contention: and mild reproof of the person himself, where we suppose that we have been injured, is more becoming, than to speak of it to others. And wherever we sojourn, we must neither neglect, nor be ashamed of the worship of Jehovah, the everlasting God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1. *God did tempt*, &c.] That is, he put his faith, and obedience to the trial; which would necessarily involve a temptation to unbelief and disobedience. As Abraham stood the trial, it proved an occasion of excercising, and manifesting the strength of his faith, and the greatness of hs grace; but had he refused obedience, that would have discovered the force and prevalence of in-dwelling sin. It is true in the English language the word *trial* is generally used in a good, and the word *temptation* in a bad sense; but the same distinction is not found in the original languages. How then it will be said is this passage reconcileable with the assertion of the apostle, "that God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth "he any man?" (See *James* c. 1. v. 12. 14.) In answer to this, it may be proper to state a few things respecting trials, and temptations:—All these have reference, 1st. To the prevailing disposition of the heart; 2d. To the concurring influence of foreign agency; And 3d. To the external circumstances, in which a man is placed. If the prevailing disposition of the heart be sinful, God is not the author of it, nor of the temptation to sin, which arises from it. "Let no man say I am tempted of God!" "for "every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his "own lust, and enticed."—Upon the sinful inclinations of the heart Satan exerts his influence, probably through the imagination; and by the scenes, which he there presents, stirs up, and gives force to sinful passions.—This is in no wise to be ascribed to God: as he originally did not implant, so he never operates upon the mind directly, to excite or increase evil propensities therein.—But the peculiar circumstances, in which his providence places us, as well as the peculiar services, to which he may call us, may be such, as may give occasion both to our sinful dispositions to discover themselves, and to Satan to work upon them; though they have no tendency in themselves to produce sin, and are all appointed in perfect wisdom and holiness.—Had the young man, who applied to Christ, (See *Matt.* c. 19. v. 16—22.) been as much under the influence of holy dispositions, as Abraham was; the command given him would have been to him an occasion of performing a most exalted act of obedience, and shewing the greatness of his faith and love: had Abraham, when tried, been as much under the power of unbelief, and worldly attachments, as that young man was, he would have been tempted to disobedience, and overcome too. If sensual lust had been as habitually subjugated in David, as it was in Joseph; and especially had the fear, and love of God, and the sense of his presence been in the hour of trial, as strong in the one, as it was in the other; the sight of Bathsheba would not have produced adultery, but have given occasion to David to exercise self-denial: and had Joseph been in as careless and sensual a frame of mind, as David at that time was, he would certainly have been overcome by the temptation. This holds good in all cases; the prevalence of sin even makes the holy law of God an occasion of exciting all manner of concupiscence; and the very Gospel of evidencing still deeper malignity. But the prevalence of holiness in the heart turns even the most horrid temptations into occasions of shewing the strength of our trust in, and love to God.

5 And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.

6 And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid *it* upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife: and they went both of them together.

7 And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here *am* I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where *is* the lamb for a burnt-offering?

8 And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering: so they went both of them together.

9 And they came to the place which God had told him of, and Abraham built an altar there,

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God. Now we ought not to be of an unholy disposition, and God originally made no creature unholy, but all very good. Therefore the trials, which his providence, or precepts make of us, are in themselves occasions of shewing our obedience; and only become temptations to sin, through our evil dispositions, and satanical influence. But as in fallen man the disposition to holiness is first implanted, and afterwards maintained and increased by the Holy Spirit; therefore the blessed effects thereof are to be wholly ascribed to his grace, from whom every good gift comes, and from whom nothing else can proceed. (See *James* c. 1. v. 13. 18.) When therefore we are told that God tempteth no man; it means that he is not the author of sin either in the principle, exercises, or effect. When we pray not to be led into temptations; it means that we may not in his providence be placed in such circumstances, as might give Satan an advantage over us, through the depravity of our nature, or the weakness of our grace: and that he would restrain Satan, mortify corruption, and increase his grace in our hearts. And when God is said to tempt us; it means, that he puts our faith and love to the trial for our comfort and benefit, and for his glory, if we stand the trial: but if we fail, the blame, and shame are our's.

V. 2. *Take now thy son*, &c.] It is remarkable how every word in this surprising command seems marked with emphasis of terror; when we consider them as directed to a tender parent: Thy son—thine only son—even Isaac,—whom thou lovest.—Go into the land of Moriah,—then after that long journey, offer him there for a burnt offering, thyself shed his blood, and burn his body to ashes. How many objections might Abraham have started to this command? He might have urged the divine prohibition of murder; The evil report such an action would bring upon his character, the religion, which he professed, and the God, whom he worshiped; He might have pleaded the fatal consequences of such an example; And even the very promises, and covenant of God ratified again and again unto him. But, assured that it was a divine command, he resolves all these things into the infinite wisdom, justice, holiness, faithfulness, goodness, and power of God; and neither hesitates nor objects. Nay, the very energy of the command compared with past mercies received, and the promises made to him, suggested a solution; and it seems Abraham expected that God would from the ashes immediately restore his son to life, though there had never been an instance of a dead person raised again from the beginning of the world. (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 19.)

Land of Moriah.] The temple was built on mount Moriah, (2 *Chron.* c. 3. v. 1.) which was doubtless in the land of Moriah: this therefore must have been some adjacent mountain; and there is no improbability in the general opinion, that it was mount Calvary, where Christ the great Anti-type was afterwards crucified; and that it was selected with reference to that event.

V. 3. *And Abraham rose up early.*] He does not seem to have felt that anguish, or anxiety, nor does he discover that perturbation of mind, which might have been expected, when such a transaction was meditated; so that neither Sarah, nor his attendants, nor even Isaac seem to have perceived any thing unusual in the manner, with which he set about it: neither does he inform Sarah, lest her feebler faith, and more tender frame might not support so severe a shock: or lest she should start some objection, or make opposition to the heavenly mandate.

V. 4. *The third day.*] Abraham's faith was thus long in the fiery trial, that his obedience might not appear the result of rash precipitation, but of calm deliberation.

Saw the place.] Marked out by some such appearance of glory, as he had been accustomed to behold, as the token of the divine presence.

V. 5. *Abide ye here.*] That there might be no disturbance given by their affectionate, but ill-timed interposition.

And come again.] The plural number is here used and seems to indicate an expectation that, notwithstanding the intended sacrifice, Isaac, as being raised from the dead, would return with him.

V. 6. *Laid it upon Isaac.*] By which it appears that he was grown up. In this also he typified Christ bearing his cross.

V. 7. *Behold the*, &c.] This question so full of consideration, and filial respect, and affection, must have tended to put Abraham's resolution to the sharper trial.

V. 8. *God will provide*, &c.] Abraham deemed it not proper as yet to disclose the solemn business; but the Spirit of God by his mouth seems to predict the Lamb of God, which he hath provided, and which taketh away the sin of the world.

V. 9. *Bound his son*, &c.] Probably he previously explained to him the nature, and obligations of the divine command, the principle of his obedience, and the expectation of his faith in respect of the event: to this it is probable Isaac yielded submission, and concurrence: certainly he attempted no escape or resistance; but like him, whom he typified, he yielded up himself voluntarily

there, and laid the wood in order; and bound Iſaac his ſon, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.

10 And Abraham ſtretched forth his hand, and took the knife to ſlay his ſon.

11 And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and ſaid, Abraham, Abraham. And he ſaid, Here *am* I.

12 And he ſaid, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou feareſt God, ſeeing thou haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only *ſon* from me.

13 And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering, in the ſtead of his ſon.

14 And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is ſaid *to* this day, In the mount of the LORD it ſhall be ſeen.

15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the ſecond time,

16 And ſaid, By myſelf have I ſworn, ſaith the LORD, for becauſe thou haſt done this thing, and haſt not withheld thy ſon, thine only *ſon:*

17 That in bleſſing I will bleſs thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy ſeed as the ſtars of the heaven, and as the ſand which *is* upon the ſea ſhore; and thy ſeed ſhall poſſeſs the gate of his enemies:

18 And in thy ſeed ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed: becauſe thou haſt obeyed my voice.

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to be a ſacrifice. In being bound alſo he typified Chriſt, as bound by the officers of the high prieſt, and nailed to the croſs.

V. 10. *Took the knife*, &c.] With firmneſs, and calm determination, as if it had been an ordinary ſacrifice.

V. 11. *Called*, &c.] Abraham was allowed to proceed thus far, that his obedience might be complete: at this criſis he was ſtopped, for it was not God's intention that Iſaac ſhould actually be ſacrificed. In this tranſaction it was intimated that nobler blood, than that of animals, even the blood of the only begotten Son of God, was in due time to be ſhed for ſin: but in the mean while, that the Lord would in no caſe have human ſacrifices uſed, as typical of it: although it is evident that he has a right to remand the life, which he gave, in what manner he pleaſes.

V. 12. *I know*, &c.] The Lord knew it before; but would have experimental evidence of it, for the glory of his own grace, for Abraham's comfort, and for the benefit of his whole church.

Thou feareſt God.] The fear of God is frequently put for the whole of true godlineſs, being ſo eſſential a part of, and neceſſarily connected with, all the reſt. It ſeems to compriſe a reverential regard to the divine majeſty, authority, preſence and purity; an influencing dread of God's diſpleaſure, accompanied with a deſire and hope of his favour: (otherwiſe it would drive us from him, and inſpire hard thoughts of him, and excite enmity againſt him, and diſcourage all endeavours to pleaſe him) (See *Matt.* c. 25. v. 24. 25.) a ſubmiſſive acquieſcence in his appointments, a conſcientious obedience to his commandments, and a ſerious devoted attendance on his worſhip, in his holy ordinances: nor can it be ever ſeparated from a real belief of his truth, and a cordial acceptance of his ſalvation, as far as we are acquainted with them; or from love, gratitude, and other holy affections, or thoſe exerciſes of grace, which flow from them. In proportion as faith, and hope deliver the ſoul from terror, humble admiring reverence of God will be increaſed; and when perfect love ſhall have caſt out entirely and finally that fear, which hath torment; the filial reverential regard to God as our adorable friend and father, will be enlarged, and perfected for ever; as it is even in the holy angels.

V. 13. *A ram.*] The ram now becomes the type of the ſacrifice of Chriſt's death, and indicated what ſort of prefigurations of that event, God would approve, and accept: Iſaac thus reſcued, after having been three days under the ſentence of death, and living to be the progenitor of the promiſed innumerable poſterity; repreſents the Saviour riſing on the third day, "to ſee his ſeed, and prolong his days, that the pleaſure of the Lord might "proſper in his hand." (See *Iſa.* c. 53. v. 10.

V. 14. *Jehovah-Jireh.*] That is, the Lord will ſee, or provide, alluding to the expreſſion before uſed, "God "will provide himſelf a lamb for a burnt-offering."

In the mount, &c.] This paſſage ſhould certainly be tranſlated, "In the mount the Lord will appear:" that is juſt in the criſis, as he did upon the mount to Abraham. This name became a proverbial expreſſion, ſimilar to that in our language, "Man's extremity is God's opportu-"nity."

V. 16. *By myſelf*, &c.] Becauſe he could ſwear by no greater. (See *Heb.* c. 6. v. 13—14.) This was ſolemnly pledging the honour of his whole name, and of all his perfections, as the ſecurity for the fulfilment of his engagements to Abraham. Thus the promiſe was given, (chap. 12.); it was formed into a covenant (chap. 15.); that covenant was ſigned and ſealed, and ratified (chap. 17.); and now in this place ſolemnly confirmed with an oath: and all this, not only that Abraham, but that we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before us in Chriſt. (*Heb.* c. 6. v. 16—17.) And can any doubt remain about the identity of the covenant, which was made with Abraham, and that which is made with other true believers?

V. 18. *Becauſe thou haſt obeyed*, &c.] His obedience evidenced the ſtrength of his faith, and the ſincerity of his love:

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19 So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up, and went together to Beer-sheba, and Abraham dwelt at Beer-sheba.

20 And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor;

21 Huz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram,

22 And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.

23 And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor Abraham's brother.

24 And his concubine whose name *was* Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah.

CHAP.

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love: thus faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect. (See *James*, c. 2. v. 21—22—23. As a sinner he was justified before God by faith alone; as a professed believer he was justified before the whole world by the works, which his faith produced.

V. 20.] This is introduced here as prefatory to the account, which we shall shortly have of Isaac's marriage with Rebecca.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst we are in this world, we must never expect to be exempt from trials, and frequently the sharpest come last: we should therefore put on, and keep on the whole armour of God, and should stand prepared and watching, and ready to say, when summoned to the conflict, "Here "I am."—Where God bestows much grace, he will be sure greatly to try it, for the glory of his own name, and for the good of others: and though the conflict be painful at the present; yet the event shall be glorious, and joyful. Conscious of our weakness, we ought not to rush uncalled into difficult services, and should pray not to be led into temptations: yet, when upright, and watchful, we may be confident that the Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able: nay we may count it all joy, when we fall into divers temptations; firmly believing that the trial of our faith shall be to praise, and honour and glory, if not now, yet at the coming of Jesus Christ. If there be any earthly object, which seems likely to rival God in our affections, we may expect that he will in that particular try the sincerity, and supremacy of our love; and by chearfully parting with even our beloved Isaacs for the Lord's sake, we give the fullest proof that we have given him our heart. They, who would perform unreserved obedience, (when they are satisfied what the will of God is) must neither be influenced by carnal affections, nor listen to plausible objections, nor consult partial counsellors, nor make needless delays, nor leave an opening to interruption, and disturbance: but committing all into the Lord's hand, must simply follow his direction, and leave all consequences with him: and they need not doubt, but in the trying moment he will appear for their comfort, or relief.—What a wonderful sight is this, which we are now beholding! the long-expected seed, the son of joy, the child of promise, the well-beloved, the only beloved Isaac, now grown up to maturity, and entwining every day more closely round the tender affections of his parents, of which he was justly deserving; nay, the church's hope, and the declared progenitor of him, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed; laid upon the altar, bound, and mildly expecting the fatal blow from the hand of his most loving father; who, with collected firmness, and intrepid resolution, takes the knife to shed his blood, prepared immediately to kindle that fire, which was to consume him to ashes! For this singular conduct, Abraham could render no reason, but God's express command: nor was there any other principle of his obedience to that extraordinary command, an obedience never equalled by mere man, but faith, an unshaken belief of the divine testimony, and a firm expectation of the accomplishment of his promises; with a full confidence in his wisdom, power, and love to perform them. Though this command seemed to run counter to those promises, he knew that it only seemed to do so. Obedience was his part; it was the Lord's to see to the honour of his own faithfulness. He had received his Isaac from the Lord, who had a right to dispose of him: honour and comfort are in this path, and though untried before, with undaunted confidence he walks therein. Hear this, ye inattentive objectors, who traduce the doctrine of salvation by faith, as inimical to practical godliness: go, and upon your principles, equal and exceed this obedience of faith: till then be dumb, or allow, that though you understand it not, yet this apparently weak principle produces effects beyond comparison prodigious.—But hear this likewise, ye abusers of this most holy faith, whose conduct merits still deeper indignation: who say you have faith, yet live in, spare and cleave to your sins, renounce not the world, deny not yourselves, refuse the cross, are lovers of yourselves, and of pleasure, more than lovers of God; and instead of parting with a deservedly beloved Isaac, at God's command, like Judas kiss Christ, and sell him to his enemies for a few pieces of silver, or some vile sensual gratification.—Hear, I say, and compare your faith with Abraham's, and acknowledge that ye are no genuine sons of this father of the faithful; but that your faith is dead, your hope presumptuous; and that Abraham disowns, and is ashamed of you.—In plain language, nothing but faith will carry a man through with obedience in every possible trial; and that is no true faith, which perseveres in refusing obedience to a plain command, in any case whatsoever. "Ye are my friends, if "ye do whatsoever I command you." In proportion as faith stands this test, when sharply and repeatedly tried, we may be assured that we are Abraham's children, interested in his covenant, and in the oath by which it was confirmed, and have a right to that strong consolation, which God thereby wills, and intends his people.

But in this wonderful transaction, faith discerns one infinitely

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains, 1st. Sarah's age and death, and Abraham's mourning for her, v. 1—2. 2d. The conference, and agreement betwixt Abraham, and the sons of Heth, about the purchase of a burying-place, v. 3—18. 3d. Sarah's burial, v. 19—20.

AND Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: *these were* the years of the life of Sarah.

2 And Sarah died in Kirjath-arba; the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan: And Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.

3 And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying,

4 I *am* a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a burying-place with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight.

5 And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him,

6 Hear us, my lord; thou *art* a mighty prince amongst us; in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead: none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead.

7 And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, *even* to the children of Heth.

8 And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar:

9 That

finitely more stupendous! What was the love of Abraham, or of Isaac to the Lord, compared with the love of God the Father in giving his only begotten Son; and of that only begotten Son in giving himself a sacrifice upon the cross for the sins of men? God commanded Abraham previous to his yielding up his son: but the sacrifice of Christ even prevented our solicitation. The Lord had an undoubted right to demand that life, which he had given: but where shall we sinners, deserving of eternal misery, ground our claim to such a gift, as that of Christ to be the propitiation for our sins? The Lord had been a most liberal friend to Abraham, previous to his being willing to offer Isaac as a burnt-offering; "but God commended his love to us, in "that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and in "that when we were enemies we were reconciled to God "by the death of his Son." Isaac was a sinner born to die: but the Son of God *assumed human nature* for the very purpose of suffering death for us; and in human nature being free from sin, was under no obligation to suffer death, but the bond of his love to us. If Isaac were justly beloved of Abraham; Jesus was the beloved Son of the Father, in whom he was well pleased: had Isaac died, it had been with inward peace, without extraordinary pain, and with singular reputation: but Christ actually tasted death in all it's bitterness, died surrounded with contempt and insult, treated with indignity and cruelty, and loaded with the weight of our iniquities; whilst it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief, and make his very soul a sacrifice for sin.—Hereby we know the loving kindness of God our Saviour towards sinful man, in that he hath not withheld his Son, his only Son from us: hereby we perceive the love of Christ in that he gave himself a sacrifice for our sins. Behold he dies! yet rises! lives, ascends, and intercedes for us! and calls to sinners to come to him, and partake of his blood-bought salvation: let sinners be warned to hear his voice; and encouraged to trust in him. He calls to his redeemed people to rejoice in him, and glorify him. What then shall we render for all his benefits? Let this love constrain us to live no longer to ourselves, but to him, who died for us, and rose again; and admiring and adoring his grace, to devote our all to his service, who laid down his life for our salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *Kirjath-arba.*] It seems Abraham had some time before quitted Beer-sheba, and come to sojourn there.

Came to, &c.] Came to her tent to express his unfeigned sorrow, and pay her the last tribute of affection.

V. 3. *Sons of Heth.*] Called elsewhere Hittites, or Hethites.

V. 4. *A stranger, and a sojourner.*] One, who had no fixed settlement amongst them, nor attempted to acquire any.

Give me.] This word does not always express bestowing gratuitously, but in this and some other places we are led by the context to interpret it of a grant made for a valuable consideration.

That I may bury, &c.] It has generally been the custom in the church of God, to *inter* the dead; though burning has been much in use amongst others: and indeed it more aptly expresses an acquiescence in that sentence, "Until thou return unto the ground, from whence thou "wast taken," &c.

V. 6. *A mighty prince.*] According to the custom of those times, Abraham's retinue, wealth, and prosperity, would rank him amongst the other surrounding princes: now the promise begins to be fulfilled, "I will make thy "name great."

V. 7. *Bowed himself.*] He rendered civil honour, and respect to them, according to the custom of that age and country. It is evidently no part of the religion of the Bible to refuse these expressions of regard; but an ornament to godliness to render them, as far as can be done, without flattering the persons, or countenancing the crimes of others.

V. 9.

9 That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which *is* in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me, for a possession of a burying-place amongst you.

10 And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth. And Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, *even* of all that went in at the gates of his city, saying,

11 Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that *is* therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead.

12 And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land.

13 And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou *wilt give it*, I pray thee hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take *it* of me, and I will bury my dead there.

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him,

15 My lord, hearken unto me: the land *is worth* four hundred shekels of silver; what *is* that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead.

16 And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron, and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current *money* with the merchant.

17 And the field of Ephron, which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* therein, and all the trees that *were* in the field, that *were* in all the borders round about, were made sure

18 Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city.

19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre: the same *is* Hebron in the land of Canaan.

20 And the field, and the cave that *is* therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place, by the sons of Heth.

V. 9.] Abraham would have a separate burying-place; perhaps intimating that though the righteous live intermingled with the ungodly in this world, there will be a separation after death.

V. 18.] Thus he had an earnest of Canaan put into his possession, as a kind of pledge of his reversionary inheritance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The longest life must shortly come to a close; and the survivors amongst relations only live to experience the greater number of painful separations. The more valued any earthly enjoyment is, the greater must be our reluctance to part with it, and our anxiety about it; and the sharper the anguish when that event actually takes place: and when those, who have lived together in conjugal harmony and affection for many years, come to part, it is but one remove from the dissolution of soul and body.—Thus the entrance of Sin, and the sentence of death have filled all below with vanity and vexation.—Blessed be God that there is a world, where sin, death, vanity, and vexation, gain no admission: that there are relations formed, which even death cannot part; and that even sinners are invited to enter into this indissoluble union, and intimate relation with the everlasting God, by faith in his only begotten Son.—"He, that is joined to the Lord is one "spirit;" and no separation can injure, or need terrify him, who can never feel that separation from God, which is the second death. Shortly will those, whom we most love; yea our own bodies, which we so inordinately care for, become so deformed, that they must be buried out of sight: how vain then to boast of vigour and comeliness! How mean to pamper and decorate these vile bodies! And how loose should we be to all earthly attachments! Let us seek rather to have our souls adorned with heavenly graces; then shall they flourish in immortal beauty, and the very body shall rise incorruptible and glorious; meet for the eternal enjoyment of God in the blessed society of the angelic hosts.—And as we are strangers, and sojourners here below, and are seeking a heavenly city, and shall shortly want nothing but a burying-place, being speedily to follow those, who go before us to the grave, let us mourn departed friends with submission, and in hope; not suffer indulged affections to interfere with present duty; avoid every appearance of selfishness; and not be outdone by the people of the world in apparent generosity; let us manage our concerns with punctuality and precision, in order to avoid contention; and so stand prepared and waiting for the coming of our Lord.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. Abraham now grown old, commissioning a servant to go and take a wife for Isaac, v. 1—9. *2d. His journey, and arrival at the city of Nahor and the house of Laban, v.* 10—33. *3d. His proposals of a marriage betwixt Isaac, and Rebekah made, and acceded to, v.* 34—58. *4th. Rebekah's journey, meeting Isaac, and marriage with him,* 59—67.

AND Abraham was old *and* well stricken in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things.

2 And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh:

3 And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites amongst whom I dwell:

4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.

5 And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest?

6 And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou, that thou bring not my son thither again.

7 The LORD God of heaven which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *Abraham was old*, &c.] This was three years after Sarah's death, when Isaac was forty years of age, and Abraham an hundred and forty. Though a numerous posterity was so eminent a part of the promised blessing, there was no great haste made about Isaac's marriage; and much less afterwards about that of Jacob.

Had blessed, &c.] Notwithstanding his trials, yea even by means of them.

V. 2. *His eldest servant*, &c.] Probably Eliezer of Damascus, who was the steward of his house, (See c. 15. v. 2.) a man eminent for wisdom and piety.

Put thy hand under my thigh.] Lifting up the hand to the Lord was before mentioned by Abraham, as his form of taking an oath: (c. 14. v. 22.) or solemn vow to the lord: putting the hand under the thigh is mentioned in this place, and in that of Joseph c. 47. v. 29. as expressive of submissive duty, and fidelity.

V. 3. *That thou shalt not*, &c.] That is, that thou wilt not only not use thy influence during my life, or after my death, to promote such a marriage; but that thou wilt use thy diligence to prevent it.

Canaanites.] Who were then generally idolaters, and wicked, and not proper persons, with whom to form so intimate a connection.

V. 4. *To my kindred*, &c.] Amongst whom the worship of God was still maintained.

V. 5. The servant supposes, that when a proper person was found, she would not consent to leave home, and become a stranger in Canaan: and he asks whether, in that case, Isaac should go to live in Mesopotamia?

V. 6. The sojourning of these patriarchs in Canaan was a representation of the state of believers in this world; and Isaac's returning and settling in that country, from which Abraham at God's command had come, would have counteracted the original call, and been an emblem of a professor's apostacy.

V. 7. *The Lord God*, &c.] Abraham here declares his assurance, that God by his powerful influence upon the human heart, and by his providential interposition, would remove all hindrances, and prosper the undertaking.

Shall send his angels before thee.] We may here make some remarks about good angels, as we formerly did about evil spirits, or fallen angels. (See note *Gen.* c. 3. v. 1.) It appears from Scripture that these were created by God complete in derived, and dependant excellency: that they are very numerous, and of different ranks, and orders, angels, archangels, principalities and powers: that they still retain, and are now confirmed in the image and favour of God, in holiness and felicity: that they excel in wisdom, knowledge, and strength; are as a flame of fire with fervent love, gratitude, and active zeal; yet proportionably influenced by deep humility, and reverential awe of the majesty of heaven. They are represented as standing in the presence of the Lord, waiting his commands: covering their faces with their wings, or prostrate in profound adoration: hearkening to his voice, doing his will, and fulfilling his pleasure: they are on this account called angels, or messengers; for though he needs them not, puts no trust in them, and even, in the comparison with his own infinite wisdom, charges them with folly; yet he is pleased to honour, and (if I may so speak) to indulge them with his commands; which they execute with unwearied alacrity; and when he appoints and approves, the meanest, or the most important services are alike delightful. They are represented as ministers of his providence, and oft introduced as executing his awful vengeance: but more generally considered as all ministering Spirits sent forth to minister to them, who shall be heirs of salvation. (*Heb.* c. 1. v. 14.) There is not an archangel through all the heavenly train, who would scorn, nay who would not delight, and glory in attending a poor

his angel before thee, and thou ſhalt take a wife unto my ſon from thence.

8 And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou ſhalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my ſon thither again.

9 And the ſervant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his maſter, and ſware to him concerning that matter.

10 And the ſervant took ten camels, of the camels of his maſter, and departed, (for all the goods of his maſter *were* in his hand): and he aroſe, and went to Meſopotamia, unto the city of Nahor.

11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city, by a well of water, at the time of the evening, *even* the time that women go out to draw *water*.

12 And he ſaid, O LORD God of my maſter Abraham, I pray thee ſend me good ſpeed this day, and ſhew kindneſs unto my maſter Abraham.

13 Behold, I ſtand *here* by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water:

14 And let it come to paſs, that the damſel to whom I ſhall ſay, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and ſhe ſhall ſay, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink alſo: *let the ſame be* ſhe *that* thou haſt appointed for thy ſervant Iſaac; and thereby ſhall I know that thou haſt ſhewed kindneſs unto my maſter.

15 And it came to paſs before he had done ſpeaking, that behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, ſon of Milcah the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her ſhoulder.

16 And the damſel *was* very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and ſhe went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up.

17 And the ſervant ran to meet her, and ſaid, Let me (I pray thee) drink a little water of thy pitcher.

18 And ſhe ſaid, Drink, my lord: and ſhe haſted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink.

19 And when ſhe had done giving him drink, ſhe ſaid, I will draw *water* for thy camels alſo, until they have done drinking.

20 And ſhe haſted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels.

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a poor deſpiſed Lazarus in an hoſpital or a dungeon, to ward off the machinations of evil ſpirits, to procure a calm to his dying moments, and to hail his departing ſoul to the manſions of the bleſſed: as all are free from pride and envy, all full of love to the Redeemer, and redeemed, and rejoycing even over one ſinner being brought to true repentance. As God's inſtruments our obligations to them are great: but all the worſhip and praiſe belong to him; they are fellow-ſervants, have no claim to ſuch ſervice, but abhor ſuch ſacrilege and idolatry. We may however feel a love for them, and rejoice in the thought of being with them, and like them for ever: and we may well endeavour to copy the example of their humble zeal, their fervent love, their ſolemn worſhip, and chearful ſervices: and in our conduct to each other to take pattern from them to condeſcend to the meaneſt, and the vileſt, not envying, not diſdaining, not overlooking one another. For the loweſt, and worſt of human creatures is not ſo mean and vile, compared with the greateſt, and the beſt of men; as the greateſt and beſt of men is mean and vile, compared even with a created angel.

V. 10. *Ten camels.*] With all other ſuitable attendants for ſuch a journey, on ſuch an occaſion. (See v. 32.)

V. 14. *Let it come,* &c.] There needs great humility and caution in imitating ſuch examples; if they are at all to be imitated, now that the written word is our complete, and univerſal rule. However we cannot too entirely depend upon God to direct, and proſper us in all our undertakings; and we muſt not pretend to limit the Lord, who may at ſome times impreſs the minds of his ſervants in perplexity in ſuch a manner, as to lead them to expect extraordinary interpoſitions, and then evidently to anſwer ſuch expectations. Theſe things therefore we muſt not univerſally condemn, provided they induce nothing in the conduct of men contrary to the plain rule of our duty; nor into the creed, contrary to the rule of our faith; and do not take off men's attention from the written word, or ordinary means of inſtruction; nor are ſubſtituted as the foundation of hope, inſtead of the promiſes of God, and the work of his Spirit upon the heart. It is further obſervable that Abraham's ſervant has in his mind, in this addreſs, the *idea* of a wife for Iſaac; as one uniting in her character, ſimplicity, induſtry, humility, affability, and chearfulneſs in being ſerviceable and hoſpitable. And, whatever may be the maxims and faſhions of a luxurious, and diſſipated age; theſe in the judgment of common ſenſe, as well as piety, are the proper qualifications for one, who is called to ſupport the honourable, and important characters of a wife, and mother; and is to be the companion of a man's retired hours; and to be intruſted with the management of his domeſtic concerns, and with forming the tender minds of his children.

21 And

21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey proſperous, or not.

22 And it came to paſs as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden ear-ring, of half a ſhekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands, of ten *ſhekels* weight of gold;

23 And ſaid, Whoſe daughter *art* thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room *in* thy father's houſe for us to lodge in?

24 And ſhe ſaid unto him, I *am* the daughter of Bethuel the ſon of Milcah, which ſhe bare unto Nahor.

25 She ſaid moreover unto him, We have both ſtraw and provender enough, and room to lodge in.

26 And the man bowed down his head, and worſhipped the LORD.

27 And he ſaid, Bleſſed *be* the LORD God of my maſter Abraham, who hath not left deſtitute my maſter of his mercy and his truth: I *being* in the way, the LORD led me to the houſe of my maſter's brethren.

28 And the damſel ran, and told *them of* her mother's houſe theſe things.

29 And Rebekah had a brother, and his name *was* Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well.

30 And it came to paſs when he ſaw the ear-ring and bracelets upon his ſiſter's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his ſiſter, ſaying, Thus ſpake the man unto me; that he came unto the man, and behold, he ſtood by the camels at the well.

31 And he ſaid, Come in, thou bleſſed of the LORD; wherefore ſtandeſt thou without? for I have prepared the houſe, and room for the camels.

32 And the man came into the houſe: and he ungirded his camels, and gave ſtraw and provender for the camels, and water to waſh his feet, and the men's feet that *were* with him.

33 And there was ſet *meat* before him to eat: but he ſaid, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he ſaid, Speak on.

34 And he ſaid, I *am* Abraham's ſervant.

35 And the LORD hath bleſſed my maſter greatly, and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and ſilver, and gold, and men-ſervants, and maid-ſervants, and camels, and aſſes.

36 And Sarah my maſter's wife bare a ſon to my maſter when ſhe was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath.

37 And my maſter made me ſwear, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not take a wife to my ſon of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whoſe land I dwell:

38 But thou ſhalt go unto my father's houſe, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my ſon.

39 And I ſaid unto my maſter, Peradventure the woman will not follow me.

40 And he ſaid unto me, The LORD before whom I walk, will ſend his angel with thee, and proſper thy way; and thou ſhalt take a wife for my ſon of my kindred, and of my father's houſe.

41 Then ſhalt thou be clear from *this* my oath, when thou comeſt to my kindred; and if they give not thee *one*, thou ſhalt be clear from my oath.

42 And I came this day unto the well, and ſaid, O LORD God of my maſter Abraham, if now thou do proſper my way which I go:

V. 21. *Held his peace.*] He had ſervants with him, who might have ſpared Rebekah that labour; but he interpoſed not, that he might obſerve her conduct, and wait the anſwer to his prayer.

V. 22. *Shekel.*] A ſhekel is about half an ounce.

V. 29.] It appears probable that Bethuel the father of Rebekah was dead, and that the Bethuel afterwards mentioned was Laban's younger brother. (See v. 50. and 55.)

V. 36.] We find that Abraham had intelligence of their affairs, and we may ſuppoſe they had alſo heard of him: but now the report was authenticated, and the particulars aſcertained.

V. 44. *Appointed out for my maſter's ſon.*] Thoſe events which to us are the effect of choice, contrivance, or chance, are matters of appointment with God: and the perſuaſion of this prevents not, but rather encourages in the uſe of all *proper means:* at the ſame time that it confines us to thoſe means, and delivers the mind from uſeleſs anxiety and perturbation about the conſequences.

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Days del. *W. Taylor sculp.*

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43 Behold, I ſtand by the well of water; and it ſhall come to paſs, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw *water*, and I ſay to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink;

44 And ſhe ſay to me, Both drink thou, and I will alſo draw for thy camels: *let* the ſame *be* the woman whom the Lord hath appointed out for my maſter's ſon.

45 And before I had done ſpeaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her ſhoulder; and ſhe went down unto the well, and drew *water*: and I ſaid unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee.

46 And ſhe made haſte, and let down her pitcher from her *ſhoulder*, and ſaid, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink alſo: ſo I drank, and ſhe made the camels drink alſo.

47 And I aſked her, and ſaid, Whoſe daughter *art* thou? And ſhe ſaid, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's ſon, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the ear-ring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands.

48 And I bowed down my head, and worſhipped the LORD, and bleſſed the LORD God of my maſter Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my maſters brothers daughter unto his ſon.

49 And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my maſter, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left.

50 Then Laban and Bethuel anſwered and ſaid, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot ſpeak unto thee bad or good.

51 Behold, Rebekah *is* before thee, take *her*, and go, and let her be thy maſters ſons wife, as the LORD hath ſpoken.

52 And it came to paſs, that when Abrahams ſervant heard their words, he worſhipped the LORD, *bowing himſelf* to the earth.

53 And the ſervant brought forth jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave *them* to Rebekah: He gave alſo to her brother and to her mother precious things.

54 And they did eat and drink, he and the men that *were* with him, and tarried all night: and they roſe up in the morning, and he ſaid, Send me away unto my maſter.

55 And her brother and her mother ſaid, Let the damſel abide with us *a few* days, at the leaſt ten; after that ſhe ſhall go.

56 And he ſaid unto them, Hinder me not, ſeeing the LORD hath proſpered my way: ſend me away, that I may go to my maſter.

57 And they ſaid, We will call the damſel, and enquire at her mouth.

58 And they called Rebekah, and ſaid unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And ſhe ſaid, I will go.

59 And they ſent away Rebekah their ſiſter, and her nurſe, and Abrahams ſervant, and his men.

60 And they bleſſed Rebekah, and ſaid unto her, Thou *art* our ſiſter, be thou *the mother* of thouſands of millions, and let thy ſeed poſſeſs the gate of thoſe which hate them.

61 And Rebekah aroſe, and her damſels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the ſervant took Rebekah, and went his way.

62 And Iſaac came from the way of the well Lahai-roi; for he dwelt in the ſouth-country.

V. 45. *In mine heart.*] Some things form more proper ſubjects for ſecret than for ſocial prayer; and Abraham's ſervant conſidered this matter to be of that kind: and therefore uſed mental prayer, till the ſingularity of the anſwer made it proper to be communicated.

V. 50. *The thing proceedeth from the Lord.*] It is ſo evidently according to the appointment, and under the direction of the Lord, that there is no room for heſitation, or objection.

V. 55—56.] His deſire of communicating the agreeable intelligence at home might cauſe him to haſten his departure: and there was a typical meaning in this whole tranſaction, in which delays, even ſhort ones, are often fatal; "To day, if ye will hear his voice."

V. 58. *And ſhe ſaid, I will go.*] The excellency of Rebekah's whole character forbids us to think, that there could be any thing in this anſwer inconſiſtent with true delicacy; though perhaps inconſiſtent with it's modern ſtandard; when it ſeems to be refined into a degree of affectation inconſiſtent with ſincerity. Doubtleſs ſhe ſaw, and that with peculiar clearneſs, that the whole was the appointment of God; and ſhe would not ſo much as ſeem to ſlight the honour, and happineſs of being a progenitor of the promiſed ſeed; but like his immediate parent, anſwered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto "me according to thy word."

V. 62. *Lahai Roi.*] Where the Lord looked upon Hagar.

63 And Iſaac went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide: and he lift up his eyes, and ſaw, and behold, the camels *were* coming.

64 And Rebekah lift up her eyes, and when ſhe ſaw Iſaac, ſhe lighted off the camel.

65 For ſhe had ſaid unto the ſervant, What man *is* this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the ſervant had ſaid, It *is* my maſter: therefore ſhe took a veil and covered herſelf.

66 And the ſervant told Iſaac all things that he had done.

67 And Iſaac brought her into his mother Sarahs tent, and took Rebekah, and ſhe became his wife; and he loved her: and Iſaac was comforted after his mothers *death*.

CHAP.

V. 63. *To meditate.*] To reflect on the works and truths of God, and pour out his heart in prayer, and praiſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The effect of a good example, of good inſtructions, and of the reverential worſhip of God in his ordinances, and in private families, will generally appear in the piety, faithfulneſs, prudence, and affection of the domeſtics: and to live in ſuch families, or be favoured with ſuch ſervants, are bleſſings from God highly to be valued, and thankfully to be acknowledged. No concern in life is of more importance to ourſelves, to others, and to the church of God, than contracting marriage; which therefore ought always to be undertaken with much circumſpection, and prudence; with an eye to the will, and appointment of God; and with prayer for his direction and bleſſing. It is an important part of a parent's duty with great tenderneſs, and affection to direct, counſel, and aſſiſt his children in this buſineſs: and young perſons are very happy, who have parents, that will in a proper manner, and with ſuitable conſideration perform this duty; and they are wiſe, who avail themſelves of ſuch advantages. But where ſuch parents are not conſulted, and regarded, the bleſſing of God cannot be expected; nor when Godlineſs is not reckoned the primary, tho' it be not the only requiſite, in a companion for life.—They, who ſtay their minds on God, will be kept in peace, and enabled to diſregard the peradventures, which trouble others: They only wait to know God's appointment, and are prepared to be ſatisfied with it, and are aſſured that in due time it will take place, and will be correſpondent with his promiſes.: And they have only to know, and do their duty, and uſe the means, which are appointed, or allowed. We ſhould however imitate the example of Abraham's ſervant, and in binding ourſelves by an oath, take care that thro' inattention we do not enſnare our ſouls.—They, who acknowledge God in all their ways, will find him preſent to direct their paths, and make their way proſperous; and when the prayer of faith meets with an immediate anſwer, the glory ought as ſpeedily to be rendered to the Lord in ſolemn praiſe, and thanksgivings.—How are the times changed, ſince the chief perſons in their ſeveral places of abode, and their ſons and daughters, chearfully performed the moſt laborious ſervices with their own hands! I fear we have got but a poor exchange in our exceſſive refinements, for the ſimplicity, diligence, and uſefulneſs, which characterized theſe patriarchal times. Whatever buſineſs we are intruſted with, we ſhould, like this pious ſervant, attend to it in preference to our own indulgence; or even refreſhment, if neceſſary: and when our purpoſe is honourable, and we are waiting to know the Lord's appointment, a plain recital of matter of facts, in which the hand of God appears evident, is more becoming, and frequently more effectual, than all the trappings of oratory, which too often diſguiſe the real truth. And the remarkable private experience, which we have of God's mercy and faithfulneſs, ought to be declared amongſt thoſe, who fear God for his glory and their encouragement.—Tho' the counſel and conſent of parents ſhould be obtained, yet, before marriage be ſolemnized, the mutual, and chearful compliance of the contracting parties muſt be had; being eſſential to the comfort and happineſs of that honourable eſtate. And when matters are thus orderly managed, and are begun, continued, and completed in the excerciſe of faith, and with the prayer of all parties concerned, the bleſſing of God upon them, and their poſterity may reaſonably be expected; and the comfort of one relation will compenſate for the loſs of another.

But will not the moſt ſober judgment allow that in this tranſaction we have a type of Chriſt, and his church?—We know who is the Bridegroom, that in perfect harmony with his heavenly Father, having offered himſelf as a ſacrifice for ſin, eſpouſes his church unto himſelf. This he does by the miniſtration of his ſervants the preachers of the goſpel, who by his commiſſion go to find out thoſe, who are afar off, that they may preſent them as a chaſte virgin unto Chriſt. His glory, his excellency, his unſearchable riches (for all things, that the father hath, are his) his ſuitableneſs, and loving kindneſs, and their own experience of his grace, they repreſent to ſinners, to induce their willingneſs: By theſe repreſentations, and the drawings of his ſpirit, and ſome foretaſtes of his goodneſs, they are prevailed upon to conſent to their own happineſs, and made willing to forſake their own country, and their father's houſe, and renounce all for him. Then does he adorn them with the robe of his righteouſneſs, and the graces of his ſpirit, endow them with all his riches, enoble them by their relation to him, and makes them happy in his love, and his fellowſhip with them. They are now ſupremely attached to his perſon, and intereſt, faithful to their engagements to him, give him their heart, and devote body and ſoul to his ſervice in ſincerity and ſimplicity. He greatly delights in the beauty, which he hath put upon them; and being thus united to him, they bring forth fruit unto God; and at length he will waſh away every ſpot and

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1st. Abraham's marriage to, and offspring by Keturah, v. 1—6. 2d. His age, death, and burial, v. 7—10. 3d. The blessing of God upon Isaac, v. 11. 4th. The posterity and death of Ishmael, v. 12—18. 5th. Circumstances of the birth of Esau, and Jacob, v. 20—26. 6th. Their different characters and pursuits, &c. v. 27—28. 7th. Esau's selling his birthright, v. 29—34.

THEN again Abraham took a wife, and her name *was* Keturah.

2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

3 And Jokshan begat Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Ashurim, and Letushim, and Leummim.

4 And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

5 And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac.

6 But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son (while he yet lived) east-ward unto the east-country.

7 And these *are* the days of the years of Abrahams life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years.

8 Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full *of years*; and was gathered to his people.

9 And his sons Isaac, and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which *is* before Mamre;

10 The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.

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and blemish, and present them (adorned as a Bride for her Husband) faultless before his presence with exceeding glory—In this view how punctual, laborious, faithful, self denied, disinterested, fervent in prayer, watchful of providence, jealous for Christ, and affectionately desirous of souls, ought all to be, who sustain the sacred ministerial character. The good Lord send forth many such, and make them wise to win souls.

NOTES

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1. *Again Abraham took a wife*, &c.] Abraham was 137 years of age when Sarah died; and almost 40 years before, his age had been considered as a very powerful obstruction to his having children; yet he had six children by Keturah, whom he sent away in his life time; on these grounds therefore some have conjectured that he had married this wife long before.—But the language of the original text, "And Abraham added, and "took a wife," &c. as well as the unnatural disturbance, which this would occasion in this simple narration, militate against such an opinion.—An innumerable posterity was promised to him by the Lord; whose power, and faithfulness were pledged for the performance thereof. The long delay was the intentional trial of Abraham's faith; and the late performance, when probability and the general efficacy of second causes had ceased, evidenced that it was the immediate effect of Almighty Power. And as Abraham lived 38 years after Sarah's death, all these children might be grown up, much older than Ishmael was, when he was sent away, and might be settled in the world before Abraham's death.

V. 4. *All these*, &c.] They were afterwards much mingled with the Ishmaelites, and many great nations at this very day claim Abraham for their progenitor by one of the two.

V. 5. *All that he had*, &c.] That is, the bulk of his substance as his legitimate heir.—Typifying in this the Son of God, whom he hath appointed heir of all things: and representing true christians, who are joint heirs with Christ, and to whom, with him, the Father freely giveth all things.

V. 6. *Concubines.*] This word is used, as we shall see hereafter, not only for one, who cohabited with a man that had another wife, as Hagar: but for one, who was a lawful wife; but only not admitted to the full privilege of that relation, in respect of rank, and possessions, as Keturah.

Gave gifts.] As Ishmael was one of these, we learn from this clause, that he was not sent away destitute, or finally deserted by Abraham; as is sometimes supposed from an inattentive perusal of Chap. 21. In this transaction we have an intended emblem of the blessings of common providence, which God bestows upon those, who have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ. (See *Gal.* c. 4. v. 28.)

V. 8. *Abraham gave up the ghost.*] An expression, which is used for the death of the wicked, as well as of the righteous; (See *Acts*, c. 5. v. 5—10. and c. 12. v. 23.) and therefore implies no more than the departure of the rational and immortal soul from the body at death: when it returns to God, that gave it, by him to be disposed of, according to the things done in the body, whether they be good, or evil.

Full of years.] The words *of years*, are not in the original; it is merely *full*, that is, satisfied of living in this world, and ripe for a better.

11 And it came to paſs after the death of Abraham, that God bleſſed his ſon Iſaac: and Iſaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi.

12 Now theſe *are* the generations of Iſhmael Abrahams ſon, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarahs handmaid, bare unto Abraham.

13 And theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Iſhmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firſt-born of Iſhmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibſam,

14 And Miſhma, and Dumah, and Maſſah,

15 Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphiſh, and Kedemah.

16 Theſe *are* the ſons of Iſhmael, and theſe *are* their names, by their towns, and by their caſtles; twelve princes according to their nations.

17 And theſe *are* the years of the life of Iſhmael, an hundred and thirty and ſeven years: and he gave up the ghoſt and died, and was gathered unto his people.

18 And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that *is* before Egypt, as thou goeſt towards Aſſyria: *and* he died in the preſence of all his brethren.

19 And theſe *are* the generations of Iſaac Abrahams ſon: Abraham begat Iſaac.

20 And Iſaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan-aram, the ſiſter to Laban the Syrian.

21 And Iſaac intreated the LORD for his wife, becauſe ſhe *was* barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.

22 And the children ſtruggled together within her: and ſhe ſaid, If *it be* ſo, why *am* I thus? And ſhe went to enquire of the LORD.

23 And the LORD ſaid unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people ſhall be ſeparated from thy bowels: and *the one* people ſhall be ſtronger than *the other* people; and the elder ſhall ſerve the younger.

24 And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, *there were* twins in her womb.

25 And the firſt came out red, all over like an hairy garment: and they called his name Eſau.

26 And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Eſau's heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Iſaac *was* threeſcore years old when ſhe bare them.

27 And the boys grew: and Eſau was a cunning

V. 11. *God bleſſed his ſon Iſaac.*] With that ſpecial bleſſing, wherewith his believing father was bleſſed.

V. 16 *Theſe are*, &c.] The Iſhmaelites were ſettled in towns and caſtles, before the deſcendants of Iſaac were delivered out of Egypt.

V. 21. *She was barren.*] The faith of Iſaac and Rebekah was tried for twenty years; as Abraham's, and Sarah's had been for a longer time.

V. 22. *Struggled*, &c.] In ſuch a manner, as convinced Rebekah, that there was ſomewhat ſupernatural in it.

If it be ſo, &c.] "If ſo, why thus;" there is ſome reaſon for this unuſual ſtruggling, which muſt be enquired into.

Went to enquire.] Some ſuppoſe ſhe went to enquire of Shem, (but according to the common chronology, he had been dead ten years;) others conjecture that ſhe applied to Heber, who was, or to Melchiſedec, who might be living; and others that ſhe ſtated her caſe to Abraham, that ſhe might from him, as the prophet of the Lord, diſcover his mind in this matter. I mention this as a ſpecimen of conjectural criticiſm in things, concerning which we never can acquire information; and wherein it would be perfectly uſeleſs, if we could. In ſome proper way, known to her, and not to us, ſhe enquired, and received an anſwer.

V. 23. *Two nations—two manner of people.*] That is, the Iſraelites, and Edomites, or Idumeans, being then in their common parents, Jacob, and Eſau. They were men of very oppoſite diſpoſitions, and their deſcendants were as diſſimilar: they perſonally ſtruggled hard for the pre-eminence; and ſo did their poſterity for many ages.

Serve the younger.] This generally took place after the times of David, and more entirely in the latter times of the Jewiſh ſtate. Yet in theſe ſtrugglings, there is an evident alluſion to the conflict between corrupt nature and grace, in the believer's experience, in which the younger acquires the aſcendancy: and the conflict between the world, and the true church of God, the ſeed of the ſerpent, and the ſeed of the woman; in which the church, which is as the younger brother, after many ſtrugglings, will gain a final maſtery.

V. 26. *Took hold*, &c.] As ſtruggling even then for the primogeniture.

V. 27. *A cunning hunter.*] With dexterity and addreſs he

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GENESIS CH.XXV. VE.XXXII.

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cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob *was* a plain man dwelling in tents.

28 And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom.

31 And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birth-right.

32 And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birth-right do to me?

33 And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birth-right unto Jacob.

34 Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birth-right.

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he hunted the beasts of the forest; till probably, like Nimrod, he became a warrior, living by his sword; (See ch. 27. v. 40.) and establishing his authority over his neighbours. Accordingly he came to meet his brother with 400 men.

A plain man, dwelling in tents.] A downright, honest, pious man; a stranger and pilgrim in his spirit, and a shepherd all his days.

V. 30. *Edom.*] That is red; nearly the same as Adam.

V. 31. *Thy birth-right.*] The temporal inheritance did not descend to Jacob, and therefore probably was not meant in this proposal: but it included the reversion of the land of Canaan, and the covenant made with Abraham with reference to Christ, the promised seed: these believing Jacob supremely valued, but unbelieving Esau despised.

V. 32. *At the point to die.*] It cannot be conceived that Esau was dying of hunger in Isaac's house, nor would the transaction have been so *severely* condemned, had it been so: but he seems to mean, I shall never live to inherit Canaan, or any of these future supposed blessings; and what signifies it, who has them when I am dead and gone. This would be the language of profaneness, with which the Apostle brands him; (See *Heb.* c. 12. v. 16.) and this would be a contempt indeed of the birth-right; which the historian notes with censure, v. 34.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

By repeated examples the Lord teaches us, that tho' he try faith by long delays; yet he honours it with abundant performances.—"The vision is for an appointed time, but "at the end it shall speak and not lie: tho' it tarry, wait "for it; because it shall surely come, it will not tarry.:" [*Habbak.* c. 2. v 3.] Beyond our fixed time it may, but not beyond the Lord's.

Still much of the history relates to those, who go off, and those who appear on the stage of life. Whether our part on this grand theatre be short, or long, it matters but little; provided we perform it in such a manner, as to quit the stage with comfort to ourselves, with benefit to others, and with the approbation of our gracious God: Provided we leave behind us a testimony from our lips to the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord, and, in the consciences of others, to our uprightness and consistency in our walk with him; and a good example to, and the blessing of God upon our families. Having then lived to every good purpose, and being satisfied of living here and ripe for the world above, we may chearfully resign our spirits into the hands of our Redeemer; and leave our bodies to be gathered to our people in the silent tomb, in joyful hope of a happy resurrection.—God forbid, that the writer, or any of the readers of these observations, should rest content with earthly blessings, which God bestows on the men of this world; or come short of those special and eternal blessings, which belong to the children of the promise. Though the former seem to have the pre-eminence here; yet the latter will have their portion, when their's is spent, and gone for ever.—Happy they, who are stirred up by the delays of promised and expected blessings to pray always, and not faint; for every one that asketh receiveth, though perhaps not immediately—In all our doubts, and perplexities we should enquire of the Lord by prayer, and attendance on his ordinances, and attention to his word: and in many of our conflicts and strugglings with sin and temptations, we may adopt Rebekah's words; "If it be so, why am I thus? If a child of God, why so careless, or carnal?" If not a child of God; why so afraid of, or burthened with sin? In the best of characters we still find infirmities, and in the best of parents sinful partialities: But sure they are intitled to our superior regard, who are evidently beloved of the Lord!—Men, who are slaves to their appetites, and inordinately crave earthly things, to the profane contempt of spiritual blessings, will, however sagacious in other respects, find themselves infinitely excelled by those, whoe huse that good part, which shall never be taken from them. But tho' we must be of Jacob's judgment in preferring the birth-right; yet we ought carefully to avoid all appearance of imposition in seeking to obtain the most important advantages.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1st. A famine, and Isaac's going to sojourn in Gerar, v. 1. 2d. The Lord's appearance, direction, and promises to him, v. 2—5. 3d. His denial of his wife, and his being detected and reproved, v. 6—11. 4th. His prosperity, and the envy and mischievous malice of the Philistines; his removal from them, and contentions with them, v. 12—22. 5th. The Lord's appearance to him at Beer-sheba, v. 23—25. 6th. Abimelech's covenant with Isaac, v. 26—33. 7th. Esau's marriage of two wives to the grief of his parents, v. 34—35.

AND there was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines, unto Gerar.

2 And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt: dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of.

3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father.

4 And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed:

5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

6 And Isaac dwelt in Gerar.

7 And the men of the place asked *him* of his wife; and he said, She *is* my sister: for he feared to say, *She is* my wife; lest, *said he*, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah, because she *was* fair to look upon.

8 And it came to pass when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac *was* sporting with Rebekah his wife.

9 And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety, she *is* thy wife: and how saidst thou, She *is* my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her.

10 And Abimelech said, What *is* this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldst have brought guiltiness upon us.

11 And Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife, shall surely be put to death.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1. *Abimelech.*] Abraham's treaty with Abimelech, had been before the birth of Isaac, (See c. 20.) who was sixty years of age when his sons were born, and an hundred when Esau married. (See the 34 v.) And as Esau and Jacob are spoken of in the close of the former chapter as grown up, and this event appears to have been subsequent; we have reason to conclude that it was ninety years or more, since the former treaty. It is probable therefore that Abimelech, which signifies, my father the king, was the common name of the kings of the Philistines: and that this Abimelech was a successor to him before mentioned.

V. 2. *The Lord appeared.*] As c. 17.

Go not down into Egypt. This Abraham had done, and Isaac was, as we may suppose, deliberating about it.

Dwell in the land, &c.] He was commanded to dwell in one part or other of the land of Canaan, according to such intimations, as should from time to time be given him.

V. 3. *Sojourn in this land.*] Of the Philistines, at the present.

I will be with thee.] Will manifest my presence with thee, by my special care of thee in providence, and by comforting thee in the exercises of religious worship.

V. 5. *Because that Abraham obeyed my voice.*] It was fit and meet that God should thus testify his signal approbation of Abraham's remarkable obedience, for the honour of his own name, and the encouragement of others, especially of Isaac: this obedience also had a tendency to promote the fulfilment of these promises; (See c. 18. v. 18. 19.) and was the proper evidence of that faith, whereby as a sinner, he was justified before God, and the effect of that love, whereby true faith works; (See *Gal.* c. 5. v. 6.) and it was in consequence of his prompt obedience, that the covenant was sealed and ratified to him with an oath.

V. 7. *Asked him*, &c.] This question began to excite in him apprehensions for his safety.

He said she is my sister, &c.] This was a more direct falsehood, than those used, in the case of Abraham; and his unbelief was more inexcusable, because he lived in Gerar by God's express command, and under his immediate protection, which had been engaged to him by the preceding vision.

V. 8. *A long time.*] Without interruption, which shewed that his suspicions were also injurious to them.

12 Then

12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundred-fold, and the LORD blessed him.

13 And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great.

14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants. And the Philistines envied him.

15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

16 And Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us: for thou art much mightier than we.

17 And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.

18 And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them.

19 And Isaac's servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water.

20 And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac's herdmen, saying, The water *is* ours: and he called the name of the well Esek, because they strove with him.

21 And they digged another well, and strove for that also: And he called the name of it Sitnah.

22 And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For the LORD hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.

23 And he went up from thence to Beer-sheba.

24 And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I *am* the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I *am* with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham's sake.

25 And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac's servants digged a well.

26 Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol his chief captain of his army.

27 And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?

28 And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, *even* betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee;

29 That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou *art* now the blessed of the LORD.

30 And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink.

31 And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water.

33 And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city *is* Beer-sheba unto this day.

V. 12. *An hundred fold.*] This was very extraordinary increase, and accounted an evident effect of the divine blessing. I believe that in many parts of this land, with all our improvements in agriculture, an ordinary crop of grain is very seldom known to exceed twenty fold; and much more frequently, without any remarkable mismanagement, or disaster, to come short of ten fold, clear increase upon the seed sown.

V. 17. *Valley of Gerar.*] Upon the borders of Abimelech's kingdom.

V. 20. *Esek.*] That is, contention.

V. 21. *Sitnah.*] That is, hatred.

V. 22. *Rehoboth.*] That is, places or room.

The Lord hath made room, &c.] The piety of the language in one of the ordinary concerns of life is worth noting, and imitating.

V. 24. *Fear not.*] Be not afraid of their envy, or enmity.

V. 33. *Shebah.*] That is, an oath. Beer-Sheba signifies the well of an oath.

34 And Eſau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Baſhemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite:

35 Which were a grief of mind unto Iſaac and to Rebekah.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains, 1ſt. Iſaac's old age, and infirmity, v. 1—2. 2d. His ſending Eſau to hunt for veniſon, previous to his bleſſing him, v. 3—4. 3d. Rebekah's ſtratagem to ſecure the bleſſing to Jacob, v. 5—10. 4th. Jacob's objections ſtated, and over-ruled, v. 11—13. 5th. The execution and ſucceſs of the ſtratagem, v. 14—26. 6th. The bleſſing pronounced on Jacob, v. 27—29. 7th. Eſau's arrival, Iſaac's ſurpriſe at the diſcovery, and Eſau's complaint, and lamentation, v. 30—36. 8th. A bleſſing pronounced on Eſau, v. 37—40. 9th. Eſau's hatred and intended revenge diſcovered by Rebekah, and her conſequent counſel to Jacob, and propoſal to Iſaac, v. 41—46.

AND it came to paſs that when Iſaac was old, and his eyes were dim, ſo that he could not ſee, he called Eſau his eldeſt ſon, and ſaid unto him, My ſon: And he ſaid unto him, Behold, *here am* I.

2 And he ſaid, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death.

3 Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver, and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me *ſome* veniſon;

4 And make me ſavoury meat, ſuch as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat; that my ſoul may bleſs thee before I die.

5 And Rebekah heard when Iſaac ſpake to Eſau his ſon: and Eſau went to the field to hunt *for* veniſon, *and* to bring *it*.

6 And Rebekah ſpake unto Jacob her ſon, ſaying, Behold, I heard thy father ſpeak unto Eſau thy brother, ſaying,

7 Bring me veniſon, and make me ſavoury meat, that I may eat, and bleſs thee before the LORD before my death.

8 Now therefore, my ſon, obey my voice, according to that which I command thee.

9 Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them ſavoury meat for thy father, ſuch as he loveth.

10 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Repeated famines in the Land of Promiſe taught the patriarchs; and uneaſineſs in the moſt eligible ſituations ſhould teach us, to look to the Canaan above, the heavenly inheritance, for unalloyed felicity. Yet happy are they even on earth, who are guided by Jehovah's counſel, upheld and protected by his power, encouraged by his preſence, and aſſured of their intereſt in his everlaſting love: if he engages to be with us, and we are, where he would have us to be, nothing but our own unbelief, and diſtruſt can prevent our comfort. The bleſſing which deſcends upon our poſterity in anſwer to our prayers, as the effect of our wholeſome inſtructions, and good example, and as a gracious recompenſe of our obedience of faith, is unſpeakably preferable to any other riches, which we can leave them. Though God do not juſtify a ſinner by his works, yet he will moſt abundantly reward the good works of a true believer; "For our righteous Lord loveth righte-"ouſneſs," and will ſhew his love of it. But alas! it is much more natural, and eaſy to us to imitate the faults, than the faith and holineſs of eminent characters. And too many conclude that they may venture on this, and the other conduct, becauſe perſons of eminent character have been betrayed into it: how careful therefore ſhould we be, not to ſanction tranſgreſſion, or give force to temptation by our example! There is nothing in this part of Iſaac's conduct to be imitated, nor even excuſed: the impartiality of the ſacred hiſtorian records it for our warning, and to ſhew that righteouſneſs cometh not by the law, but by the faith of Chriſt.—Rather let us in this tranſaction imitate the conduct of Abimelech, his ſerious rebuke, and his return of good for evil: and how will his abhorrence of adultery riſe up in judgment againſt ſuch a nation as this! But though the Lord detect, reprove, and even ſhame his offending ſervants, yet he ſtill pardons and bleſſes them; and his bleſſing maketh rich, and the increaſe of the earth is his gift: but alas! riches generally excite envy, ſuſpicion, and jealouſy, and we may very often call our worldly acquiſitions, by the names, which Iſaac gave his wells, contention, and enmity. The ſpirit that is in us luſteth to envy, and whilſt we watch againſt it's workings in ourſelves, and pray to him, who giveth more grace; we ſhould avoid whatever may needleſsly excite it in others: for when once it is kindled, the malice, and rancour, and wanton miſchief, which it may occaſion, can ſcarce be deſcribed. That wiſdom, which is from above, will teach us rather to recede from our right, and retire from the contentious, than to engage in angry diſputes: and if we are injuriouſly driven from one place, the Lord will make room for us in another, and recompenſe us with the aſſurance and conſolations of his love: and when ſuch a yielding ſpirit is united with a profeſſion of his truth, and a regard to his worſhip, and ſervice; he will himſelf plead our cauſe, make our enemies to be at peace with us, and to court our friendſhip, as acknowledging that the Lord loveth us: and the forgiveneſs of injuries, and readineſs to reconciliation, and hoſpitality are ornamental to godlineſs.

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10 And thou ſhalt bring *it* to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bleſs thee before his death.

11 And Jacob ſaid to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Eſau my brother *is* a hairy man, and I *am* a ſmooth man.

12 My father peradventure will feel me, and I ſhall ſeem to him as a deceiver; and I ſhall bring a curſe upon me, and not a bleſſing.

13 And his mother ſaid unto him, Upon me *be* thy curſe, my ſon: only obey my voice, and go fetch me *them*.

14 And he went, and fetched, and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother made ſavoury meat, ſuch as his father loved.

15 And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldeſt ſon Eſau, which *were* with her in the houſe, and put them upon Jacob her younger ſon.

16 And ſhe put the ſkins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the ſmooth of his neck.

17 And ſhe gave the ſavoury meat, and the bread which ſhe had prepared, into the hand of her ſon Jacob.

18 And he came unto his father, and ſaid, My father: And he ſaid, Here *am* I; who *art* thou, my ſon?

19 And Jacob ſaid unto his father, I *am* Eſau thy firſt-born; I have done according as thou badeſt me: ariſe, I pray thee, ſit and eat of my veniſon, that thy ſoul may bleſs me.

20 And Iſaac ſaid unto his ſon, How *is it* that thou haſt found it ſo quickly, my ſon? And he ſaid, Becauſe the LORD thy God brought it to me.

21 And Iſaac ſaid unto Jacob, Come near,

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lineſs. But we muſt ſtill have ſome croſs to counterbalance each comfort: yet children are highly culpable, who are the ſinful occaſions of grief of heart to their pious, and affectionate parents: nor has any thing been more univerſally the bane of domeſtic happineſs, than unhallowed marriages, and the practice of polygamy.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *Iſaac was old.*] Joſeph was 30 years of age when he ſtood before Pharaoh; after the ſeven years of plenty, and about the third year of the famine, (that is, when Joſeph was about 40) Jacob told Pharaoh that he was 130 years of age. Hence it appears that Jacob was 90, when Joſeph was born, which was probably ſomewhat more than 14 years after this time; conſequently Jacob was now about 75, or 76, and Iſaac 135, or 136 years of age.

V. 2. *I know not*, &c.] Yet he lived, though blind, at leaſt 44 years after this. But he deemed it beſt to ſettle his domeſtic concerns, that he might not have that to incumber him, when the time of death ſhould come: in this he is much to be commended.

V. 4. *That I may eat*, &c.] As this was not intended for a public feaſt, but merely for a private, ſelf-indulgent meal, one cannot but deem it a carnal introduction to the ſpiritual bleſſing, which he purpoſed to pronounce: a ſolemn ſacrifice would have appeared more conſiſtent with his character, and the occaſion.

And bleſs thee, &c.] Iſaac's partiality for Eſau, and the cuſtom of the elder being heir, led him to forget, miſunderſtand, or be inattentive to the anſwer, which the Lord had formerly given Rebekah on this ſubject. (Chap. 25. v. 23.)

V. 10. *That he may bleſs thee*, &c.] Rebekah was ſenſible that Iſaac was going to act wrong; ſhe knew that the bleſſing was intended for Jacob, and expected that he would have it. But either ſhe ſhould calmly have argued the matter, and expoſtulated with Iſaac; or, if that appeared inexpedient and unavailing, ſhe ſhould by prayer have committed the matter to the Lord, and remained quiet; and not by any means have uſed ſuch artifice as this. She did not indeed wrong Eſau, in regard to the birth-right; as both the Lord's purpoſe, and his own agreement ratified with an oath, deprived him of all claim thereto: but ſhe wronged Iſaac, by practiſing ſuch an impoſition upon him; ſhe wronged Jacob, by uſing her authority and perſuaſions to tempt him to wickedneſs; ſhe was guilty of much ſin againſt the Lord, and diſhonoured his power and faithfulneſs, by ſuppoſing he needed ſuch means of effecting his purpoſe, and fulfilling his promiſe. Nay, ſhe even threw a ſtumbling block in Eſau's way, and furniſhed him with a plauſible pretext for his enmity, not only to Jacob, but to religion, by putting Jacob on acting ſuch a treacherous part.

V. 13. *Upon me be thy curſe*, &c.] Though there was a well-grounded confidence in Rebekah, that Jacob would obtain the bleſſing; yet thus to introduce that confidence in backing a perſuaſion to commit evident ſin, too much reſembled the conduct of ſuch perſons, as are the more bold in wickedneſs, becauſe God is rich in mercy.

V. 14. *And he went.*] In ſo doing, God's purpoſe indeed was not defeated, but he contracted much guilt, for which he afterwards ſeverely ſmarted.

V. 20. *Becauſe the Lord*, &c.] This was a ſore profanation of the Lord's name, and making religion the covert of his diſſimulation.

V. 21. Though Iſaac probably would have been glad to have heard Eſau uſe ſuch language, yet it ſeems to have excited ſome ſuſpicions in his mind.

I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my ſon, whether thou *be* my very ſon Eſau, or not.

22 And Jacob went near unto Iſaac his father, and he felt him; and ſaid, The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Eſau.

23 And he diſcerned him not, becauſe his hands were hairy, as his brother Eſau's hands: So he bleſſed him.

24 And he ſaid, *Art* thou my very ſon Eſau? And he ſaid, I *am*.

25 And he ſaid, Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my ſons veniſon, that my ſoul may bleſs thee. And he brought *it* near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank.

26 And his father Iſaac ſaid unto him, Come near now, and kiſs me, my ſon.

27 And he came near, and kiſſed him: and he ſmelled the ſmell of his raiment, and bleſſed him, and ſaid, See, the ſmell of my ſon *is* as the ſmell of a field, which the LORD hath bleſſed.

28 Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatneſs of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.

29 Let people ſerve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mothers ſons bow down to thee: Curſed *be* every one that curſeth thee, and bleſſed *be* he that bleſſeth thee.

30 And it came to paſs, as ſoon as Iſaac had made an end of bleſſing Jacob, and Jacob was yet ſcarce gone out from the preſence of Iſaac his father, that Eſau his brother came in from his hunting.

31 And he alſo had made ſavoury meat, and brought it unto his father; and ſaid unto his father, Let my father ariſe, and eat of his ſons veniſon, that thy ſoul may bleſs me.

32 And Iſaac his father ſaid unto him, Who *art* thou? And he ſaid, I *am* thy ſon, thy firſt-born Eſau.

33 And Iſaac trembled very exceedingly, and ſaid, Who, where *is* he that hath taken veniſon, and brought *it* me, and I have eaten of all before thou cameſt, and have bleſſed him? yea, *and* he ſhall be bleſſed.

34 And when Eſau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and ſaid unto his father, Bleſs me, even me alſo, O my father.

35 And he ſaid, Thy brother came with ſubtilty, and hath taken away thy bleſſing.

36 And

V. 22. *The voice is Jacob's*, &c.] His eyes failing him, he ſeems to have diſtruſted his ears alſo. How wonderful is that difference, which there is betwixt the faces, and the voices of the ſeveral individuals of the human ſpecies! ſcarce any two of the innumerable millions are exactly alike in either! and yet the difference cannot be defined, or deſcribed. The power, and the wiſdom, and the kindneſs of our Creator, ſhould be admired and adored in this; for they are very viſible. This deſcription is not unaptly accommodated to the character of a hypocrite; his voice, his language is that of a chriſtian; his hands, or conduct, that of an ungodly man: but the judgment will proceed, as in the preſent caſe, not by the voice, but by the hands.

V. 27—29.] Though we muſt acknowledge the hand of God in this matter, and conſider this bleſſing as a prophecy: (and accordingly it was fulfilled in the hiſtory of the two nations deſcended from Jacob and Eſau) yet in making the prophet the Lord does not unmake the man; and it occurs to enquire why there is no explicit mention made here, as elſewhere, of the promiſed ſeed, and of the promiſed land? Perhaps Iſaac was conſcious that theſe belonged to Jacob, and confined his interpretation of Rebekah's information to thoſe particulars: perhaps he deemed that matter determined by the ſale of the birthright: perhaps he knew that Eſau did not ſet much value on the ſpiritual meaning of the bleſſing, and therefore he couched it in general terms. However, though Iſaac ſeems to ſpeak with heſitation, yet we conclude that the bleſſings were implied in the words here employed; and he is more explicit in the next chapter on this head. (See chap. 28. v. 3—4.) But by the will of God he was led to utter ſuch words, as expreſsly conferred the dominion, and the whole bleſſing of Abraham, contrary to his intention, upon Jacob.

V. 33. *Trembled very exceedingly.*] He was ſeized with this conſternation by the various circumſtances, which now ruſhed into his mind, evincing that he had been raſhly attempting to counteract the appointment of God: the language of the whole verſe very emphatically expreſſes the confuſion of his mind, at perceiving in what manner God had fruſtrated his intention.

Yea, and he ſhall be bleſſed.] It is the will of God, and I ſubmit to it.

V. 34. *Exceeding bitter cry.*] He was exceedingly grieved to be thus circumvented, and diſappointed; and to find that the providence of God had ratified his former fooliſh bargain; and perhaps he dreaded ſome immediate temporal calamity in conſequence: yet it is plain that he had no proper value even now for the ſpiritual bleſſings of the

GENESIS CH.XXVII.VE.XXXIII.

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36 And he ſaid, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath ſupplanted me theſe two times: he took away my birth-right; and behold now he hath taken away my bleſſing. And he ſaid, Haſt thou not reſerved a bleſſing for me?

37 And Iſaac anſwered and ſaid unto Eſau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for ſervants; and with corn and wine have I ſuſtained him: and what ſhall I do now unto thee, my ſon?

38 And Eſau ſaid unto his father, Haſt thou but one bleſſing, my father? bleſs me, *even* me alſo, O my father. And Eſau lift up his voice, and wept.

39 And Iſaac his father anſwered, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thy dwelling ſhall be the fatneſs of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.

40 And by thy ſword ſhalt thou live, and ſhalt ſerve thy brother: and it ſhall come to paſs when thou ſhalt have the dominion, that thou ſhalt break his yoke from off thy neck.

41 And Eſau hated Jacob, becauſe of the bleſſing wherewith his father bleſſed him: and Eſau ſaid in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand, then will I ſlay my brother Jacob.

42 And theſe words of Eſau her elder ſon were told to Rebekah: And ſhe ſent and called Jacob her younger ſon, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thy brother Eſau as touching thee, doth comfort himſelf, *purpoſing* to kill thee.

43 Now therefore, my ſon, obey my voice: and ariſe, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran.

44 And tarry with him a few days, until thy brothers fury turn away;

45 Until thy brothers anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou haſt done to him: then I will ſend, and fetch thee from thence. Why ſhould I be deprived alſo of you both in one day?

46 And Rebekah ſaid to Iſaac, I am weary of my life, becauſe of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, ſuch as theſe *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good ſhall my life do me?

CHAP.

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the covenant, made with Abraham, and Iſaac, and which now were transferred to Jacob.

V. 36. *He took away*, &c.] He expreſſes this, as if Jacob had taken it away by force, or fraud, being more diſpoſed to blame him, than himſelf.

V. 38. *But one bleſſing.*] If he may not have that very bleſſing, which was the bleſſing of Abraham, and then limited to Iſaac, and now given to Jacob, which implied and typified the everlaſting bleſſings, which believers have in and by Chriſt; he will compound for another bleſſing of a more carnal nature.

V. 39—40.] This bleſſing was very ſuitable to his character, and probably would not have been diſagreeable to his inclinations, had it not been for the clauſe, "ſhalt "ſerve thy brother."

Break his yoke.] Nor ſerve ſubmiſſively, but indignantly, and at ſome times revolting ſucceſsfully. (See 2 *Kings*, c. 8. v. 20—22.)

V. 41. *Hated Jacob.*] Although Jacob had given Eſau ſome plauſible pretence for his enmity; yet it originated from the ſame ſource, and was of the ſame nature, as the hatred of Cain to Abel: namely, the piety of Jacob's character, and the evident preference which the Lord had manifeſted for him.

For my father, &c.] He ſeems to have had no regard for Rebekah, whom probably he diſliked for her love to Jacob.

V. 45. *Both in one day.*] Either by the death of the murderer, by ſome judgment from God, if human juſtice reached him not: or by his becoming ſo vile, as to be only a trouble, and a grief of heart unto her.

V. 46.] Not deſiring to render Iſaac's mind more uneaſy, ſhe mentions not the principal reaſon; but adduces one, which was perfectly conſiſtent with truth, and gives us a melancholy idea of Eſau's two wives, and their effect upon Iſaac's domeſtic felicity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What is long life, of which we are ſo deſirous, but the ſurviving of our deareſt friends, and choiceſt comforts, our capacities of enjoyment, and our very faculties, and ſenſes? And what can life then be but labour, and ſorrow?—We ſhould indeed be willing to live as long, as either by active ſervice, or patient ſuffering, we can glorify God, and ſerve our generation: but ſhould never poſtpone the neceſſary preparation for death; and if ready, we need not be unwilling to quit this vale of tears, whenever the Lord ſhall call: nor will the conſtant expectation of, and habitual preparation for the uncertain hour of death, in the leaſt haſten its approach. The ſame impartiality, which influenced the inſpired writer, requires us to note, that we muſt not follow the beſt of men, further than they act in conformity with the law of God; and that we meet with many things in this chapter to cenſure, and ſhun: ſuch, as Iſaac's partiality for the profane Eſau, and the unworthy grounds of that preference; his inatten-

tion

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Iſaac bleſſing and counſelling Jacob, and ſending him to Padan-Aram, v. 1—5. *2d. Eſau's marriage to a third wife, v.* 6—9. *3d. Jacob's journey, lodging, dream, obſervations upon it, and ſubſequent vow, v.* 10—22.

AND Iſaac called Jacob, and bleſſed him, and charged him, and ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.

2 Ariſe, go to Padan-aram, to the houſe of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother.

3 And God Almighty bleſs thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayeſt be a multitude of people:

4 And give thee the bleſſing of Abraham, to thee and to thy ſeed with thee; that thou mayeſt inherit the land wherein thou art a ſtranger, which God gave unto Abraham.

5 And Iſaac ſent away Jacob, and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, ſon of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Eſau's mother.

6 When Eſau ſaw that Iſaac had bleſſed Jacob, and ſent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he bleſſed him, he gave him a charge, ſaying, Thou ſhalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan;

7 And that Jacob obeyed his father, and his mother, and was gone to Padan-aram;

8 And Eſau ſeeing that the daughters of Canaan pleaſed not Iſaac his father:

9 Then went Eſau unto Iſhmael, and took unto the wives which he had, Mahalath the daughter of Iſhmael Abraham's ſon, the ſiſter of Nebajoth, to be his wife.

10 And Jacob went out from Beer-ſheba, and went toward Haran.

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tion to the divine revelation, and, we hope, his unwilling attempt to diſannul the Lord's purpoſe: ſuch, as Rebekah's raſh project to deceive Iſaac, and her putting into her ſon Jacob's mouth ſo many falſehoods, and powerfully urging him to venture upon them: and ſuch, as Jacob's undertaking and going through with this fraudulent deſign. Nor can their faith, or deſire of the bleſſing juſtify, or excuſe, much leſs ſanctify ſuch unlawful means; we muſt not do evil, that good may come. And though God indeed overruled ſuch unjuſtifiable actions to the accompliſhment of his purpoſes: yet we may read his judgment of them in the conſequences of them to all the parties concerned: in Iſaac's trembling and conſternation, and diſcord in his family; in the piercing of Rebekah's very ſoul by the report of Eſau's murderous intentions; and her parting with her beloved Jacob, probably never more to meet on earth; and in Jacob's long exile, and many hardſhips; and long after in his fear, leſt enraged Eſau ſhould deſtroy the mother with the children. But nothing can diſannul the Lord's purpoſe, his counſel muſt, and ſhall be eſtabliſhed, notwithſtanding all miſmanagement and oppoſition. Furthermore we may obſerve, that the arts of falſehood are ſoon learned, and one ſin makes way for many; and that a lying lip is but for a moment. Nor can they expect to be treated with candour and truth by others, who do not ſtrictly adhere thereto themſelves. They, who profanely deſpiſe ſpiritual bleſſings, may one day bewail their folly with unavailing lamentations: nay, even in this world, there are ſeaſons when the moſt ungodly perceive and envy, though they will not ſeek for the ſuperior felicity of true believers. Impenitent hearts will blame any body rather than themſelves; and in plenty of worldly good things will ſoon forget the folly and miſery of forfeiting ſpiritual bleſſings. A godly man, when reminded and convinced of the will of God, will ſubmit his inclination thereto; though before he was otherwiſe minded: and though the wicked hate the righteous, being the ſeed of the old ſerpent; yet ſometimes the miſconduct of the righteous furniſhes them with the pretext, and draws forth their enmity into more immediate malice and murder. There is much wickedneſs in the world, but much more in the heart, which is reſtrained by fear of man, natural affection, ſhame, conſcience, or human laws: without which the earth would be a mere Aceldama: for that heart muſt be truly diabolical, that can ſeek for comfort in a brother's murder. We would commend Rebekah for her prudent care to prevent the fatal effects of her ſon's anger, for her tenderneſs to Iſaac, and for her diſlike to the ill behaviour of Eſau's wives: yet we muſt obſerve, that it is hard to expreſs abhorrence of evil, without ſome mixture of impatience: life may be valuable and uſeful, though the world be wicked, and ungrateful.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 2. *To the houſe.*] To the family; for Bethuel had been long dead.

V. 9. *Unto Iſhmael.*] Iſhmael alſo had been dead ſome time, but he went to his family. It does not appear whether he would have done right, had he married her, firſt and ſingly. We hope ſome regard to Abraham's God remained in Iſhmael's family; yet it did not look well in Eſau to unite himſelf with thoſe, who were caſt out from the inheritance by God himſelf: but to marry her, when he had two other wives, was certainly making bad worſe.

11 And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put *them for* his pillows, and laid down in that place to sleep.

12 And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

13 And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I *am* the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.

14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

15 And behold, I *am* with thee, and will keep thee in all *places* whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee, until I have done *that* which I have spoken to thee of.

16 And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew *it* not.

17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful *is* this place! this *is* none other but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven.

18 And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put *for* his pillows, and set it up *for* a pillar, and poured oyl upon the top of it.

19 And he called the name of that place Beth-el: but the name of that city *was called* Luz at the first.

V. 11.] We must not resolve the solitary journey of Jacob on this occasion *merely* into the simplicity of the times; for *the servant* of Abraham, when he took the same journey on a similar occasion, had a suitable retinue: and probably Isaac was more wealthy than his father. We may suppose that it was concerted by Rebekah; in order that Jacob might set out on his journey unobserved by Esau, and lest he should embrace that opportunity of murdering him; and to prevent Esau's envy and jealousy being any further excited; as they would have been, had he been sent off with a proportionable attendance; but rather that they might be abated by the consideration of the hardships, to which Jacob was exposed: and that it might appear that he did not, in consequence of the birthright and blessing, intend to prosecute a claim to the temporal riches of his father. (See note on *Gen.* c. 4. v. 7.) And Jacob, as a plain man, would have no objection to go unattended, and obscure. Nor can we conclude from the meanness of this night's lodging, that he had not wherewithal to purchase a better: but night coming on, and there being no public inns, and no hospitable person at hand, in that mild climate, having taken such refreshment as he had with him, and being weary, and of a hardy disposition, he soon composed himself to sleep: though in a situation, which we should think neither comfortable, nor secure.

V. 12. *Dreamed, and behold a ladder.*] This ladder seems to be an emblem of that gracious care, which the God of heaven takes of the inhabitants of the earth, especially of such as fear, and trust in him; which is in great measure through the ministry of holy angels, executing his mandates, and reporting their services: but all this is only through Jesus Christ. In his person, as God manifest in the flesh, the communication betwixt heaven and earth is prepared; through his incarnation, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, and advocacy, a new and living way is opened into the holiest; by this way sinners draw near with acceptance for their persons and services to the throne of grace; and all blessings are communicated through him from our reconciled father to his redeemed people. By faith we perceive this way, and in prayer we approach by it; and in answer thereto we receive all needful blessings of providence and grace, by the ministrations of angels, and by the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.—He then is the true ladder; and Jacob, as well as Abraham saw his day, and was glad.

V. 14. *And thy seed*, &c.] We should bear in mind that when this promise was made, Jacob was above seventy years old, and unmarried.

V. 16. *Surely*, &c.] Jacob was not ignorant of God's omnipresence, nor of his gracious nearness to them, who fear him. But having left his father's house under the rebukes of providence, probably uneasy in his conscience, fleeing from the face of enraged Esau; and being deprived not only of the solace of the company of endeared friends, of whom he had taken a sorrowful farewel, but of the ordinances of divine worship, from which he was exiled; and having nothing before him but a long journey to a strange country, his heart probably was disquieted within him, and he was ready to say, I am banished from the sight of thine eyes. Little expecting the ordinary comforts of religion, he was surprised with this extraordinary visit, and these gracious assurances: and in a deep sense of his own unworthiness and of his unbelieving despondency, and in a thankful, reverential acknowledgment of the divine condescension, he thus expresses his mingled affections.

V. 18. *Poured oil upon it.*] Expressing as well as he was able in his present situation his willing mind to offer the sacrifice of praise, and his desire to keep in remembrance the goodness of the Lord, who had answered him, in the day of his distress. (See c. 35. v. 1—3.)

V. 19. *Bethel.*] That is, the house of God.

20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on;

21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace: then shall the LORD be my God.

22 And this stone, which I have set *for* a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, 1st. Jacob's arrival at his journey's end, and his conference with the shepherds of Haran, v. 1—8. 2d. His meeting with, and making himself known to Rachel, v. 9—12. 3d. His entertainment by Laban, v. 13—14. 4th. His agreement to serve seven years for Rachel, v. 15—20. 5th. The cheat put upon him by Laban and Leah; his remonstrance, and Laban's excuse, and the issue of that matter in his marrying both sisters, and serving fourteen years, v. 21—30. 6th. Rachel's barrenness, and Leah's fruitfulness, v. 31—35.

THEN Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east.

2 And he looked, and behold, a well in the field, and lo, there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone *was* upon the wells mouth.

3 And

V. 20. *Vowed a vow.*] Solemnly bound himself unto God by a voluntary engagement, to do as follows.

If God, &c.] This does not imply in Jacob any unbelieving distrust of the divine promise; or a disposition to dictate to the Lord; or as if otherwise he would not have him for his God: but merely he takes the Lord's words, and puts the most moderate sense upon them; and intimates, that having food and raiment he desires no more; and that, when he returned in peace as was promised, he would publicly set up the worship of the Lord his God, as his father and grandfather had done; and build an altar in that very spot, and offer the tenth of all his substance, which he brought back with him, to the immediate service of God and the support of his worship. All he engaged for was lawful, and practicable, and the circumstances, and place of this solemn worship, and the proportion of his goods to be thus dedicated, were in themselves, things discretionary: and thus the proper matter for a religious vow.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is incumbent upon parents to unite their influence and authority, with their wisdom and experience, in warning, advising, and charging things of importance upon the consciences of their children: and when such instructions are conjoined with fervent affectionate prayers, they are likely to make a deep impression. It is also well when former miscarriages render us more watchful, and attentive, and when we have humility enough openly and explicitly to retract what we have erroneously attempted. Good examples of obedience to God, and godly parents cannot but make some impressions even upon the profane, and malicious: but a few external acts of partial or imaginary amendment, which only spring from a desire of pleasing men, too often serve as a fatal quietus to the conscience. We know not to what hardships we may in God's providence be called: it is good therefore to inure ourselves to labour, and self-denial: the very things, which are intolerable to the delicate, and luxurious, are scarce inconvenient to those who have been accustomed to work hard and fare hard. When the Lord hath made his offending children sensible of, and penitent for their misconduct, he will again encourage them, lest they should be swallowed up of over-much sorrow: and generally the sweetest comforts are afforded in the sharpest trials, and surprises us, when ready to faint under deserved rebukes. And when the soul by faith can see Christ the true ladder opening the way of communication betwixt heaven, and earth, and securing to us acceptance with God, the protection of his providence, the ministrations of his angels, and the consolations of his Spirit, every place will become pleasant, and every prospect joyful: with such a guide, companion, and comforter, we may defy all enemies, outbrave all dangers, and despise all difficulties: every thing must speed well, and end well; and he will never leave us, until his last promise is accomplished in our everlasting felicity. It is well when the places, and ordinances, in which God is more especially present, are regarded with solemn reverence; and when peculiar consolations leave us filled with holy awe, and prepared for self-denying services, and disposed to adopt every means of keeping the Lord's goodness in remembrance. Many an Israelite indeed; who had been for a time, burdened with guilt, oppressed with desponding fears, and conflicting with difficulties and temptations; having at length unexpectedly, been surprised with sweet peace, and a sense of pardoning mercy, through the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit, has, in adoring gratitude, furnamed the scene of such a deliverance, Bethel; has deemed it the very house of God, and the gate of heaven; and perhaps been afraid to quit it, lest he should lose the sweet consolations, which he had tasted, or forget the loving kindness of the Lord. At such a time how ready are we to enquire, what we shall render unto the Lord for his goodness! How willing are we to forego all worldly considerations, and to be content with food and raiment however mean, and hard earned! How do we stand prepared for any service or suffering; and by solemn vows to yield ourselves

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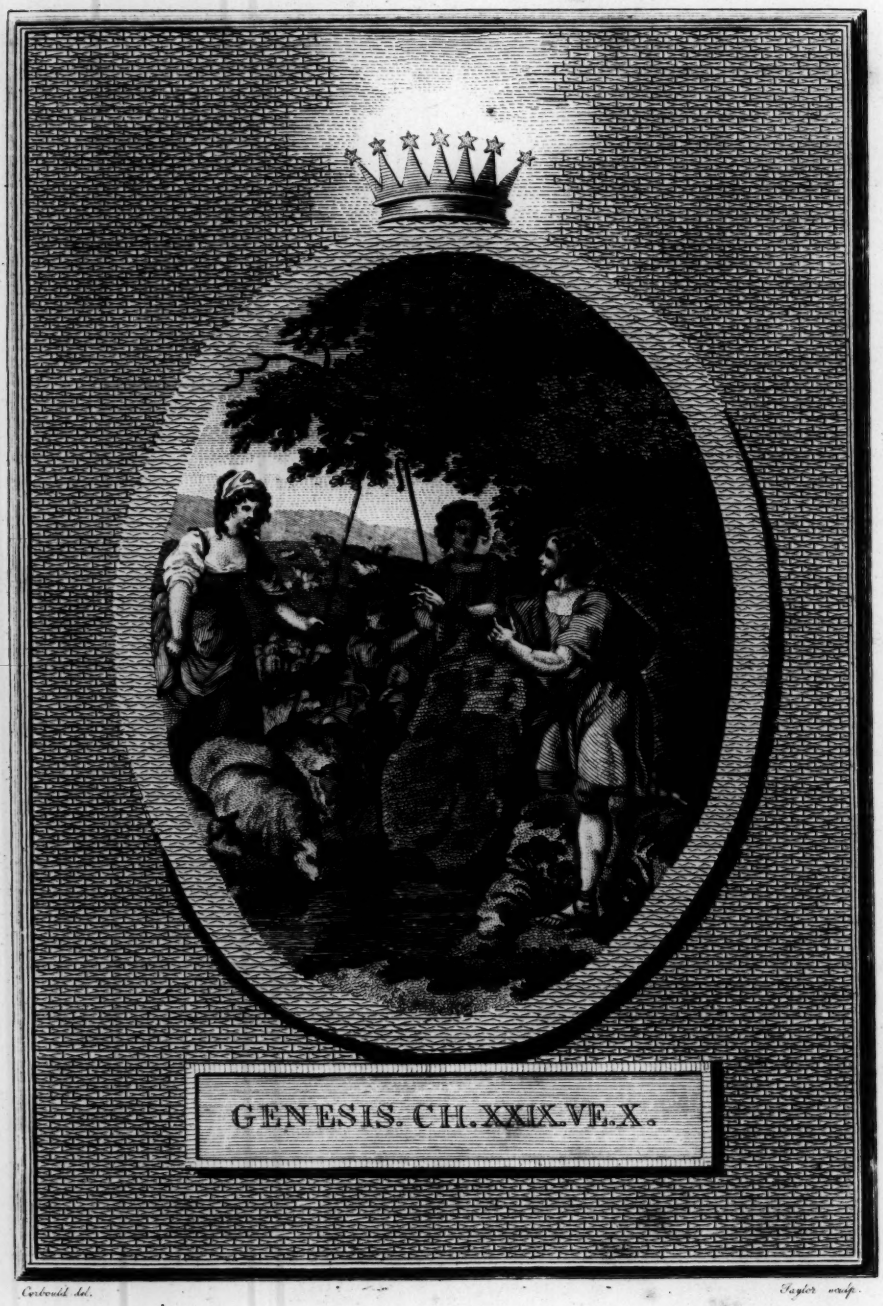

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3 And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the ſtone from the wells mouth, and watered the ſheep, and put the ſtone again upon the wells mouth in his place.

4 And Jacob ſaid unto them, My brethren, whence *be* ye? and they ſaid, Of Haran *are* we.

5 And he ſaid unto them, Know ye Laban the ſon of Nahor? And they ſaid, We know *him*.

6 And he ſaid unto them, *Is* he well? And they ſaid, *He is* well: and behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the ſheep.

7 And he ſaid, Lo, *it is* yet high day, neither *is it* time that the cattle ſhould be gathered together: water ye the ſheep, and go *and* feed *them*.

8 And they ſaid, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and *till* they roll the ſtone from the wells mouth; then we water the ſheep.

9 And while he yet ſpake with them, Rachel came with her fathers ſheep: for ſhe kept them.

10 And it came to paſs, when Jacob ſaw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mothers brother, and the ſheep of Laban his mothers brother; that Jacob went near, and rolled the ſtone from the wells mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mothers brother.

11 And Jacob kiſſed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept.

12 And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* her fathers brother, and that he *was* Rebekahs ſon: and ſhe ran and told her father.

13 And it came to paſs, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his ſiſters ſon, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kiſſed him, and brought him to his houſe. And he told Laban all theſe things.

14 And Laban ſaid to him, Surely thou *art* my bone and my fleſh: and he abode with him the ſpace of a month.

15 And Laban ſaid unto Jacob, Becauſe thou *art* my brother, ſhouldſt thou therefore ſerve me for nought? tell me, what *ſhall* thy wages *be*?

16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel.

17 Leah *was* tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well-favoured.

18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and ſaid, I will ſerve thee ſeven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.

19 And Laban ſaid, *It is* better that I give her to thee, than that I ſhould give her to another man: abide with me.

20 And Jacob ſerved ſeven years for Rachel: and they ſeemed unto him *but* a few days, for the love he had to her.

21 And Jacob ſaid unto Laban, Give *me* my wife, (for my days are fulfilled) that I may go in unto her.

22 And

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ourſelves unto the Lord, to take him for our God, and to devote all we have, and are to his glory! All this is well, and as it ſhould be: but oh! that there were at all times ſuch a heart in us! Let us remember our Bethels, be aſhamed of our forgetfulneſs, and pay the vows, which we vowed in the day, when the Lord anſwered us in our diſtreſs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 5. *Laban the ſon of Nahor.*] That is, the deſcendant of Nahor; he ſeems to have been his grandſon: this is very common in the language of Scripture.

V. 8. *We cannot.*] That is, it was contrary to ſome regulation, formed by mutual conſent, to prevent the waſte, or the unequal uſe of the water, where it was ſo ſcarce, and valuable.

V. 14. *My bone, and my fleſh.*] That is, a very near relation, being his ſiſter's ſon.

V. 21. *Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled.*] It hath been a queſtion of more difficulty, than importance, whether Jacob married his wives previous to his firſt ſeven years ſervice, or not until its expiration: but the language of the narration ſeems to determine, that he waited, old as he was, till ſeven years were expired before his marriage. To this indeed ſome objections have been made, eſpecially from the circumſtances of Judah's family, previous unto, and at their going down into Egypt. This event took place when Joſeph was not above 40, and Judah, according to this calculation, not above 44 years of age: now Judah had had two ſons, both married to Tamar in ſucceſſion; and after their death, (See ch. 38.) he himſelf had Pharez by inceſtuous commerce with her, who was married and had two children when Jacob went down

22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feaſt.

23 And it came to paſs in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him: and he went in unto her.

24 And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah, Zilpah his maid, *for* an handmaid.

25 And it came to paſs that in the morning, behold it *was* Leah: and he ſaid to Laban, What *is* this thou haſt done unto me? did not I ſerve with thee for Rachel? Wherefore then haſt thou beguiled me?

26 And Laban ſaid, It muſt not be ſo done in our country, to give the younger before the firſt-born.

27 Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this alſo, for the ſervice which thou ſhalt ſerve with me yet ſeven other years.

28 And Jacob did ſo, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife alſo.

29 And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid, to be her maid.

30 And he went in alſo unto Rachel, and he loved alſo Rachel more than Leah, and ſerved with him yet ſeven other years.

31 And when the LORD ſaw that Leah *was* hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel *was* barren.

32 And Leah conceived and bare a ſon, and ſhe called his name Reuben: for ſhe ſaid, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my huſband will love me.

33 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſaid, Becauſe the LORD hath heard that I *was* hated, he hath therefore given me this *ſon* alſo: and ſhe called his name Simeon.

34 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſaid, Now this time will my huſband be joined unto me, becauſe I have born him three ſons: therefore was his name called Levi.

35 And ſhe conceived again, and bare a ſon; and ſhe ſaid, Now will I praiſe the LORD: therefore ſhe called his name Judah, and left bearing.

CHAP.

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down into Egypt. This ſuppoſes, that all theſe parties, Judah, Onan, and Pharez, married and had children as young as thirteen or fourteen years of age. (See ch. 46. v. 12—26.) But add ſeven years more, by ſuppoſing Jacob married when he firſt went to Laban, and this would allow ſixteen, or ſeventeen years to each ſucceſſion. But there is another method of getting over this difficulty, which will be mentioned in it's proper place. Which ever way the reader determines the matter in his own mind, it may be proper to obſerve, that it is very obvious that Judah, and the other deſcendants of Jacob, married very young: and though it was proper that the perſons, to whom the promiſe was immediately made, ſhould, in evidence, or exerciſe of their faith, live long unmarried, or childleſs; yet it might naturally be expected that afterwards the progenitors of ſuch a numerous poſterity ſhould marry, and have children, as ſoon as poſſible.

V. 23.] Thus he, who by perſonating Eſau had impoſed upon his father, is impoſed upon by Laban, and Leah, in a very important concern, by a like deception.

V. 26. *It muſt not be ſo done*, &c.] We have reaſon to think that this was a mere pretence; or if it were any thing more, Jacob ought to have been previouſly informed.

V. 31. *Hated.*] He loved Rachel more; (verſe 30.) and through that preference was led, in many reſpects, to treat Leah with ſuch indifference and neglect, as reſembled hatred.

V. 32.] Reuben ſignifies, ſee a ſon: Simeon, hearing; Levi, union; and Judah, praiſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Gracious conſolations are intended as cordials to animate, and ſtrengthen us, that we may run without wearineſs, and walk without fainting, in the arduous and ſelf-denying paths of obedience: and in ſo doing, we ſhall ſpeedily experience the Lord's faithfulneſs to his promiſes: thus far he accompanied, and kept Jacob in all the places through which he went. We cannot but feel a diſpoſition to approve the ſimplicity, courteouſneſs, and benevolence, which mark this firſt interview betwixt Jacob, and theſe ſhepherds: the frank manner in which he makes his obſervations, and offers his advice, and affords his aſſiſtance; and the mild and candid reception he meets with from them: though proud ſpirits oft are offended with ſuch intimations of miſtake, or blame. He, who has all hearts in his hands, diſpoſes all things for their good, who truſt in, and follow him; and works upon the natural affection even of ſelfiſh hearts, to procure them kind entertainment. But they who are ſkilful, and active in buſineſs, being capable of rendering themſelves uſeful, will generally, when known, be made welcome:—nor ſhould our relations be leſs rewarded for their ſervices, than others; but ſhould meet with greater encouragement.—Whatever be the object of love, it is a moſt active and powerful principle; and not only engages a man in hard and difficult ſervices, but even renders them delightful. If the Lord have our ſupreme love, we ſhall greatly delight in his commandments, and all our other affections will be regulated,

CHAP. XXX.

Contains, 1st. Rachel's envy, and impatience, and Jacob's anger, and rebuke, v. 1—2. *2d. Jacob's espousing Bilhah at Rachel's, and Zilpah at Leah's requeſt, his offspring by them, and their names, v.* 3—13. *3d. Leah's other children, and their names, v.* 14—21. *4th. Rachel's bearing Joſeph, v.* 22—24. *5th. Jacob's further agreement with Laban, v.* 25—36. *6th. Jacob's conſequent proſperity, v.* 37—43.

AND when Rachel ſaw that ſhe bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her ſiſter; and ſaid unto Jacob, Give me children, or elſe I die.

2 And Jacobs anger was kindled againſt Rachel; and he ſaid, *Am* I in Gods ſtead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?

3 And ſhe ſaid, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and ſhe ſhall bear upon my knees, that I may alſo have children by her.

4 And ſhe gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her.

5 And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a ſon.

6 And Rachel ſaid, God hath judged me, and hath alſo heard my voice, and hath given me a ſon: therefore called ſhe his name Dan.

7 And Bilhah Rachels maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a ſecond ſon.

8 And Rachel ſaid, With great wreſtlings have I wreſtled with my ſiſter, and I have prevailed: and ſhe called his name Naphtali.

9 When Leah ſaw that ſhe had left bearing, ſhe took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife.

10 And Zilpah Leahs maid bare Jacob a ſon.

11 And Leah ſaid, A troop cometh: and ſhe called his name Gad.

12 And Zilpah Leahs maid bare Jacob a ſecond ſon.

13 And Leah ſaid, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me bleſſed: and ſhe called his name Aſher.

14 And Reuben went in the days of wheat-harveſt, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel ſaid to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy ſons mandrakes.

15 And ſhe ſaid unto her, *Is it* a ſmall matter that thou haſt taken my huſband? and wouldſt thou take away my ſons mandrakes alſo? And Rachel ſaid, Therefore he ſhall lie with thee to night for thy ſons mandrakes.

16 And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and ſaid, Thou muſt come in unto me, for ſurely

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regulated, and ſubordinated by it, and rendered lawful and uſeful: yet times may come, when we muſt, in the ſuperiority of our love to him, be called to diſregard our deareſt friends, as if we hated them. But, on the other hand, if they have our *ſupreme regard*, we ſhall for their ſakes deſpiſe, and neglect the Lord.—How oft in God's providence are men paid in their own coin, and reminded of their ſin in their puniſhment, and corrected by others much worſe than themſelves? Yet in all this the Lord is righteous. One cannot but lament to ſee Jacob cheated into polygamy, after living ſo many years unmarried; and ſurely may obſerve, that the malice and artifice of Satan is diſcernible in this buſineſs.—However, the Lord ſo ſets one thing over againſt another, that there is leſs difference in the comparative happineſs of mankind, than ſuperficial obſervers imagine: and in the moſt ordinary circumſtances of private life, the hand of the Lord is to be acknowledged—"Lo! children, and the fruit of the womb are an "heritage, and gift, that cometh of the Lord," and are to be received as ſent by him, and trained up for him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1. *Give me children, or elſe I die.*] That is, I ſhall fret myſelf to death; my heart will be broke with inward anguiſh. Compare this impatience of Rachel with Rebekah's conduct when barren 20 years; and with Hannah's weeping, praying, humble requiſition, and ſolemn vow. (See 1 *Sam.* c. 1.)

V. 3. *Upon my knees.*] She means that ſhe will adopt them, and nurſe them as her own, and thus ſolace herſelf under the trial and reproach of barrenneſs. Had not her ſiſter been her rival, and had not her heart been diſtorted with malignant paſſions, ſhe would have thought her children nearer to her, and more entitled to her care, than Bilhah's.

V. 6. *Dan.*] That is judgment.

V. 8. *Naphthali.*] That is, wreſtlings.

V. 11. *Gad.*] That is, a troop.

V. 13. *Aſher.*] That is, bleſſed.

V. 14. *Mandrakes.*] Theſe were either fruit, or flowers; ſomewhat pleaſing to the eye, the taſte, or the ſmell; but we know not what.

V. 15—16.] The ambition good in itſelf, but oft inordinate

ſurely I have hired thee with my ſons mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.

17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and ſhe conceived and bare Jacob the fifth ſon.

18 And Leah ſaid, God hath given me mine hire, becauſe I have given my maiden to my huſband: and ſhe called his name Iſſachar.

19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the ſixth ſon.

20 And Leah ſaid, God hath endowed me *with* a good dowry; now will my huſband dwell with me, becauſe I have born him ſix ſons: and ſhe called his name Zebulun.

21 And afterwards ſhe bare a daughter, and called her name Dinah.

22 And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb.

23 And ſhe conceived and bare a ſon: and ſaid, God hath taken away my reproach.

24 And ſhe called his name Joſeph; and ſaid, The LORD ſhall add to me another ſon.

25 And it came to paſs, when Rachel had born Joſeph, that Jacob ſaid unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country.

26 Give *me* my wives and my children, for whom I have ſerved thee, and let me go: for thou knoweſt my ſervice which I have done thee.

27 And Laban ſaid unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, *tarry*: for I have learned by experience, that the LORD hath bleſſed me for thy ſake.

28 And he ſaid, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give *it*.

29 And he ſaid unto him, Thou knoweſt how I have ſerved thee, and how thy cattle was with me.

30 For *it was* little which thou hadſt before I *came*, and it is *now* increaſed unto a multitude; and the LORD hath bleſſed thee ſince my coming: and now when ſhall I provide for mine own houſe alſo?

31 And he ſaid, What ſhall I give thee? And Jacob ſaid, Thou ſhalt not give me any thing; if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed *and* keep thy flock:

32 I will paſs through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the ſpeckled, and ſpotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the ſheep, and the ſpotted and ſpeckled among the goats: and *of ſuch* ſhall be my hire.

33 So ſhall my righteouſneſs anſwer for me in time to come, when it ſhall come for my hire before thy face: every one that *is* not ſpeckled and ſpotted amongſt the goats, and brown amongſt the ſheep, that ſhall be accounted ſtolen with me.

34 And Laban ſaid, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word.

35 And he removed that day the he-goats, that were ring-ſtraked, and ſpotted, and all the

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dinate and irregular, of being the mother of the promiſed ſeed; together with the honour of being prolific, and the reproach of being barren, were probably the chief ſources of this unbecoming conteſt.

V. 18. *God hath given*, &c.] Leah, (as Rachel, v. 8.) ſo far from conſidering herſelf culpable in giving her handmaiden to her huſband, ignorantly deems it meritorious, and erroneouſly interprets the Lord's kindneſs as the reward of it.

Iſſachar.] Signifies hire.

V. 20. *Zebulun.*] Signifies dowry.

V. 24. *Joſeph.*] That is, he hath added.

V. 26. *For whom I have ſerved thee.*] The fourteen years being now expired, Jacob was willing to depart without any other recompence for his hard ſervice, except his large family; or any other proviſion, except God's promiſe. But he had, in many ways, an equitable claim on Laban's ſubſtance, and it was the will of God, that he ſhould be provided for out of it.

V. 30. *Since my coming*, &c.] Laban had acknowledged that the Lord had bleſſed him for Jacob's ſake; but Jacob, with obſervable modeſty, only ſays, that it was ſince his coming.

V. 31. *Any thing.*] As ſtated wages; but that which the providence of God ſhall allot me in the following manner.

V. 33. *So ſhall my righteouſneſs.*] It would appear that he had acted honeſtly; when none but thoſe of the ſtipulated colours ſhould be found among his cattle.

V. 34. *Behold, I would*, &c.] Laban, who was a ſelfiſh man, argued from common obſervation, and concluded that the white cattle would engender few or none of other colours: But Jacob made thus his appeal to God to recompence him, as he pleaſed, for his labours.

V. 37.

the she-goats that were speckled and spotted, *and* every one that had *some* white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave *them* into the hands of his sons.

36 And he set three days journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hasel and chesnut-tree; and pilled white-strakes in them, and made the white appear which *was* in the rods.

38 And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering-troughs, when the flocks came to drink; that they should conceive when they came to drink.

39 And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ring-straked, speckled, and spotted.

40 And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ring-straked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban: and he put his own flocks by themselves; and put them not unto Laban's cattle.

41 And it came to pass whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods.

42 But when the cattle were feeble, he put *them* not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's.

43 And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses.

V. 37. *And Jacob took.*] This has generally been considered as an instance of Jacob's policy, and management; and has by some been objected to, and by others commended: but I do not suppose that such a contrivance would be found in general to produce such an effect. I would rather consider it as done by intimation from God; (See ch. 31. v. 12.) and as a mere signal, or token of his power, performing a supernatural operation; or at least giving a new and uncommon bias to the tendency of natural causes.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a dangerous thing for eminent saints to sanction any thing evil by their example; because it is so easy and so natural to imitate their mistakes; and even to go beyond those in transgression, of whose example of faith and obedience we come grievously short: and we are apt to think ourselves authorised, or at least excused in so doing. What an unhappy precedent was Sarah to Rachel, and Leah; and Abraham to Jacob! We are grieved to see this plain man, in his old age, yielding to one suggestion after another to multiply wives; though he only multiplied thereby bitter envying, and contention in his family. This his way was his folly; though many of his posterity approved and imitated his example. To carry matters even betwixt two wives, who have an equal claim to affection, is almost, if not entirely impossible: and to fail of so doing ensures emulation and strife, and every evil work; even perpetuating discord to posterity. How much more comfortably did his father Isaac live with his one wife, according to God's primary institution! Envy and jealousy are most tormenting passions to the breast, which harbours them, and very vexatious to all around us, and introductory to much impatience and ungodliness. We should do well to observe how absurd and odious they appear in Rachel, that we may watch and pray against them in ourselves, and turn aside from all such objects, and pursuits, as tend to excite them. Too frequently they, who possess the most beautiful countenances, are lamentably deficient in the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, and of all wise men, of much greater value: and partial affections are oft corrected by the persons, on whom they are misplaced.—They, who are only angry at sin, and express that anger only by reasonable, though sharp rebuke, and with zeal for the honour of God, are not sinfully angry; nor must those we love best, be connived at in wickedness.—Our natural conscience is a partial and erroneous judge, and, if left to itself, will oft excuse, nay commend our very faults: we have need therefore to seek to the word, and pray for the Spirit of God, to illuminate our understanding, and deliver our conscience from mistake, and self-flattery.—Still, however, the Lord hears the prayer of faith, and passes by the transgression of his people; and graciously recompenses and honours their integrity, and faithful industry. He convinces all, with whom they are connected, that he hath loved, and doth bless them, and others on their account: so that it is no ways uncommon for those, who love neither their persons, nor their godliness, to value them for the sake of their own interest; and to desire to deal with, and employ them in preference to others: and all that name the name of Christ should, for the honour of his Gospel, be ambitious of such distinction.—The Lord will also, one way or other, plead the cause of the injured and oppressed; and honour those, who simply trust his providence, are careful to do no evil, avoid the appearance of it, and walk so wisely, as to give no occasion to such, as are manifestly seeking occasion of reproach: and as the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, he has a right to dispose of every one's property as he pleases; and who shall dare to find fault with his appointments?

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. The envy, and resentment of Laban, and his sons, v. 1—3. *2d. The Lord's command and promise to Jacob, v.* 3. *3d. Jacob's consequent conversation with his wives about leaving their father. v.* 4—16. *4th. Their private departure, v.* 17—21. *5th. Laban's pursuit of them; God's speaking to him in a dream; his overtaking Jacob, and conference with him, with Jacob's vindication of himself, v.* 22—42. *6th. Their amicable conclusion, and covenant, and Laban's leaving Jacob, v.* 43—55.

AND he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that *was* our father's; and of *that* which *was* our father's hath he gotten all this glory.

2 And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and behold, it *was* not toward him as before.

3 And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.

4 And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock,

5 And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it *is* not towards me as before: but the God of my father hath been with me.

6 And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.

7 And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times: but God suffered him not to hurt me.

8 If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ring-straked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ring-straked.

9 Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given *them* to me.

10 And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle *were* ring-straked, speckled, and grisled.

11 And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, *saying*, Jacob: And I said, Here *am* I.

12 And he said, Lift up now thine eyes and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle *are* ring-straked, speckled, and grisled: for I have seen all that Laban doth unto thee.

13 I *am* the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, *and* where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.

14 And Rachel and Leah answered, and said unto him, *Is there* yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house?

15 Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money.

16 For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that *is* ours, and our childrens: now then whatsoever God hath said unto thee do.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *It was not toward him as before*, &c.] He appeared so dissatisfied, and expressed in his looks so much envy, and resentment, that Jacob deemed it dangerous to continue longer with him: yet he did not move, until the Lord expressly commanded him; perhaps thinking it still more dangerous to come in his brother Esau's way.

V. 7. *Ten times.*] As the history, which we have of these six years, is very compendious, we cannot determine, whether it were exactly ten times, or whether it mean in general, many times: but it is plain that Laban tried all methods of circumventing, and defrauding Jacob, but in vain.

V. 10. *Behold the rams*, &c.] The Lord would have him peculiarly note this circumstance, that he might be satisfied that it was not the effect of chance, or human policy, but his own express appointment: in order that he might possess his substance with a quiet conscience, and a thankful heart; regardless of the unmerited anger, and reproaches of Laban, and his sons.

V. 11—13. *The angel of God spake—I am the God of Bethel.*] I would always call the reader's attention to these expressions, as continually augmenting the evidence, that the speaker was no other than the Word, and Son of God; who was God, and with God; and now condescended to be the angel, or messenger of the father to men; as he afterwards did in human nature to take upon him the form of a servant; yet in both manifestations of himself could say; "he that hath seen me, hath seen the "Father; for I and the Father are one." This title, the God of Bethel, &c. would be peculiarly encouraging, quickening, and edifying to Jacob.

V. 15. *Are we not counted*, &c.] They mean that instead of providing for them as children, he had sold them, as strangers and slaves, for the increase of his wealth.

V. 16. *That is our's*, &c.] God hath thus provided for us, and we acknowledge his hand in it, and expect, and desire no more.

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17 Then Jacob roſe up, and ſet his ſons and his wives upon camels.

18 And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padan-aram; for to go to Iſaac his father in the land of Canaan.

19 And Laban went to ſhear his ſheep: and Rachel had ſtolen the images that *were* her father's.

20 And Jacob ſtole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled.

21 So he fled with all that he had, and he roſe up, and paſſed over the river, and ſet his face *toward* the mount Gilead.

22 And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled.

23 And he took his brethren with him, and purſued after him ſeven days journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead.

24 And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and ſaid unto him, Take heed that thou ſpeak not to Jacob either good or bad.

25 Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead.

26 And Laban ſaid to Jacob, What haſt thou done, that thou haſt ſtolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives *taken* with the ſword?

27 Wherefore didſt thou flee away ſecretly, and ſteal away from me? and didſt not tell me, that I might have ſent thee away with mirth, and with ſongs, with tabret, and with harp?

28 And haſt not ſuffered me to kiſs my ſons and my daughters? thou haſt now done fooliſhly in *ſo* doing.

29 It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father ſpake unto me yeſternight, ſaying, Take thou heed that thou ſpeak not to Jacob either good or bad.

30 And now *though* thou wouldſt needs be gone, becauſe thou ſore longeſt after thy father's houſe; *yet* wherefore haſt thou ſtolen my gods?

31 And Jacob anſwered and ſaid to Laban, Becauſe I was afraid: for I ſaid, Peradventure thou wouldſt take by force thy daughters from me.

32 With whomſoever thou findeſt thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren diſcern thou what *is* thine with me, and take *it* to thee: for Jacob knew not that Rachel had ſtolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maid-ſervant's tents; but he found *them* not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent.

34 Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and ſat upon them: and Laban ſearched all the tent, but found *them* not.

35 And ſhe ſaid to her father, Let it not diſpleaſe my lord that I cannot riſe up before thee; for the cuſtom of women *is* upon me; and he ſearched, but found not the images.

V. 19. *Images*, &c.] Learned men are not agreed about theſe images, or teraphim; it is plain they were uſed for idolatrous purpoſes: but not ſo plain what Rachel's motive was in taking them away: whether ſhe took them to uſe them in idolatry; or to prevent her father from ſo doing. However ſhe did wrong, expoſed herſelf and the reſt of the company to danger; and they afterwards ſeem to have been a ſnare to Jacob's family. (See c. 35. v. 2.)

V. 21. *The river.*] That is Euphrates.

V. 23. *Purſued after*, &c.] Without doubt Laban intended at leaſt to have plundered him, or to have conſtrained his return,—but the Lord withheld him.

V. 26. *As captives*, &c.] This was very falſe and injurious: Jacob had a nearer intereſt in them, than Laban; and they had voluntarily agreed to go with their huſband, rather than abide with their father; as it was their duty to do.

V. 27—28.] Laban only pretended to ſo amicable a diſpoſition, now that he was overawed, and durſt not hurt them.

V. 30. *Sore longeſt for thy father's houſe.*] Laban would thus inſinuate that Jacob had no other cauſe of diſſatisfaction.

V. 31. *Becauſe I was afraid*, &c.] He anſwers the former queſtion in the firſt place, without mentioning it: Becauſe I was afraid, therefore I ſtole away.

V. 32. *Let him not live*, &c.] This was raſh, and might have produced fatal effects: but Jacob was partial to Rachel, and ſuſpected her not.

36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered, and said to Laban, What *is* my trespass? what *is* my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

37 Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household-stuff? set *it* here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both.

38 This twenty years *have* I *been* with thee: thy ews and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

39 That which was torn *of beasts*, I brought not unto thee, I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, *whether* stolen by day, or stolen by night.

40 *Thus* I was, in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty: God hath seen mine affliction, and the labour of my hands, and rebuked *thee* yesternight.

43 And Laban answered, and said unto Jacob, *These* daughters *are* my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *these* cattle *are* my cattle, and all that thou seest *is* mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

45 And Jacob took a stone, and set it up *for* a pillar.

46 And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap.

47 And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed.

48 And Laban said, This heap *is* a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed:

49 And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

50 If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take *other* wives besides my daughters, no man *is* with us; See, God *is* witness betwixt me and thee;

51 And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold *this* pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee.

52 This heap *be* witness, and *this* pillar *be* witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.

53 The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac.

54 Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount.

55 And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place. CHAP.

V. 42. *The fear of Isaac*, &c.] That God, whom Isaac, (who was still living) worshipped with reverential fear (v. 53.); he uses not the same expressions respecting Abraham, who was entered upon a very different state; in which however the God of the living, and not of the dead, continued to be his God.

V. 45—46.] Thus a large heap was formed to be an abiding proof of this compact, and reproach to him, who should pass over it to injure the other.

V. 47. *Jegar-sahadutha:—Galeed.*] The former in Syriac, the other in Hebrew signified the heap of witness.

V. 49. *Mispah.*] The watch tower.

V. 54. *Offered sacrifice.*] Laban speaks, of a common sensual feast (v. 27.); but Jacob offers a solemn sacrifice, and makes a religious feast: in this we read the different characters of the two men; and hence may form some estimate of the low state of religion in Laban's family. This parting proved final, and we hear no more of Laban, or of any other of that branch of Abraham's family; who seem after this to have sunk into idolatry, and to have been lost amongst the other Gentiles.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How particularly are the affairs of these families related, whilst the great events of states and kingdoms are passed over

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1st. Jacob's vision of angels, v. 1—2. 2d. His message to Esau, v. 3—5. 3d. The report of Esau's formidable preparation to meet him, v. 6. 4th. Jacob's terror, precaution, and prayer, v. 7—12. 5th. His intended present to Esau, directions to his servants, and passage of the brook Jabbok, v. 13—23. 6th. His wrestling at Peniel, and prevailing, v. 24—32.

AND Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him.

2 And when Jacob saw them, he said, This *is* God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

3 And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother, unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom.

4 And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now.

5 And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and men-servants, and women-servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight.

6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also

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over in silence, and buried in obscurity! Indeed the Bible is intended to teach people the duties of common life, and how to serve God, and enjoy comfort, and do good in it's several stations and relations: and but a very few are concerned in the government of empires, compared with the numbers, who support the characters of parents, husbands, masters, &c.

Those objects, which the men of the world count "all "their glory", are so scanty, that in the pursuit, or possession of them, they stand in each other's way, and seem every one to be taking away from the rest: hence discontent, envy, and discord: but there are possessions of such amplitude, as to suffice for all, without such interference: happy they, who seek them in the *first* place. However, we may thankfully receive, and chearfully use the portion, which God's providence allots us, as far as we obtain it with a clear conscience, and a testimony in the consciences of others to our fidelity, and integrity: and though men may causelessly hate, and criminate us, yet the Lord will plead our cause, and make our very enemies to be at peace with us, when our ways please him: he will vindicate our character, and do us justice, and over-rule all for our good. In all our removals we should have respect to the command and promise of God, and keep our eye upon the openings of his providence; and if he be with us, we need not flinch in dangerous circumstances. And indeed so many are the perils, with which we are surrounded, that nothing else can reasonably ensure our safety, or encourage our hearts. The remembrance of favoured seasons of communion with God, is very refreshing to us, when embarrassed in difficulties: and the recollection of our vows should be frequent, that we fail not to fulfil them.—Selfish men count themselves robbed of all that, which goes besides them; and covetousness will even swallow up natural affection.—Let us take heed and beware of it. (*Luke* c. 12. v. 13. 15, 21.) God can put a bridle in the mouth of wicked men to restrain their malice, though he do not change their hearts: and then, though they have no love for us, they will pretend to it, and try to make a merit of necessity. But great watchfulness will be necessary to keep out evil, and the appearance of evil, even from those undertakings, which are in themselves according to the will of God: and yet nothing short of this can stop the mouths of our enemies, and make them ashamed, who would speak evil of us.—There are seasons, when a sharp reproof may consist with meekness; and reminding others of our services with humility; but much wisdom, and grace is necessary on such occasions, that they may be well timed, well conducted, and unanswerably convincing: and they should always be accompanied with a disposition to forgiveness, to accept of a partial apology, and to overlook injurious insinuations.—They who mean honestly and kindly need not scruple assurances: but they should be solemnly entered into, in the fear of God, who is both the witness, and the avenger of fraud and injustice.—And finally an amicable conclusion of differences, though upon disadvantageous terms is generally preferable both in respect of our innocence, peace, and interest, to the most successful litigation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1. *The angels of God met him.*] In some visible, and glorious appearance, to encourage him with the assurance of the divine protection, especially from the power and anger of Esau.

V. 2. *God's host.*] Or army; by which we learn that they were numerous, and appeared very formidable, and powerful to protect, or to destroy.

Mahanaim.] That is, two armies. As some suppose the one to deliver him safe from Mesopotamia; the other to welcome him to Canaan, and receive him under their protection: or perhaps one encamping before, and the other behind him, and his company, as his guard on every side; as from Laban, so from Esau.

V. 3. *Seir, the country of Edom.*] Whilst Jacob, to whom the promise belonged, had been in hard service, Esau was become a prince, and had established his authority in Mount Seir; which was afterwards called by his name.

V. 5. *And I have sent to tell my lord,* &c.] Intimating that he was well satisfied with his present possessions, which were the fruit of his labour; and was ready to give up all pretensions to Isaac's substance, and to render his brother all suitable respect.

V. 6. *He cometh to meet thee,* &c.] We have every reason

alſo he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid, and diſtreſſed: and he divided the people that *was* with him, and the flocks and herds, and the camels into two bands;

8 And ſaid, if Eſau come to the one company and ſmite it, then the other company which is left ſhall eſcape.

9 And Jacob ſaid, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Iſaac, the LORD which ſaidſt unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

10 I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant; for with my ſtaff I paſſed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands.

11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Eſau: for I fear him, leſt he will come and ſmite me, *and* the mother with the children.

12 And thou ſaidſt, I will ſurely do thee good, and make thy ſeed as the ſand of the ſea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

13 And he lodged there that ſame night; and took of that which came to his hand, a preſent for Eſau his brother;

14 Two hundred ſhe-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred ews and twenty rams,

15 Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine and ten bulls, twenty ſhe-aſſes and ten foles.

16 And he delivered *them* into the hand of his ſervants, every drove by themſelves; and ſaid unto his ſervants, Paſs over before me, and put a ſpace betwixt drove and drove.

17 And he commanded the foremoſt, ſaying, When Eſau my brother meeteth thee, and aſketh thee, ſaying, Whoſe *art* thou? and whither goeſt thou? and whoſe *are* theſe before thee?

18 Then thou ſhalt ſay, They *be* thy ſervant Jacob's; it *is* a preſent ſent unto my lord Eſau: and behold alſo he *is* behind us.

19 And ſo commanded he the ſecond, and the third, and all that followed the droves, ſaying, On this manner ſhall you ſpeak unto Eſau, when you find him.

20 And ſay ye moreover, Behold, thy ſervant Jacob *is* behind us. For he ſaid, I will appeaſe him with the preſent that goeth before me, and afterward I will ſee his face; peradventure he will accept of me.

21 So went the preſent over before him: and himſelf lodged that night in the company.

22 And he roſe up that night, and took his two wives, and his two women-ſervants, and his eleven ſons, and paſſed over the ford Jabbok.

23 And he took them, and ſent them over the brook, and ſent over that he had.

24 And Jacob was left alone: and there wreſtled

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reaſon to think that Eſau's reſentment revived at this meſſage, and that he ſet out with malicious intentions, though God ſuffered him not to execute them.

V. 9—12.] There cannot be a finer model of genuine prayer than this: a thankful acknowledgment of former unmerited favours; a humble confeſſion of entire unworthineſs; an unaffected deſcription of his fears, and diſtreſs; an unreſerved reference of the whole matter to the Lord, renouncing all other dependance, and reſting all his hopes on him: an explicit mention of the very words both of the Lord's promiſes, and commands, as pleading for him, and engaging the glory of God on his behalf: and an anxiety more for the preſervation of his family, than for his own; but eſpecially of his children, in whoſe lives the promiſes ſeemed chiefly concerned: theſe things are worthy of notice; and of our imitation, when we approach the Lord in prayer.—Thus he made the name of the Lord his ſtrong tower, and could not but be ſafe: thus he filled his mouth with arguments, and could not but prevail.

V. 18. *Thy ſervant Jacob—My lord Eſau.*] Though he had purchaſed the birth-right, and the dominion had been expreſsly promiſed him in the bleſſing: yet underſtanding them, in their temporal ſenſe, as belonging rather to his poſterity, than to himſelf; and ſatisfied with the ſpiritual benefits for himſelf, he thus pays homage to Eſau as an acknowledged ſuperior.

V. 24. *Jacob was left alone.*] Renewing his earneſt ſupplications.

There wreſtled.] Nothing requires more vigour, activity, patience, attention, and unwearied unremitting exertions than the exerciſe of wreſtling: and it ſeems to be intended as a deſcriptive emblem of the true ſpirit of faith, and prayer. They, who are poſſeſſed of that ſpirit, muſt expect

wreſtled a man with him, until the breaking of the day.

25 And when he ſaw that he prevailed not againſt him, he touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wreſtled with him.

26 And he ſaid, Let me go, for the day breaketh: And he ſaid, I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.

27 And he ſaid unto him, What *is* thy name? And he ſaid, Jacob.

28 And he ſaid, Thy name ſhall be called no more Jacob, but Iſrael: for as a prince haſt thou power with God and with men, and haſt prevailed.

29 And Jacob aſked *him*, and ſaid, Tell *me*, I pray thee, thy name: And he ſaid, Wherefore *is* it, *that* thou doſt aſk after my name? and he bleſſed him there.

30 And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have ſeen God face to face, and my life is preſerved.

31 And as he paſſed over Penuel, the ſun roſe upon him, and he halted upon his thigh.

32 Therefore the children of Iſrael eat not *of* the ſinew which ſhrank, which *is* upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: becauſe he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, in the ſinew that ſhrank.

CHAP.

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expect ſharp, and long trials in the path of duty, and many conflicts with divers opponents: even from the Lord himſelf they will be tried with various delays, and diſcouragements: but they are encouraged to pray without ceaſing; to pray always, and not faint: to perſiſt in prayer, and watch thereunto with all perſeverance: they are ſtirred up, by difficulties, and delays, to be more earneſt, and importunate; and thus to riſe ſuperior to all diſcouragements, nay, to draw arguments from them. And they, who thus wreſtle in prayer, always at laſt prevail with God.

A man.] After he had ſpent much time in fervent ſupplication to that God, who ſeeth in ſecret: one in faſhion as a man appeared to him, and engaged in wreſtling with him; to illuſtrate the nature and ſucceſs of his prayers.

V. 25. *Prevailed not againſt him.*] Emblematically deſcribing that frame of mind, which refuſes as it were to yield, and will not be put off with a denial. (See *Matt.* c. 15. v. 21—28.

Touched, &c.] The perſon with whom he wreſtled, thereby intimated, that though he ſuffered himſelf to be prevailed upon; yet that this was the effect of his mercy, and gracious acceptance of thoſe prayers, which he had taught, and enabled him to make.

Was out of joint.] For a moment; but was, as it ſeems, immediately replaced; though the effect afterwards remained in ſome meaſure.

V. 26. *Let me go, for the day breaketh.*] Intimating that the morning now called Jacob to his employment in the care of his family.

Except thou bleſs me, &c.] Though, as a wreſtler, he appeared to oppoſe Jacob; yet he recognized in him a friend, yea that friend, from whom all bleſſings come.

V. 28. *Thy name ſhall no more be called Jacob, but Iſrael.*] Not one, who got the bleſſing by twice, with ſome appearance of diſcredit, ſupplanting thy elder brother: but a prince of God, who haſt wreſtled with him, and prevailed for the bleſſing, to thine everlaſting honour.—Having power with God, he would ſurely alſo prevail with man. Thus he was, ſo to ſpeak, knighted in the field; and all who by faith and prayer prevail, inherit the ſame title, and are called the Iſrael of God.

V. 29. *Wherefore is it*, &c.] Thou canſt not remain in doubt, or uncertainty, in that reſpect, after what has paſſed.

Bleſſed him there.] Probably ratified to him the bleſſings covenanted to Abraham, &c.

V. 30. *Peniel.*] The face of God.

For I have ſeen God face to face.] The perſon, who appeared to Jacob, is before called a man, yet here, God. The prophet Hoſea (See *Hoſea*, c. 12. v. 3—5.) calls him God, the Angel, even the Lord of Hoſts; and ſays, that he made ſupplication to him. We cannot therefore have a doubt of the ſentiments of Jacob, of Moſes, and of Hoſea, concerning him, who now wreſtled with Jacob, and ſurnamed him Iſrael. Certainly our creed will beſt accord with their's, if we believe that it was the ſecond perſon in the ſacred Trinity, who was afterwards God manifeſted in the fleſh; and dwelling in human nature is called Immanuel.

My life is preſerved.] Beholding the Lord in human form, he was not overwhelmed by the appearance; as it was the general ſentiment, that they muſt be, who beheld the glory of the divine majeſty. And he had alſo received an aſſurance of deliverance from the dreaded reſentment of Eſau.

V. 31. *He halted upon his thigh.*] He carried this token with him, that it was a reality, and not a deluſive imagination.

V. 32. *Therefore*, &c.] Probably by ſome divine appointment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Although we cannot ſee the angels of God meeting us, and as God's hoſt encamping round us: yet if we poſſeſs that faith, which is the evidence of things not ſeen, we may have as full, and comfortable aſſurance that they actually do ſo, as if we could behold them with our eyes. And we have need of the encouragement both of the guardianſhip of angels, and the protection of the God of angels, to render us ſecure and happy in ſuch a world as this; where the victory in one conflict only reminds us to arm for another; and deliverance from one trouble, or

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The meeting of Eſau, and Jacob, v. 1—4. *2d. Their amicable conference, and Eſau's departure, v.* 5—16. *3d. Jacob's abode at Succoth, v.* 17. *4th. His buying a field, and building an altar at Shechem, v.* 18—20.

AND Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, Eſau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two hand-maids

2 And he put the hand-maids and their children foremoſt, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joſeph hindermoſt.

3 And he paſſed over before them, and bowed himſelf to the ground ſeven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 And Eſau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kiſſed him: and they wept.

5 And he lift up his eyes, and ſaw the women and the children; and ſaid, Who *are* thoſe with thee? And he ſaid, The children which God hath graciouſly given thy ſervant.

6 Then the hand-maidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themſelves.

7 And Leah alſo with her children came near, and bowed themſelves: and after came Joſeph near, and Rachel, and they bowed themſelves.

8 And he ſaid, What meaneſt thou by all this drove, which I met? And he ſaid, *Theſe are* to find grace in the ſight of my lord.

9 And Eſau ſaid, I have enough; my brother, keep that thou haſt unto thyſelf.

danger, to expect another. Yet frequently our ſevereſt trials reſult from former tranſgreſſions, and call them to our remembrance, that we may be humbled for them. Prudent precautions may and ought to be employed by thoſe, who ſimply truſt in God; and to neglect them is to *tempt him*. And no means are more proper to diſarm reſentment, eſpecially that of proud, and worldly men, than humble reſpectful language, and yielding up the objects of contention. Yet theſe are but means, and without God arreſt, and influence the heart, will not ſubdue the power of jealouſy, and revenge.—In times of urgent danger, the ſtrongeſt faith, and repeated aſſurances will not entirely exclude terror, and diſtreſs: but they will put life and vigour into humble fervent prayer, and enable us ſo to plead the Lord's promiſes, and precepts; in ſuch a manner as to remember former mercies, and deliverances; and ſo to leave ourſelves in the Lord's hands, as ſhall inſure protection, and reſtore peace to our ſouls. Every duty has it's ſeaſon; and the care of our families, providing againſt emergencies, and ſuitable attention to our relative engagements, may properly ſucceed, though they muſt not exclude our devotions: and again, when we have uſed every prudent means for our own and others good, we muſt retire, and pray for the bleſſing. If we are in a proper frame of mind, we ſhall rather abridge ourſelves of wonted refreſhments, than neglect our communion with God: and there may be urgent caſes, when even the night itſelf may not ſeem too long to pour out our hearts before him; and if our faith do not fail, nor our ſpirits flag, nor our ſouls grow formal, our devotions are not to be counted too long. When the Spirit of God helpeth our infirmities, and our intenſe, and earneſt, and vaſt deſires can ſcarce find words large, and emphatic enough to utter them; and we ſtill mean more than we can expreſs; then prayer is indeed wreſtling with God; and however tried, or diſcouraged, we ſhall certainly prevail: he will approve our importunity, and largely communicate his bleſſings: and prevailing with him in prayer, we ſhall prevail againſt all our enemies, that perſiſt to ſtrive with us, and prevail on many to be at peace with us. But it is only in human nature that ſinners can ſee God, and live: the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; God, as reconciled in and through him, is the only object of a ſinner's acceptable worſhip: with him we may be as importunate as we pleaſe; and if in humble faith, we determine not to let him go, except he bleſs us, he will take it well: nor ſhould we ever leave wreſtling in nights of trouble, or temptation, until the day break, nay, till the ſun of righteouſneſs ariſe upon our ſouls. Thus ſhall we be acknowledged as true Iſraelites, and crowned as princes with God: and whilſt we carry away the memorials of our victories; we muſt record his goodneſs, for his glory, and the benefit of others. Nor let us wonder, if even our ſweeteſt conſolations carry with them evidences of our infirmity; and if we have afterwards a thorn in the fleſh, to preſerve us from being exalted above meaſure.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII.] V. 2. *Rachel and Joſeph hindermoſt.*] Being deareſt to him, he provides moſt carefully for their ſecurity.

V. 3. *Bowed*, &c.] Still proſecuting his plan of ſatisfying Eſau, that he made no claim to ſecular pre-eminence.

V. 4. *Eſau ran*, &c.] In anſwer to Jacob's prayer, and accompliſhment of his own promiſes, the Lord had thus influenced, and ſoftened his heart.

V. 5. *The children, which the Lord hath graciouſly*, &c.] The piety and ſimplicity of this anſwer to one, who was no friend to religion, is moſt worthy of admiration and imitation.

10 And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.

11 Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough: and he urged him, and he took *it*.

12 And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.

13 And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children *are* tender, and the flocks and herds with young *are* with me; and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die.

14 Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me, and the children be able to endure; until I come unto my lord unto Seir.

15 And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee *some* of the folk that *are* with me: And he said, What needeth it? Let me find grace in the sight of my lord.

16 So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.

17 And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.

18 And Jacob came to Shalem a city of Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan-aram; and pitched his tent before the city.

19 And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money.

20 And he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.

CHAP.

V. 10. *As though I had seen the face of God.*] He hereby denoted the great satisfaction which he took in this friendly interview; as if it resembled even the pleasure of intimate communion with God. Although we may suppose this to have been a proverbial expression; yet we cannot so cordially approve it, as we do the foregoing answer.

V. 12. *I will go before thee.*] To escort him into the land of Seir.

V. 14. *Until I come*, &c.] It is not likely that Jacob ever intended to settle in Seir with his family; nor do we know that he ever himself paid Esau a visit; though we cannot determine that he did not. But upon consideration, or by divine monition, or some change in his circumstances, he might afterwards alter, or fail of his intention. Or perhaps this was a hasty word extorted by Esau's importunity, and his own fear of giving offence.

V. 15. *What needeth it?*] Guarded thus far by the angels of God, he did not require, or wish a guard of soldiers.

Let me find, &c.] Thy friendship and favour is all I require.

V. 17. *Succoth.*] That is, booths, or tents: this place was on the east side of Jordan, before he passed that river. After a journey of several hundred miles, he staid here, in some temporary habitation a short space, to rest, and refresh his family, and his flocks.

V. 18. *To Shalem*, &c.] On the west side of Jordan, or after he had crossed that river. Some translate it, he came in peace to the city of Shechem.

V. 20. *El-Elohe Israel.*] The mighty God, the God of Israel. The altar was erected and inscribed to him, with whom he had before wrestled, and prevailed, and by whom he had been surnamed Israel: *(in perpetuam rei memoriam)* which is an additional discovery, who that *man was:* (See ch. 32. v. 24.) and an indication what value Jacob put on this new name, which he had thus received.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Having poured out our souls before the Lord in fervent prayer, we are then prepared with comfort to meet dangers, and difficulties; and may depend upon, and shall soon experience the faithfulness of God, in a gracious answer. He has various methods of making our enemies to be at peace with us; he can either tye their hands, awe their spirits, excite natural affection, or plant supernatural grace in their hearts. Yet in all this the Lor . works by suitable means; and the wisest method of pacifying great offences, is by yielding; waving points in contest, paying all due respect; receding from our temporal interest; and manifesting to their consciences, that we are satisfied with our more scanty portion, earned by our labour; that we neither envy, nor covet their abundance; that we count it more blessed to give than to receive; that we consider ourselves happy in the Lord's favour, and under his protection; and want nothing more than to live with them in peace, and amity; which we much desire and greatly value. Yet we must be careful in such circumstances that we carry not our desire of pleasing, or our fear of offending too far, or profess more than consists with piety, or sincerity: nor may we conceal, or be ashamed of our religion, when in their company, who fear not God. It is not therefore desirable to be too intimate with superior ungodly relations, who will expect us to join in, or at least to connive at *their* vanities; though they disapprove,

perhaps

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st. Dinah's defilement by Shechem, v. 1—2. 2d. Shechem's love for her, and proposals of marrying her, v. 3—12. 3d. The insidious terms proposed by Jacob's sons, v. 13—17. 4th. The circumcision of the Shechemites; their murder, and the plunder of their city by the sons of Jacob, v. 20—29. 5th. Jacob's reproof and complaint, and their reply, v. 30—31.

AND Dinah the daughter of Leah, *which* she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land.

2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her.

3 And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel.

4 And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife.

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter, (now his sons were with his cattle in the field): and Jacob held his peace until they were come.

6 And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.

7 And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard *it*, and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth: because he had wrought folly in Israel, in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.

8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.

9 And make ye marriages with us, *and* give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you.

10 And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade you therein, and get you possessions therein.

11 And Shechem said unto her father, and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give.

perhaps deride our religion; and who therefore will either be a snare to us, or be offended with us. It is more prudent to keep at a distance, and live amongst such as have less ascendancy, and where we can be more at liberty. Nor should we omit to observe, that we shall expose that to the least hazard which we value most and love best; and shall therefore venture the loss of all things, rather than endanger the loss of our souls, if we know their value; or renounce Christ, if we truly love him. Nor may we overlook in Jacob's care, and tender attention to his family and flocks, the good shepherd of our souls, who gathers the lambs in his bosom, and gently leads those with young: whose example we all as parents, teachers, and pastors, should imitate. Blessed be his name, he is still the mighty God, the God of Israel: may he, who writes, and all who read these reflections, be numbered amongst the true Israel of God; that we may record his name, and rejoice in his love, through our pilgrimage here on earth, and for ever in the Canaan above. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 1. *And Dinah.*] She seems to have been about the age of Joseph, or somewhat younger: some time after Jacob's departure from Shechem, Joseph being seventeen years of age, went to his brethren, and was sold by them. Dinah therefore could not at this time be more than fifteen years old; an only daughter, doubtless much beloved, and probably too much indulged.

Went out to see, &c.] Probably upon some public occasion of mirth and festivity, by their invitation; but whether with, or without her parents consent, doth not appear.

V. 2. *Took her, and lay with her*, &c.] It does not appear that it was by force; but rather by the arts of seduction. And it seems that he kept her with him, until she was afterwards taken away by her brethren. (v. 26.)

V. 4. *Get me this damsel.*] Obtain me the consent of her father.

V. 5. *Jacob held his peace*, &c.] As scarce knowing what to answer, or afraid either of exasperating them, or taking some improper step. It seems to us, that he had done more wisely, if he had taken the management of the business wholly upon himself; rather than to have intrusted it with his sons, who were rash, and violent, and possessed too much influence with him.—Nor need we determine whether the covenant made with Jacob, would have rendered it totally wrong for him to have in such circumstances acceded to Shechem's proposal: however it ought certainly to have either been flatly refused, or fairly accepted of.

V. 7. *Were grieved,—and very wroth.*] More it seems for the disgrace to their family, than for the sin committed against God.

Folly in Israel, &c.] This seems the sentiment of the historian, rather than of Jacob's sons; who speaks according to the language of the times when he wrote, and to intimate to the Children of Israel the inconsistency of such practices with their name, and profession.

12 Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.

13 And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, (because he had defiled Dinah their sister)

14 And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised: for that were a reproach unto us.

15 But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we *be*, that every male of you be circumcised;

16 Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people.

17 But if you will not hearken unto us to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone.

18 And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son.

19 And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob's daughter: and he *was* more honourable than all the house of his father.

20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying,

21 These men *are* peaceable with us, therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, *it is* large enough for them: let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters.

22 Only herein will the men consent unto us, for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they *are* circumcised.

23 *Shall* not their cattle, and their substance, and every beast of their's *be* ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us.

24 And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city, and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.

25 And it came to pass on the third day when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males.

26 And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out.

27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.

28 They took their sheep and their oxen, and their asses, and that which *was* in the city, and that which *was* in the field,

29 And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and

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V. 12. *Ask me never*, &c.] As willing to purchase their peace and consent upon any terms; nothing as matters then stood could be spoken fairer.

V. 13. *And said, because*, &c.] Making his sin, the excuse for their own deceitful project.—Probably Jacob's sons at first only intended to take the advantage of the soreness of the Shechemites to rescue their sister; in case Shechem should refuse to restore her peaceably: but afterwards Simeon and Levi formed and executed the deeper scheme of revenge and plunder.

V. 15. *That every male*, &c.] We cannot be certain that it would have been right to have admitted the Shechemites, who were of the devoted race of Canaan, into the church by the ordinance of circumcision, upon an intelligent and suitable profession of religion: but the very proposing the performance of this religious rite, as a condition of a secular advantage (though the like is still shamefully common in the world), is as inconsistent with true piety: as their deceitful intention, and after conduct were inconsistent with truth, justice, and humanity.

V. 20—24.] The whole conduct of the Shechemites shews them to have acted upon the most selfish principles, and to have submitted to circumcision without the least regard to its nature, meaning, or divine institution; merely to obtain their own secular ends: yet were they much more excusable in this profanation, than they who put them upon it, and might have been expected to have known better.

V. 25. *Simeon and Levi Dinah's Brethren.*] Being sons of Leah, as well as of Jacob.

Took each man, &c.] It has, not improbably, been conjectured that they were now hospitably entertained in Shechem's house, which would give them a fairer opportunity of coming upon them when sore, and unawares, and enable them to perform this dreadful execution: and perhaps though no more of Jacob's sons were concerned in the massacre, some servants might assist in it; and it seems (See v. 27.) all the rest concurred in the plunder.

V. 29. *All their little ones and their wives*, &c.] We are not informed what became of these persons afterwards,

and ſpoiled even all that *was* in the houſe.

30 And Jacob ſaid to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to ſtink among the inhabitants of the land, amongſt the Canaanites, and the Perizzites: and I *being* few in number, they ſhall gather themſelves together againſt me, and ſlay me, and I ſhall be deſtroyed, I and my houſe.

31 And they ſaid, Should he deal with our ſiſter as with an harlot?

CHAP. XXXV.

Contains, 1ſt. God's command to Jacob to repair to Bethel, v. 1. 2d. Jacob's obedience, &c. v. 2—7. 3d. The death of Deborah, v. 8. 4th. God's appearance and promiſes to Jacob, and Jacob's worſhip, v. 9—15. 5th. The birth of Benjamin, and death of Rachel, v. 16—20. 6th. Reuben's inceſt with Bilhah, v. 22. 7th. The names of Jacob's ſons, v. 23—26. 8th. Jacob's viſit to Iſaac, and Iſaac's age, death, and burial, v. 27—29.

AND God ſaid unto Jacob, Ariſe, go up to Beth-el, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddeſt from the face of Eſau thy brother.

2 Then Jacob ſaid unto his houſhold, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the ſtrange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments:

3 And

any more than of the ſervants of Jacob's houſhold: whether they were otherwiſe previouſly diſpoſed of; or whether they went down with Jacob's family into Egypt, though not mentioned.

V. 30. *To make me to ſtink.*] Abraham and Iſaac had been reſpected though ſtrangers, and their religion was honoured through the good behaviour of them and their families: but, by this infamous conduct, Jacob apprehended that they would cauſe him, and his family, and his religion even to be execrated amongſt the heathen; whoſe crimes they had ſurpaſſed.

V. 31.] Vindicating themſelves; and wickedly inſinuating that Jacob was willing to have permitted his daughter to have been ſo treated.—After this we read no more of Dinah, than her name, and may conclude that ſhe lived and died unmarried; but we hope not impenitent.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Young perſons, eſpecially females, are never ſo ſafe and well as under the inſpection of prudent and pious parents: their own inexperience, and credulity, and the intoxicating nature of flattery; together with the artifice of thoſe, who are ever laying ſnares for them, expoſe them to imminent danger. They are therefore their own enemies, if they deſire to go much abroad alone, and amongſt thoſe, who are ſtrangers to God, and true religion: but thoſe parents are much more inexcuſable, who allow and encourage them in ſo doing; nay who do not interpoſe their authority to prevent their thus expoſing themſelves heedleſsly to unſeen and unſuſpected danger.—Such indulged, becauſe beloved children, too often like Dinah, become the ſhame, and grief of their parents, and families.—And indeed however trained up in the fear of God, large families of children will in general occaſion many trials, anxieties, and ſorrows to their parents; and the grief of loſing them in infancy is tranſient, and tolerable, compared to that of ſeeing them grow up, and live in wickedneſs. Let parents then rejoice in their chidren as though they rejoiced not, and ſubmit reſignedly, if the Lord bereave them of their beloved off-ſpring; and if they are ſpared, take care to bring them up for the Lord, and commend them to his keeping: and at laſt expect comfort from him, and not from them. When a young woman liſtens to the vile propoſals, or flattering promiſes of a ſeducer, ſhe not unfrequently ſecludes herſelf from every proſpect of an honourable connexion, and voluntarily conſigns herſelf to a future ſingle life; if ſtill worſe conſequences do not enſue: this conſideration ſhould coincide with nobler motives to induce them to reject with determined indignation and diſdain every overture of that kind. No ſin is made lighter of by multitudes than lewdneſs; yet no crime is more injurious to the bodies and ſouls of individuals, to the peace and comfort of families, and to the welfare of ſociety; or makes way for more horrible conſequences, as introductory to all other wickedneſs.—Flee fornication therefore. But how will theſe heathens riſe up in judgment againſt and condemn thouſands, falſely called chriſtians, who having ſeduced and defiled the objects of their pretended affection, afterwards treat them with contempt and hatred, leave them to the infamy and miſery of proſtitution, diſeaſe, and death; and without the leaſt compaſſion for them, or their broken-hearted parents, proceed to add new trophies of their infamous ſucceſs, and to multiply the victims of their unbridled luſts! Surely Shechem was in this more honourable not only than all the houſe of his father, but than all the reſt of his brethren, the whole tribe of Seducers; who all are in honour, and conſcience bound; though ſcarce any one will propoſe and make this only, though inadequate, reparation. Alas! that children, who have profited ſo little by the example and inſtructions of their godly parents, ſhould gain ſuch undue aſcendancy over them! and that they, who expreſs ſo much indignation at the crimes of others, and the folly wrought in Iſrael; ſhould ſhew themſelves ſo unacquainted with the character of an Iſraelite indeed, as far to exceed in their own conduct thoſe crimes which they pretend to puniſh in others! They, who under the pretext of religion, and by profaning it's ſacred inſtitutions, can conceal, that they may, without being ſuſpected, execute their purpoſes of atrocious wickedneſs,

3 And let us arise, and go up to Beth-el; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.

4 And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* ear-rings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem.

5 And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.

6 So Jacob came to Luz, which *is* in the land of Canaan (that *is* Beth-el) he and all the people that *were* with him.

7 And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 But Deborah Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Beth-el, under an oak: and the name of it was called Allon-bachuth.

9 And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-aram; and blessed him.

10 And God said unto him, Thy name *is* Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name; and he called his name Israel.

11 And God said unto him, *I am* God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee: and kings shall come out of thy loins.

12 And the land which I gave Abraham

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wickedness, are the worst enemies of religion; who cause it, and it's professors to be hated and execrated, expose them to inward anguish, and outward persecution; and open the mouths and harden the hearts of multitudes to their destruction.—But they, who are wicked enough to perpetrate enormous crimes, will never fail of excusing and vindicating them; nor will any thing but the true grace of God, or the discoveries, which the day of judgment will make, effectually stop men's mouths, and silence their excuses: then, however, the impenitent sinner will find that the crimes of others form no excuse for his own; and that, though God may justly punish those who profane his ordinances, or transgress his laws, even by the hands of their very tempters; yet these shall in turn be punished with still greater severity. The good Lord preserve our families from such crimes and miseries, and his church from such scandals, as this chapter records!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV.] V. 1. *Arise*, &c.] Jacob had hitherto deferred to perform his vow, made at Bethel, and to dedicate the tenth of his substance to the Lord. Perhaps his afflictions, recorded in the former chapter, were intended to chastise that delay: but being now reminded of God, he doubtless accomplished the whole of his vow, though we are not particularly informed about it.

V. 2. *Put away the strange gods.*] The idols, which were worshipped by those, who were strangers to the true God, and his covenant. Probably the images, which Rachel had stolen, were of that number; and those, which they had seized among the spoil of the Shechemites; and which some of the household worshipped, we hope none but the servants, and captives.

And be clean.] It seems there existed some rules for external purification, of which we are now ignorant, before the promulgation of the Mosaic law; (See *Exodus*, c. 19. v. 10—15.) which were designed to represent the sanctification of the spirit, as their sacrifices prefigured the atonement of Christ's death. The abominations recorded in the foregoing chapter, as well as many other evils, which seem to have prevailed in Jacob's family, much needed such reformation, and purification.

V. 4. *And they gave*, &c.] With less reluctancy than he expected.

Ear-rings.] These were probably worn as an amulet, or charm, in token of some dependance on, or respect for their strange gods.

Jacob hid them.] Buried them in the ground secretly, so that his family knew not what he had done with them, if they had been disposed to have sought for them; either from superstition, or value of the precious metals, of which probably they were made.

V. 8. *But Deborah, Rebekah's nurse*, &c.] This took place about 125 years after Rebekah's marriage with Isaac. (See ch. 24. v. 59.) Probably after Rebekah's death, which is not recorded, this aged servant was taken into Jacob's house, by the desire of Leah and Rachel, as peculiarly dear to, and respected by them, and their family; and thus her death comes to be recorded in Jacob's history, rather than in Isaac's.

Allon-Bachuth.] That is the oak of weeping: for though a servant, and not a relation, and though now in extreme old age, and probably not only incapable of being useful to others, but occasioning much trouble, yet her good behaviour had so engaged all their affections, that her death was much lamented.

V. 10. *He called his name Israel.*] Confirmed to him all that special favour, and protection, which that title implied.

and

and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.

13 And God went up from him, in the place where he talked with him.

14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, *even* a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink-offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.

15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Beth-el.

16 And they journeyed from Beth-el: and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour.

17 And it came to pass when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also.

18 And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.

19 And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Beth-lehem.

20 And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day.

21 And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar.

22 And it came to pass when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard *it*. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.

23 The sons of Leah; Reuben Jacob's first-born, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun.

24 The sons of Rachel; Joseph and Benjamin.

25 And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan and Naphtali.

26 And the sons of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid; Gad and Asher. These *are* the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padan-aram.

27 And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah (which *is* Hebron) where Abraham and Isaac sojourned.

28 And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years.

29 And Isaac gave up the ghost and died, and was gathered unto his people, *being* old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

CHAP.

V. 13. *Talked with him.*] A personal conference, as with Abraham.

V. 14—15.] Jacob seems to have renewed with more solemnity the ceremony, which he observed when God first met him at Bethel; and confirmed to the place more publicly that name, by which he had privately called it, and which it ever after bore; till it became Beth-aven, a house of vanity, and of idolatry.

V. 17. *Fear not, thou shalt have this son also.*] Alluding to the name of Joseph, and the occasion of that name. (See ch. 30. v. 24.)

V. 18. *Her soul was in departing.*] An expression aptly describing the nature of death, which is the dissolution of the union betwixt soul and body.

For she died.] She had rashly said, Give me children, or else I die: God gave her children, and she dies in child-birth.

Benoni.] The son of my sorrow.

Benjamin.] The son of my right-hand.

V. 22. *Israel heard it.*] Although both Reuben and Bilhah doubtless flattered themselves that it would have been concealed, and bestowed all pains to conceal it.

V. 27. *Came unto Isaac.*] We cannot conclude, from the silence of Scripture, that he paid his father only this one visit; probably he came often.

V. 28. *And the days,* &c.] The age, death, and burial of Isaac are here inserted by anticipation; for by computation we find that he died not till about the time that Joseph stood before Pharoah; we have shewn that Isaac was 150 years old when Joseph was born, Joseph was therefore 30 when Isaac was 180.

V. 29. *Esau and Jacob buried him.*] Instead of taking this opportunity of murdering Jacob, as he had purposed; his heart was so influenced that he amicably assisted at Isaac's funeral.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

Such is the imperfection of the best of men, that they are prone to defer those things, which they know ought to be done, and really intend doing; and to forget the mercies, that they have received, and the obligations, that they lie under: nay, without great circumspection, gross abuses will find their way even into religious families, especially if they are large: we have need therefore to be reminded of our duty, and even rebuked for neglecting it; and should deem it a very great mercy to be stirred up to personal, or family reformation, and chearfully part with every thing, however valuable, which proves an occasion of sin. A good example, and serious admonitions will go a great way in promoting the good behaviour of those around us, and there is often less opposition to our pious endeavours, than we expected. The Lord deals not with his people, and their families, according to their deservings, but is better to them than their fears; and when

CHAP. XXXVI.

Contains, 1st. The account of Esau's wives, and children, v. 1—5. *2d. His removal to Mount Seir, v.* 6—8. *3d. His descendants in Seir, v.* 9—19. *4th. The descendants of Seir the Horite, &c. v.* 20—30. *5th. Kings and dukes of Edom, v.* 31—43.

NOW these *are* the generations of Esau, who *is* Edom.

2 Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite:

3 And Bashemath Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth.

4 And Adah bare to Esau, Eliphaz: and Bashemath bare Reuel.

5 And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these *are* the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan.

6 And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country, from the face of his brother Jacob.

7 For their riches were more than that they might dwell together: and the land wherein they were strangers, could not bear them, because of their cattle.

8 Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau *is* Edom.

9 And these *are* the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites, in mount Seir.

10 These *are* the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau.

11 And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz.

12 And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these *were* the sons of Adah Esau's wife.

13 And these *are* the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.

14 And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of

when he awes the spirits of their enemies, they cannot but be safe whithersoever they go, or wherever they are. When we have obediently hearkened to the Lord's reproving voice, have rectified abuses, and paid our vows, we may expect to hear from him with comfort, and to enjoy the assurance and earnests of his covenanted blessings. Yet all our consolations in this world only prepare us for, and are intermingled with trials: and the continual ravages of death, bereaving us of our nearest and best beloved friends and relatives, will frequently excite our fears, and lamentations, and remind us to be ready also, and to set our affections on things above. Nothing is more becoming than when servants by their good behaviour merit, and obtain the endeared affection of the families, in which they reside, and when they live beloved, and die lamented by them. Such scenes of domestic life are more beautiful, and more instructive, than the events, which crowd the page of history with evidences of the madness and folly of mankind. But we should not too earnestly wish for, or impatiently complain of the want of any temporal object: the Lord may remember our unadvised expressions long after, and rebuke them even by granting our desires, without giving his blessing with them. How one trial after another oft comes upon the favoured servants of the Lord! Whilst we live in the world, we must witness so much sin around us, and mourn over so much in ourselves and families, as well as experience so many bodily infirmities, and outward disappointments, that we may well congratulate, and almost envy those, who have finished their measure of sufferings and services, and leave the world full of days, and ripe for glory: for if we are fit for Heaven, better is the day of our death, than the day of our birth. They, who live the most quietly, and comfortably, are least noticed in history; and it may be some consolation to reflect, that whilst we read of scarce any thing but the vices and miseries of mankind; numbers unnoticed by man have walked with God, and are not, for God hath taken them.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI.] V. 2. *Adah*, &c.] She is also called Judith, the daughter of Beeri; (See ch. 26. v. 34.) probably the same person as Elon, or the one might be her father, and the other her grandfather.

Aholibamah the, &c.] Who is also called Bathshemath, the daughter of Elon; he probably was her father, and Anah, the daughter of Zibeon, was her mother: Elon might either be the same person as mentioned above, or another of the same name.

V. 3. *Bathshemath.*] Called elsewhere Mahalath. Such a variation of names is very common in Scripture.

V. 6. *Went into the country from the face*, &c.] Probably he came frequently to Isaac during his life-time, but now took away all his possessions, and quitted finally the land of Canaan, and left Jacob to the unmolested prospect of his reversionary inheritance.

Zibeon Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau, Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah.

15 These *were* dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the first-born *son* of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz,

16 Duke Korah, duke Gatam, *and* duke Amalek: These *are* the dukes *that came* of Eliphaz, in the land of Edom: these *were* the sons of Adah.

17 And these *are* the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah. These *are* the dukes *that came* of Reuel, in the land of Edom: these *are* the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife.

18 And these *are* the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these *were* the dukes *that came* of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah Esau's wife.

19 These *are* the sons of Esau (who *is* Edom) and these *are* their dukes.

20 These *are* the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah,

21 And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these *are* the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom.

22 And the children of Lotan were, Hori, and Heman: and Lotan's sister *was* Timnah.

23 And the children of Shobal *were* these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam.

24 And these *are* the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this *was that* Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.

25 And the children of Anah *were* these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 And these *are* the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran.

27 The children of Ezer *are* these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Achan.

28 The children of Dishan *are* these; Uz, and Aran.

29 These *are* the dukes *that came* of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah,

30 Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these *are* the dukes *that came* of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.

31 And these *are* the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.

32 And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah.

33 And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead.

34 And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead.

35 And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad (who smote Midian in the field of Moab) reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Avith.

36 And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead.

37 And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth *by* the river reigned in his stead.

38 And Saul died, and Baal-hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead.

39 And Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city *was* Pau; and his wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

40 And these *are* the names of the dukes *that came* of Esau, according to their families, after

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V. 15. *Dukes.*] Military leaders, who were cotemporaries.

V. 20. *The sons of Seir the Horite.*] The former inhabitants of that country, with whom probably the descendants of Esau intermarried, and were incorporated.

V. 24. *Found the mules.*] Probably in keeping the asses he discovered the method of breeding mules, by the unnatural copulation of the distinct species of horses, and asses.

V. 31. *These are the kings*, &c.] Who reigned in succession over the whole country; before there was any king over the Israelites.

V. 40. *Names of the dukes.*] Eminent military leaders under these kings.

after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth,

41 Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon,

42 Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar,

43 Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these *be* the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations, in the land of their possessions; he *is* Esau the father of the Edomites.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Contains, 1st. Jacob's sojourning in Canaan, v. 1. 2d. Joseph loved by Jacob, and hated by his brethren, v. 2—4. 3d. His dreams, with their interpretation, and effect, v. 5—11. 4th. His going to see his brethren, with their counsel to slay him, v. 12—20. 5th. Joseph at Reuben's desire cast into a pit; and afterwards sold to the Ishmaelites, with Reuben's lamentation at not finding him, v. 21—30. 6th. His coat covered with blood sent to Jacob, with his embittered grief at his supposed death, v. 31—35. 7th. Joseph brought to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, v. 36.

AND Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.

2 These *are* the generations of Jacob; Joseph *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of *many* colours.

4 And

V. 43. *Their possessions.*] Whilst Israel had his inheritance only in reversion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The registers in this Chapter are recorded to evince the faithfulness of God to his promise to Abraham, "Nations shall come of thee;" to shew the accomplishment of his prophetical information to Rebekah, "Two nations are in thy womb;" and the blessing to Esau, "By thy sword shalt thou live." They might also be many ways useful to the children of Israel. Yet they are but mere registers, and very different from the particular history of the heirs of promise; who have the best place, and the highest character in the book of God, though not in many other books. However men may struggle against the purpose of God, it will stand, and they will finally see it necessary to give place to it; and God hath many ways of inducing them to it. Oft he gives ungodly people a large portion of this world; and satisfied therewith, they leave others to possess and enjoy spiritual blessings unenvied, and unmolested. This is Edom; still the same profane despiser of heavenly things, as when he sold his birth-right: though not the same malicious persecutor, as when he vowed Jacob's destruction.—Yet he, and such as he, look great, and grow into dukes and princes, and are envied and courted; whilst the Israel of God are poor, obscure, and despised. But the tables will be turned presently: the wicked shall soon be cut down, and wither as the grass; while the righteous shall flourish as the cedar in Libanus: and having their good things, when those of the sinner are spent and gone, they shall have them durably, yea eternally. Let us then seek an interest in these blessings; and not covet, envy, or glory in those fading distinctions, which are so often lavished upon the enemies of God, and the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVII.] V. 1. *Jacob dwelt.*] He was contented to continue a stranger, in Canaan, both whilst his father lived, and after Esau had got possession, and exercised lordship in Seir.

V. 2. *These are the generations*, &c.] The history of him, and of his family. The inspired writer has done with Esau, except as he comes in his way, when treating of the affairs of Israel: he has joined himself to the heathen, let him be numbered amongst them.—But of Jacob, and the chosen seed he hath much to record.

Feeding the flock, &c.] Joseph, though much beloved, was not trained up delicately and in sloth, but to labour: they, who are brought up otherwise are truly called *spoiled children*, for they are not likely to be worth much.

With the sons of Bilhah—and Zilpah.] Particularly assisting them in their pastoral employments.

Brought unto their father their evil report.] In order that the crimes, which he could not prevent, and might not reprove, might be reproved, and repressed by Jacob's authority.

V. 3. *Son of his old age.*] The main comfort of his old age, after the loss of Rachel. But as Joseph was much older than Benjamin, and not much younger than several of Jacob's other sons; I incline to favour the translation, the son of Eders, or of the aged, as descriptive of his gravity and piety, far above his years; a Hebrew phrase similar to the sons of Belial, and many others.

A coat of many colours.] A coat of colours, the word *many* not being in the original: a garment more beautiful, than the others wore; which was intended as a token of peculiar

4 And when his brethren ſaw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not ſpeak peaceably unto him.

5 And Joſeph dreamed a dream, and he told *it* his brethren: and they hated him yet the more.

6 And he ſaid unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed.

7 For behold, we *were* binding ſheaves in the field, and lo, my ſheaf aroſe, and alſo ſtood upright; and behold, your ſheaves ſtood round about, and made obeiſance to my ſheaf.

8 And his brethren ſaid unto him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or ſhalt thou indeed have dominion over us? and they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words:

9 And he dreamed yet another dream, and told it his brethren, and ſaid, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more, and behold, the ſun and the moon, and the eleven ſtars made obeiſance to me.

10 And he told *it* to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and ſaid unto him, What *is* this dream that thou haſt dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourſelves to thee, to the earth?

11 And his brethren envied him: but his father obſerved the ſaying.

12 And his brethren went to feed their father's flock in Shechem.

13 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, Do not thy brethren feed *the flock* in Shechem? Come, and I will ſend thee unto them. And he ſaid unto him, Here *am I*.

14 And he ſaid to him, Go, I pray thee, ſee whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he ſent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.

15 And a certain man found him, and behold, *he was* wandering in the field: and the man aſked him, ſaying, What ſeekeſt thou?

16 And he ſaid, I ſeek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed *their flocks*.

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peculiar regard; but ſeems to have been an invidious, and injudicious diſtinction.

V. 4. *When his brethren ſaw*, &c.] The preference, which was manifeſted, excited their envy; and the ground of that preference, even Joſeph's wiſdom and piety called forth their enmity; conſcious of his ſuperior excellency, and hating that very excellency, they conſidered the approbation of *his* conduct as a reproach of *their's*; all which was augmented by his reporting their evil deeds.—In this he was a type of Chriſt, the beloved of the father, therefore envied and hated by the Jews, and by the world; not only, notwithſtanding his excellency, but for it, as it reproached and expoſed their hypocriſy, and wickedneſs; and becauſe alſo he teſtified of them, that their works were evil. And this alſo was the effect of the old enmity put between the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent.

V. 5. *Joſeph dreamed a dream*, &c.] God thus gave him a pre-intimation of his future greatneſs to prepare him for, and ſupport him under his previous trials.—Thus Chriſt "for the joy ſet before him endured the croſs;" and chriſtians are prepared by the hope and earneſt of heaven for their ſufferings on earth.—Mr. Henry obſerves, "that he dreamed of his preferment but not of his impri-"ſonment; as young people are apt to dream of proſperi-"ty, but think nothing of affliction."

V. 6. *Hear I pray you*, &c.] Probably by ſome inward impulſe he was led to tell theſe prophetical dreams, which were very proper to be known; though it would otherwiſe have been impolitic for him to have declared them.

7—8.] They rightly interpreted the dream, though they abhorred the interpretation: and whilſt they ſpared no pains, and ventured upon the moſt atrocious crimes, in order to defeat it, were themſelves the very inſtruments of it's accompliſhment.--Thus the Jews underſtood Chriſt's parable, and the intimations he gave of his kingdom; but determined he ſhould not reign over *them*, they conſulted to put him to death; and by his crucifixion actually made way for that exaltation, which they intended to prevent.

V. 10. *His father rebuked him.*] Perhaps to abate their indignation; yet it is evident that he thought that there was ſomething ſupernatural in it. (See v. 11.)

Thy mother.] Rachel was dead, but Leah ſeems to have been ſtill alive: it may however mean only the whole family, with peculiar reference to the number of his brethren.

V. 12. *In Shechem.*] This was at leaſt forty miles from Hebron, where Jacob at preſent reſided.—They went probably thither for the ſake of better paſture.

V. 14. *See whether it be well*, &c.] After the wickedneſs which they had perpetrated upon the Shechemites, it is more wonderful that they ſhould venture thither, than that Jacob ſhould be anxious for their ſafety. He ſuſpected not ſuch deep enmity in their hearts, as they actually entertained, or he would not thus have expoſed his favourite ſon.—But the hand of the Lord was in it all.

V. 15. *Wandering.*] Having loſt his way, or traverſing the country from place to place ſeeking his brethren.

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GENESIS CH.XXXVII. VE.XXXIII.

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17 And the man said, They are departed hence: for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.

18 And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him, to slay him.

19 And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh.

20 Come now therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit; and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.

21 And Reuben heard *it*, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him.

22 And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit that *is* in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again.

23 And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of *many* colours that *was* on him.

24 And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit *was* empty, *there was* no water in it.

25 And they sat down to eat bread: and they lift up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead, with their camels bearing spicery, and balm, and myrrh, going to carry *it* down to Egypt.

26 And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit *is it* if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood?

27 Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he *is* our brother, and our flesh: and his brethren were content.

28 Then there passed by Midianites merchant-men; and they drew and lift up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty *pieces* of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.

29 And Reuben returned unto the pit; and behold, Joseph *was* not in the pit: and he rent his clothes.

30 And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child *is* not; and I, whither shall I go?

31 And they took Joseph's coat and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood.

32 And they sent the coat of *many* colours, and they brought *it* to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it *be* thy son's coat or no.

V. 18. *Saw him*, &c.] Compare this with *Luke* c. 20. v. 14—15.

V. 19. *Behold this dreamer*, &c.] Thus Jesus, upon the cross, was scornfully reproached, with his pretensions to be the Christ the King of Israel.

V. 20. *Come now therefore*, &c.] They had no more compassion for their father, than for Joseph: nay perhaps they secretly enjoyed the pleasure of disappointing, and grieving him: for they typified those, who saw and hated both Christ, and his Father: and all the enmity born the children of God, is because they resemble, and are beloved of him; and is only an expression of enmity to God.

V. 21. *Reuben*, &c.] We not long since read of Reuben being guilty of such fornication, as is not so much as named among the Gentiles; yet here he opposes another kind of wickedness: human depravity runs in different channels; some are more prone to one sin, some to another.

V. 22. *Cast him into this pit*, &c.] As if he meant that he should there be left to starve; but with intention to restore him to his father, hoping probably thereby to recover his favour. Thus Joseph, murdered in their intention, and as it were buried in the pit, yet preserved in order to his exaltation, was a type of Christ crucified, buried, risen, and glorified.

V. 25. *Ishmeelites*.] The descendants of Ishmael, Midian, (See v. 28.) and other sons of Abraham, (who were grown into a multitude, whilst the descendants of the promised Isaac were few in number,) uniting together, engaged in this traffic.

V. 28. *Sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver*.] Thus Christ was sold for thirty pieces, and by a Judas, or Judah; the same name with him, who proposed the sale of Joseph; and, considering the difference of coins, it might be just the same sum too.

V. 29. *Reuben returned unto the pit*.] He was absent when the plan of selling Joseph had been proposed, agreed upon, and executed: however he never disclosed, that we find, what he knew of this business to his father; for fear, perhaps, of drawing down the resentment of the rest upon himself.

V. 32. *Thy son's coat*.] Not our brother's, nor Joseph's coat, but thy son's; as if, even in this cruel imposition, they would reproach him for his partiality to Joseph, and almost insinuate, that he alone was considered as a son.

33 And he knew it, and said, *It is* my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him: Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces.

34 And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days.

35 And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning: Thus his father wept for him.

36 And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's, *and* captain of the guard.

CHAP.

V. 34. *Rent his clothes, and put*, &c.] Which was in those ages and countries the customary indication of great sorrow; and implied an humiliation before God for sin, as the cause of affliction.

V. 35. *His daughters.*] Not only Dinah, but his sons' wives; for many of them were at that time married.

To comfort him.] His sons now seem to have rather relented, when they witnessed his excessive sorrow: yet not so as to confess their evil deeds, or betray one another; though Jacob's grief might thereby have been abated, and probable measures taken of recovering Joseph.

Thus his father wept for him.] Immoderately, and without proper resignation to the will of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who hate to be reformed, hate also to be reproved, and hate those, who expose them to reproof: and though it is oft of important advantage to discover the secret crimes, which men commit, to those who are authorised to reprove, and restrain them; yet nothing requires more prudence and candour: nor should it ever be done out of resentment, or without urgent occasion; always out of hatred of the sin, and love to the sinner; and with reluctancy, as expecting nothing but unpleasant consequences to ourselves. In the present state of things, there will be contentions amongst brethren, especially those of opposite characters; and parents ought certainly to manifest their preference of them, who behave with the greatest piety, and prudence; yet even this will excite the enmity and envy of those, who are proud and ungodly: great care ought therefore to be taken, not to inflame these malignant passions, by such distinctions, as are useless and inviduous. Much of that wisdom, which is from above, will be necessary in this respect, to avoid sowing those seeds of discord, that will not speedily be eradicated: for when once malice, and envy have got possession of the heart, every circumstance enhances them; love, shewn to the person envied, is considered as hatred to the man, who is infected with envy; kindness to the one, seems injustice to the other; and commendation, reproach: yea the very excellency of a man's character, and conduct makes him the more odious to such persons. These passions, when once full grown, break through every tye of nature, every obligation of duty, and every restraint of conscience and compassion: and, if grafted upon that enmity, which is in the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman, upon religious enmity, and the spirit of persecution, produce the most atrocious crimes, without the least remorse, or reluctance.—Yet though the the Lord knows that the tokens of his favour, and that honour, which comes from him, will excite these diabolical dispositions, and enflame them more and more; yet he will not therefore on that account be withheld; but will rather confer such favours purposely to evidence their malignity and force, either for the sinner's future conviction and humiliation, or to manifest his own Justice in his condemnation. He knows how to make the wrath of man to praise him, and to restrain the remainder of it: he can check and moderate the force of men's passions; work upon their humanity, or natural affection; excite horror, or terror in their minds; or even let loose selfishness, or covetousness, or fear of man to counteract the effects of malice and revenge: so that, in direct opposition to their own intention, they shall just go far enough to accomplish his purposes, and to defeat their own; and to promote the benefit and advancement, which they meant to hinder.—If the Lord ever now does, as he oft did formerly, give previous intimations of what he intends to do for, and by his servants, it must be considered as equivalent to an assurance of many preparatory trials; for before honour is humility; and without severe discipline the heart of the best of men is seldom sufficiently humbled, for suitably filling up important stations of usefulness.—Nothing can well be baser than for children to insult, and torture the heart of a parent, whose main fault is having too much indulged them; yet in this common case, though the conduct of the child be vile, the appointment of God is wise and righteous.—The more we love earthly objects, the greater affliction we are thereby exposed to; and impatient mourning for their loss, too plainly proves the excess of our affection, and the need there was of the salutary stroke: yet oft, our sorrow would cease, and be turned into joy, if we knew all the truth. In faith resting satisfied that though we know not now what the Lord is doing, yet we shall both know and approve hereafter; we should comfort ourselves under severe trials, and not determine rashly and *falsely*, (See c. 45. v. 28. c. 48. v. 11.) to go down mourning to the grave. As we know not what we, or our's may come to before we die, it is good to habituate ourselves to labour, self-denial, and submission. (Compare v. 2—13—14 and 36.) When men are bent upon wickedness, they will never want some stratagem to effect, and some pretext to conceal it: but however unanimous they may be in hiding their sins, they will at last be brought to light to their confusion.

But let us in all this behold Jesus, hated, envied, persecuted, sold, and suffering for us; yea in some sense by us; for we are like-minded in ourselves by nature, to those, who crucified him; and our sins were the real causes of those sufferings, which made way for his mediatorial exaltation: thus whilst we were enemies, provision was made

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Contains, 1st. Judah's marriage, and children by his wife, v. 1—5. 2d. His son Er's marriage, and death, v. 6—7. 3d. Onan's marriage to his brother's widow, his misbehaviour, and death, v. 8—10. 4th. Tamah, the widow, preserved for Shelah, v. 11. 5th. The death of Judah's wife, his incest with Tamar, with it's discovery, and his confusion, and the fruit of it in two sons, v. 12—30.

AND it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name *was* Hirah.

2 And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name *was* Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her.

3 And she conceived and bare a son; and he called his name Er.

4 And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan.

5 And she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him.

6 And Judah took a wife for Er his first-born, whose name *was* Tamar.

7 And Er, Judah's first-born, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.

8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.

9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his: and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled *it* on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.

10 And the thing which he did, displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

11 Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown; (for he said, Lest peradventure he die also as his brethren *did:*) and Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house.

12 And in process of time, the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died: and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

13 And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold, thy father in law goeth up to Timnath, to shear his sheep.

14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which *is* by the way to Timnath: for she saw that

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for our perishing necessity, when we are made sensible of it: and he waits his opportunity of overcoming evil with good. Whilst we receive from his fulness daily, let us not forget the anguish of his soul, when suffering for our sins, that we may mourn for and crucify his crucifiers, love and serve him, and through envy, reproach and tribulation follow him to glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII.] V. 1.] The inspired historian breaks off the thread of his narration to relate some other domestic occurrences, which about the same time took place in Jacob's family; and were doubtless an additional cause of great grief to the aged Patriarch.

V. 2. *Canaanite.*] Though Judah and his brethren so strenuously opposed the marriage of Dinah with an uncircumcised person; yet he, and probably all the rest, married wives from amongst them.

Took her.] Though very young he married, as it seems, without Jacob's advice, or consent, at the instance of his Canaanitish friend.

V. 7. *Was wicked in the sight of the Lord.*] Probably not so in the sight of man; from whom he contrived to conceal his sin.

The Lord slew him.] Many premature deaths might probably be accounted for in the same manner, had we as impartial, and well-informed historians to record them.

V. 8. *Go in unto thy brother's wife,* &c.] This seems to have been a traditional, before it became a written law; and the first-born from such marriages were accounted the children, were adopted into the family, and became the heirs of the deceased.

V. 9.] His conduct was not only unnatural and detestable in itself; but full of envy, and malice; and not without something of the nature of murder in it: for the same principle would have induced him to have murdered a child born to him, but accounted as his brother's, which induced him to prevent it's conception.

V. 11. *For he said, lest peradventure,* &c.] Perhaps ignorant of the real cause of his son's death, he attributed it to some ill-behaviour of Tamar; and therefore secretly determined not to marry Shelah to her: but he put the matter off, by intimating that he was too young, and he should wait a little longer, before he allowed them to marry.

V. 14. *And she was not,* &c.] She could not think this a probable way of forwarding her marriage with Shelah:

that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

15 When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; because she had covered her face.

16 And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee (for he knew not that she *was* his daughter in law:) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?

17 And he said, I will send *thee* a kid from the flock: And she said, Wilt thou give *me* a pledge, till thou send *it*?

18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that *is* in thine hand: and he gave *it* her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

19 And she arose, and went away, and laid by her vail from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not.

21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where *is* the harlot, that *was* openly by the way-side? And they said, There was no harlot in this *place*.

22 And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, *that* there was no harlot in this *place*.

23 And Judah said, Let her take *it* to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her.

24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also behold, she *is* with child by whoredom: And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.

25 When she *was* brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man whose these *are*, *am I* with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose *are* these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff.

26 And Judah acknowledged *them*, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son: and he knew her again no more.

27 And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that behold twins *were* in her womb.

28 And

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lah, but probably perceived that Judah never intended it; and yet it is difficult to assign a reason for her laying this snare for her father-in-law. Some conjecture that being proselyted to the true religion, she was desirous of being brought into the line of Christ's ancestors, and therefore of having children by some of Jacob's family; nay, perhaps some intimation had been given that our Lord should spring from Judah; therefore not expecting to be married to Shelah, she saw no other way, but drawing in Judah to lay with her. If these were her motives, though they by no means excuse her conduct, which must be ascribed to her ignorance, she certainly obtained her end; for Christ was descended from her by this very incestuous intercourse.

V. 18. *Signet, bracelets, and staff.*] These were probably of considerable value, and would afford her an opportunity of exposing him; yet he was so infatuated as to entrust them with a supposed common prostitute.

V. 21. *Where is the harlot?* &c.] By this circumstance, and by her covering her face, we learn that these practices were neither so common, nor so shameless amongst these Canaanites, as they now are amongst nominal christians. We shall not easily find a place, of which it can now truly be said, there is no harlot here.

V. 23. *Lest we be shamed*, &c.] For the whoredom, and the folly connected with it.

V. 24. *Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.*] Some suppose that he meant no more but to brand her with a mark of infamy: if he meant to burn her to death, in her present situation, it shews not only that he considered her as betrothed to Shelah, and an adulteress: but also that he was actuated by an undue severity, and dislike to Tamar. In those days the injured party was oft both accuser, judge, and executioner; as in the case of murder, the nearest relation was the avenger of blood.

V. 25. *Discern I pray thee*, &c.] He, who had been the adviser in the sale of Joseph, and in sending his coat to Jacob, with this taunting message, "Know now whether this be thy son's coat or no:" is here met with in a similar manner, "Discern, I pray thee, whose *these* "are."

V. 26. *More righteous than I*, &c.] Judah had intentionally committed fornication, she incest: yet conscious of his being the occasion of her crime, by withholding Shelah; and condemned in his conscience for the harsh sentence, which he had uttered against her, and we hope truly penitent, he condemns himself more than her.

Knew her again no more.] Nor do we find, though yet young, that he married again.

V. 27—30.] By hard labour she was corrected for her crime; yet from these twins descended the whole tribe of Judah;

28 And it came to paſs when ſhe travailed, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a ſcarlet thread, ſaying, this came out firſt.

29 And it came to paſs as he drew back his hand, that behold his brother came out; and ſhe ſaid, How haſt thou broken forth? *this* breach *be* upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez.

30 And afterward came out his brother, that had the ſcarlet thread upon his hand; and his name was called Zarah.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Reſumes the hiſtory of Joſeph, and contains, 1ſt. His being bought by Potiphar, and preferred in his family, v. 1—6. 2d. Tempted by his miſtreſs to adultery, but victorious over the temptation, v. 7—13. 3d. Accuſed falſely by her, and impriſoned by his maſter, v. 14—20. 4th. Comforted of the Lord, and favoured and advanced by the keeper of the priſon, v. 20—23.

AND Joſeph was brought down to Egypt: and Potiphar an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Iſhmeelites, which had brought him down thither.

2 And the LORD was with Joſeph, and he was a proſperous man: and he was in the houſe of his maſter the Egyptian.

3 And his maſter ſaw that the LORD *was* with him, and that the Lord made all that he did to proſper in his hand.

4 And Joſeph found grace in his ſight, and he

Judah; from whom the whole nation are to this day called Jews, or Judeans; and who had little cauſe to boaſt, that they were not born of fornication. Some make the circumſtances of this birth emblematical of the Jews, and Gentiles: the Jews, like Zarah, ſeemed marked for priority in the church of Chriſt; yet they drew back; and the Gentiles, like Pharez, have got the birth-right: yet in due time they ſhall alſo regain admiſſion, and ſhare the ſame privileges.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Alas! what a melancholy view do theſe records give us of the ſtate of Jacob's family, of the troubles, which he had with his children, and of the ſtate of religion in the then viſible church of God!—Is this Judah, whom his brethren ſhall praiſe? Rather let us praiſe God for his patience with him; and that where ſin had abounded, grace, as we hope, much more abounded in his ſalvation. The friendſhip of thoſe who will encourage, flatter, and aſſiſt them in gratifying their licentious inclinations, is oft much valued by young perſons; and their company courted and preferred before that of pious friends and relations; but it corrupts good manners, and makes bad worſe.—Though, all things conſidered, it is beſt for *moſt* men to marry early in life; yet ſurely not when they are incapable of judging for themſelves, and will not be counſelled, or directed by their parents and friends; but are led by thoſe, who fear not God, into connections with others of the ſame ſtamp. Too often parents lead their children into the ſame miſtakes, and ſins, which themſelves have fallen into; and are inſtrumental in their ruin temporal and eternal. The Lord ſometimes makes ſpeedy work in executing judgment on young ſinners, in order to prevent the abuſe of his patience in his dealings with others. Sometimes the Scriptures ſparingly hint at thoſe vile practices, which though done in ſecret, are a ſhame to be ſpoken of: this is to ſhow that he notices, abhors, and will bring to light every ſecret ſin, and eſpecially all the laſciviouſneſs of heart, and life, which it is to be feared millions live in, who ſtand fair in the world's eſteem: then ſhall the ſecret hiſtory of every individual, (who have not truly repented, and waſhed away their ſins in the blood of Chriſt) written with an impartial pen, be publiſhed to the world of men and angels; and every mouth ſhall then be ſtopped; and God's righteouſneſs in the condemnation of ſinners be manifeſted to all. Mirth, feaſting, and vain company furniſh fuel to licentious inclinations, and opportunity inflames the heart: then intereſt, credit, conſcience, are all ſacrificed, and the wiſeſt of men act as if bereft of common ſenſe: for wine and whoredom take away the heart, and ſtupify the conſcience.—What need then to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation! Unthought of conſequences will ſoon prove *their* folly, who give licence to their luſts; and they, who fear ſhame before men, more than condemnation before God, oft find the very thing come upon them, which they feared, notwithſtanding all their care to prevent it. Injurious ſuſpicions, and unjuſt treatment, will oft drive thoſe to evil practices, who were not previouſly diſpoſed to them: but miſerable and infatuated beyond expreſſion are they, who barter chaſtity, reputation, and even their ſouls, for the paltry reward of ſin. Nor are any more hardened againſt compaſſion, or more diſpoſed to treat others with unrelenting ſeverity; than they who are moſt indulgent to themſelves, and hardened in unrepented wickedneſs. But it is hopeful, when being put to ſhame before men, produces inward conviction of guilt, humiliating confeſſions, and renunciation of ſin, never more to return to it. But whilſt we compaſſionate pious Jacob, thus wounded on every ſide by the miſconduct of his family: let us admire the ſovereign purpoſe, and grace of God, who by all this was preparing for the manifeſtation of his Son in human nature. Our Redeemer ſprang from Judah by Tamar, and from Pharez; for his excellency was perſonal; and,

he ſerved him: and he made him overſeer over his houſe, and all *that* he had he put into his hand.

5 And it came to paſs from the time that he had made him overſeer in his houſe, and over all that he had, that the LORD bleſſed the Egyptian's houſe for Joſeph's ſake, and the bleſſing of the LORD was upon all that he had, in the houſe, and in the field.

6 And he left all that he had in Joſeph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, ſave the bread which he did eat: and Joſeph was *a* goodly *perſon*, and well favoured.

7 And it came to paſs after theſe things, that his maſter's wife caſt her eyes upon Joſeph; and ſhe ſaid, Lie with me.

8 But he refuſed, and ſaid unto his maſter's wife, Behold, my maſter wotteth not what *is* with me in the houſe, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand.

9 *There is* none greater in this houſe than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, becauſe thou *art* his wife: how then can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?

10 And it came to paſs as ſhe ſpake to Joſeph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, *or* to be with her.

11 And it came to paſs about this time, that *Joſeph* went into the houſe to do his buſineſs; and *there was* none of the men of the houſe there within.

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though ſinleſs, it ſuited the end of his appearance, to be made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIX.] V. 2. *The Lord was with Joſeph*, &c.] Not only was he favoured with the comforting preſence of the Lord, and with ſeaſons of peculiarly ſweet communion with him: but he was ſo remarkably furniſhed with wiſdom from above, and proſpered in all his undertakings, that it was evident even to Potiphar himſelf, (v. 3.) that the Lord was with him, aſſiſting, and ſucceeding him: thus becoming uſeful, though a ſlave, he was had in reputation.

And he was in the houſe, &c.] He abode there well ſatisfied, and kept cloſe to his work.

V. 4. *Found grace.*] He became a favourite, and was much confided in.

V. 5. *He had made him overſeer*, &c.] Conſidering Potiphar's rank, it is not probable that Joſeph was preferred to ſo important a ſtation, till his ability, and fidelity had been previouſly made trial of, for ſome time. Near thirteen years elapſed from the time of his being ſold into Egypt, to that of his ſtanding before Pharaoh. Some years he was confined in priſon; but probably more elapſed during his continuance in Potiphar's family, previous to his impriſonment: where he would have large opportunity of acquiring that kind of knowledge, and addreſs, which his future elevated ſtation required.

The Lord bleſſed, &c.] There was a remarkable change for the better: every body noticed that every thing was better conducted, and had a more proſperous event.

V. 6. *And he left all*, &c.] Having increaſing confidence in his fidelity, integrity, prudence, and good ſucceſs.

V. 7. *Lie with me.*] The diſparity in rank betwixt Potiphar's wife, and Joſeph; and the obſervation of his modeſty, as equal to his other virtues, probably made her deſpair of inveigling him by any diſtant hints: and conſidering how much it was his intereſt to oblige her, and how dangerous to offend her; and being hurried on by the violence of her criminal paſſions, ſhe was not aſhamed to addreſs him in ſo impudent a manner, not much fearing a repulſe.

V. 8—9.] Attending to the circumſtances before mentioned, and conſidering Joſeph as a ſingle man, and in the vigour of youth: and the importunity with which he was aſſaulted, and the opportunity, and privacy afforded him, we cannot too much admire this glorious victory of chaſtity; the power of divine grace therein diſplayed; and the excellency of him, who was hated of his brethren: and comparing his conduct with that of Judah, Reuben, and other of Jacob's ſons, we muſt allow that he had juſtly the preference in his father's eſteem.—Nor is his refuſal more worthy of admiration, than the manner of it: the calmneſs of his ſpirit, the force of his arguments, the generoſity, and delicacy, as well as piety of his ſentiment are moſt beautiful.—His maſter's kindneſs to him; the honourable ſtation which he held in his family; the peculiar relation, in which his tempter ſtood to his generous benefactor; the greatneſs of the injuſtice, and ingratitude to him, which would be in ſuch a conduct; but above all the greatneſs of the wickedneſs of it in the ſight of God, whoſe authority and diſpleaſure he is not aſhamed to mention to this adulterous woman: theſe are the topics, which he inſiſts upon: and had not her vile paſſions ſtupified and hardened her heart, ſure ſhe muſt have been reclaimed, or even converted to his God, and his religion, which he ſo adorned and recommended in his conduct.

V. 10.] Whilſt ſhe day by day aſſailed him, doubtleſs Satan as far as permitted, would paint to his imagination in lively colours the advantages of compliance, and the conſequences of refuſal, but all in vain; for the grace of our Lord was ſufficient for him.

Or to be with her.] When he found her deaf to the calls of duty, conſcience, gratitude, honour, and the fear of God, and found that he could not reclaim her, he avoided her company as much as poſſible; being diſtruſtful of himſelf, and fearful of being overcome, if he parleyed with the temptation.

12 And

12 And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out.

13 And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth,

14 That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice.

15 And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out.

16 And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home.

17 And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me.

18 And it came to pass, as I lift up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.

19 And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled.

20 And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* bound: and he was there in the prison.

21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison.

22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that *were* in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer *of it*.

23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing *that was* under his hand; because the LORD *was* with him: and *that* which he did, the LORD made *it* to prosper.

CHAP.

V. 13. *She saw that he had left*, &c.] Her lustful affection thus finally, as she deemed, disappointed, was converted into the most rancorous enmity, and she seems to exult in the opportunity, which she now had of being revenged upon him.

V. 14. *See, He*, &c.] Without mentioning Potiphar: it is the affected language of rage, and disdain.

Hebrew.] Called so from Eber, one of the ancestors of Abraham. It is spoken in contempt of his original, and religion.

V. 15. *Left his garment with me*, &c.] Intimating that having called aloud for help, he hasted to escape; upon which seizing hold of his garment she had endeavoured in vain to retain him, till they came to apprehend him.

V. 17. *To mock me*, &c.] To insult and treat me in a base unworthy manner.

V. 19—20.] We find not that Joseph attempted to say one word in his own defence: perhaps he was not permitted, and perhaps he was not inclined, as sensible it would be all in vain: however he was dumb upon David's principle, "thou shalt answer for me, O Lord my God." Though we cannot but censure Potiphar for so hastily crediting this accusation of a person of such approved excellency; yet considering the absolute authority masters then possessed over the lives of their slaves, and the vehement rancour of his accuser, and the baseness of the crime laid to his charge; it was certainly by remarkable restraint from God, that Joseph was preserved from being put to death.

Where the king's prisoners were.] Here also the hand of the Lord is to be noticed: in any other prison probably Pharaoh had never heard of him.

V. 22. *He was the doer of it.*] Through the wisdom and fidelity, which he manifested, he soon acquired the confidence of the keeper; and though at first severely treated (See *Psalm* 105. v. 19.) yet he afterwards became both comfortable and useful: and doubtless the prisoners were now treated with singular humanity; and we hope benefited by his pious counsels, excellent example, and winning benevolence.

V. 23. *Because the Lord*, &c.] This was so evident that the keeper of the prison noticed it, was influenced, and perhaps converted by it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our enemies may strip us of our external distinctions, and ornaments, but wisdom and grace cannot be taken from us: they may banish us from friends, relatives, and country; but they cannot deprive us of the presence of the Lord: they may exclude us from the benefits of common providence, rob us of liberty, and confine us in dungeons; but they cannot shut us out from communion with God, seclude us from the throne of Grace, or bereave us of the special blessings of salvation. The ordinances of God, and the society of his people are useful, and in some sense almost necessary to the life of faith, and growth of grace, especially in young converts: and parents, and ministers are justly fearful of their beloved children, or people being secluded from them: but if God's providence, contrary to our inclination, deprive us of them, his gracious presence can supply the deficiency, and make the soul like a watered garden, though destitute of such advantages; and render us both comfortable, respectable, prosperous, and useful. Had Potiphar purchased

Joseph

CHAP. XL.

Contains, 1ſt. The impriſonment of Pharaoh's chief butler, and baker, v. 1—3. *2d. Joſeph's being charged with them, v.* 4. *3d. Their dreams, and his interpretation of them, with his petition to the chief butler, v.* 5—19. *4th. The accompliſhment of the dreams, and the chief butler's forgetfulneſs of him, v.* 20—23.

AND it came to paſs after theſe things, *that* the butler of the king of Egypt and *his* baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt.

2 And Pharaoh was wroth againſt two *of* his officers, againſt the chief of the butlers, and againſt the chief of the bakers.

3 And he put them in ward in the houſe of the captain of the guard, into the priſon, the place were Joſeph *was* bound.

4 And the captain of the guard charged Joſeph with them, and he ſerved them; and they continued a ſeaſon in ward.

5 And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream; the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which *were* bound in the priſon.

6 And

Joſeph with half the ſubſtance of his houſe, he had made an advantageous bargain: and, though a heathen, until impoſed on, he learned his value by experience, and treated him accordingly. Yet how little do many chriſtians underſtand the value of ſuch ſervants, as fear God! who will ever be moſt faithful, induſtrious, and ſucceſsful. But we muſt allow on the other hand that mere pretenders to religion, of character and conduct exactly the reverſe of Joſeph, occaſion this prejudice amongſt thoſe, who cannot, or will not diſcriminate betwixt the humble chriſtian, and the noiſy hypocrite. When the Lord pleaſes, he can eaſily give his ſervants favour even amongſt ſtrangers, and none ever was a loſer by being kind unto them: and uſually they, who accommodate themſelves to a low and laborious ſituation, will get forward, and acquire confidence. But alas, proſperity draws on temptation; and perſonal accompliſhments are often ſnares to others, as well as to the poſſeſſor; therefore not to be envied, coveted, or gloried in. Through the force of human depravity, thoſe amiable qualities, which ſhould command eſteem, attract the attention of the licentious eye, and kindle in the heart the flame of forbidden luſt: which having acquired the aſcendancy, ſcorns all reſtraint, and throws off all regard to modeſty, and decency: thus when luſt is conceived it bringeth forth ſin; and the infatuated wretch ruſhing headlong forward to deſtruction, commences ſeducer, and the factor for Satan in tempting others to wickedneſs; nor is any thing more to be dreaded than ſuch a tempter, or more to be ſhunned than ſuch temptations; and, if we mean not to commit iniquity, we ought to flee as a bird from the ſnare, and as a roe from the hand of the hunter. Let us not in this glorious example of Joſeph reſt in our admiration of him, but proceed to adore the energy of divine grace in him: truſting to that grace we may hope to be more than conquerors, not only if expoſed to the fiery trial of perſecution, but even if aſſaulted in the more dangerous manner, that Joſeph was. But would we ſtand ſteadfaſt in the day of trial we muſt have our minds armed with gratitude, juſtice, fear of, faith in, and love to God, abhorrence of evil, contempt of worldly pleaſure, or gain, and readineſs for the croſs: we muſt learn alſo to judge of every ſin, and of the luſts of the fleſh eſpecially, not according to that ſlight manner, which he world does; but as enormous crimes for the ſake of which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of diſobedience: and that importunity may not prevail upon, nor ſecrecy encourage us; we ſhould endeavour to have our minds habitually poſſeſſed with a ſenſe of our obligations unto God, his all-ſeeing eye upon us, and the approaching diſcoveries of the day of judgment. But if Satan cannot tempt us to ſin, he will diſtreſs us: and we may lay our account with the embittered reſentment of thoſe, whoſe wicked inclinations we diſappoint; and with being falſely accuſed of thoſe very crimes, which we abhor, yea becauſe we abhor them. However it is better, if the will of God be, that we ſuffer for well-doing than for evil-doing: a clear conſcience, and the preſence of a merciful God will ſupport us not only under other trials, but under the moſt injurious calumnies; and we need not much labour to vindicate ourſelves; in due time, the Lord will vindicate us, and wipe off every aſperſion.—And the more meekly and patiently we ſuffer, the leſs bitterneſs ſhall we experience in our trials, and the more conſiſtent will our conduct be with the character of chriſtians. By all theſe things the Lord is training up his people for glory; perhaps for better ſcenes, and important ſervices in this preſent world; and if we are not in a wrong ſpirit, nor out of the path of duty, we can never be in a wrong place either for comfort or uſefulneſs.

But let us not forget through Joſeph to look unto Jeſus, who ſuffered being tempted, yet without ſin: who was calumniated and perſecuted, but without cauſe; "who was "led as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her "ſhearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth," to recriminate, or to vindicate himſelf; and who by the croſs aſcended to the throne. May we be enabled, and contented to follow in the ſame path of ſubmiſſive ſuffering, to the ſame place of glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XL.] V. 3. *In the houſe of the captain of the guard.*] Potiphar was the captain of the guard, and it ſeems this ſtate priſon was adjoining to his houſe, and entruſted to his care; and that the keeper of the priſon was his deputy.

V. 4.

6 And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and behold they *were* sad.

7 And he asked Pharaoh's officers that *were* with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye *so* sadly to day?

8 And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, *Do* not interpretations *belong* to God? tell me *them*, I pray you.

9 And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said unto him, In my dream, behold, a vine *was* before me.

10 And in the vine *were* three branches: and it *was* as though it budded, *and* her blossoms shot forth; *and* the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes.

11 And Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup iuto Pharaoh's hand.

12 And Joseph said unto him, This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches *are* three days.

13 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.

14 But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and shew kindness, I pray thee, unto me; and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this honse.

15 For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon.

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good; he said unto Joseph, I also *was* in my dream, and behold, *I had* three white baskets on my head.

17 And in the uppermost basket *there was* of all manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head.

18 And Joseph answered, and said, This *is* the interpretation thereof: The three baskets *are* three days.

19 Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.

20 And it came to pass the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's birth-day, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the

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V. 4. *Charged Joseph with them.*] Though it is probable that at first Joseph was not only closely confined, but severely treated in this prison; yet after some time Potiphar's resentment cooled: and considering the whole of his prudent and excellent conduct, and the improbability of the charge brought against him, with other circumstances, he perhaps began to suspect it a malicious accusation: and though he would not give umbrage to his wife, by taking him out of prison; yet he seems to have connived at the kind treatment, which he there met with; and, sensible of his abilities, was not unwilling he should be trusted, and be serviceable in that situation.

He served them. Gave them, as prisoners of rank, all the attendance required, or allowed.

V. 6. *They were sad.*] Looking upon their dreams as supernatural, and indicating their future fate: their situation, and perhaps some consciousness of guilt caused them to forebode the worst.

V. 7. *Wherefore look ye*, &c.] This is a beautiful specimen of that attentive tenderness and sympathy, by means of which God gave him favour with every one.

V. 8. *No interpreter.*] They could not in the prison consult their diviners, in whom they placed confidence; which added to their anxiety.

Do not interpretations, &c.] This intimates that he had frequently before discoursed with them of the true God, and endeavoured to draw them off from those lying vanities, to his worship, and service: it also precluded them from giving him the honour of the interpretation.

V. 13.] The actual delivery of the cup into Pharaoh's hand obviously denoted the favourable issue.

V. 14. *Make mention*, &c.] By appeal to Pharaoh he would make suit for his enlargement; but he had no further request to present.

V. 15. *I was stolen away*, &c.] He says not how, or by whom: for he is not disposed to criminate, or reproach his brethren.

Here also I have done nothing.] He does not so much as accuse his wicked mistress, or at all reflect on Potiphar, or means to bring his action of false imprisonment.

V. 19 *The birds shall eat*, &c.] The bake-meats eaten by the birds, and not brought to Pharaoh was the unfavourable presage: the bad dream will not admit of a good interpretation; nor can he consistent with fidelity conceal the truth, however it pain him to speak it. The baker may be the better for it, if he prepare accordingly.

V. 20. *Birth-day.*] Being observed as a season of festivity, they came then to be enquired after, and either

the head of the chief butler, and of the chief baker among his servants.

21 And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand:

22 But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them.

23 Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgat him.

CHAP. XLI.

Contains, 1st. Pharoah's two dreams, which the magicians cannot interpret, v. 1—8. 2d. The chief butler's report of Joseph, who is sent for out of prison, and interprets the dreams, as foretelling seven years of plenty, and seven of scarcity, v. 9—32. 3d. Joseph's counsel, preferment, and marriage, v. 33—45. 4th. The seven years of plenty, and Joseph's management, v. 46—49. 5th. His two children, v. 50—52. 6th. The beginning of the seven years of scarcity, and the distress of the Egyptians relieved by Joseph, v. 53—57.

AND it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharoah dreamed, and behold, he stood by the river.

2 And behold, there came up out of the river seven well-favoured kine, and fat-fleshed; and they fed in a meadow.

3 And

through the merits of their cause, or the caprice of their sovereign, they were thus differently disposed of. We have but two instances I think in scripture, for festive observation of birth-days: this of Pharaoh, and that of Herod: (*Matt*, 14.) neither of which give much sanction to the custom —Indeed it seems rather incongruous that worldly people, who are so fond of living here, should celebrate the burial of one year after another of their short span, with such indications of hilarity. A christian may however very properly observe his birth-day: and indeed has cause to rejoice both that ever he was born, and that he comes nearer and nearer to the conclusion of sin and sorrow, and to the completion of felicity: and may take occasion to bless the Lord for the mercies, and to humble himself for the sins, of the preceding year; and to seek his blessing upon the year ensuing.

V. 23. *The chief butler*, &c.] Neither the kindness shewn him; nor the interpretation of the dream thus remarkably verified; nor the discourses he had heard from Joseph concerning his religion; nor his excellent conduct, whereby he adorned it, made any lasting impression, when he was again possessed of the emoluments of his office, and enjoying the pleasures of the court.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

High stations are slippery places, and from the presence chamber to the dungeon, is in many earthly courts but a short step: a place in his favour, who will not forsake his true servants, is of unspeakable value.—In the most voluntary actions of men, who know not God, nor pay any regard to him, we may discern his hand, and perceive how his purposes unfold, and his counsels work towards an accomplishment, slowly but surely. Whilst we are encouraged by the gracious dealings of the Lord towards his afflicted servant; let us mark how he resembled Christ, and may we through the grace of God resemble, and imitate him, in fidelity, humanity, compassion, unaffected piety, and humility: in repressing the pride and resentment, which agitate our hearts, embitter our spirits, and are apt to disgrace our conversation, when we meet with injurious treatment, or mention that, which we have met with; and in modestly pleading our own cause without *needlessly* mentioning, or exposing the faults even of our most malignant enemies.—Alas the foresight of sinners however attained, reaches but a few days forward: but by faith the believer looks through the sufferings of time, and anticipates the glories of eternity. Though we may not expect *in general* information from dreams, nor regret the want of an interpreter of them; yet to be favoured with a wise and faithful interpreter of God's providences, and oracles, especially in seasons of affliction, is an inexpressible mercy.—Here also interpretations belong to God; from him we must seek them, and to him give the praise, whatever instruments he employs. But the same faithful interpretation which encourages one, will contain an awful warning to another of a contrary character: yet both profitable; for, blessed be God, if we discover our danger, we need not seek long, or in vain for a refuge. Temporal deliverances must generally be longer waited for by the Lord's servants, than by others: that they may have them with a blessing, and be previously prepared for them: and the Lord will teach them to cease from man, before they obtain their best blessings. We must not complain, nor be discouraged if we are forgoten, or ungratefully requited by those, whom we have served: alas! it is the fault of our nature, and we are guilty of it as well as others, especially in our ingratitude to, and forgetfulness of God.—However let us not forget the sufferings, promises, and love of our Redeemer; nor neglect to mark in this narration of Joseph, a type of Jesus, in the depth of his humiliation, by free grace indeed, assuring one of the malefactors, which hung beside him, of immediate and eternal felicity; and with equal justice leaving the other to hardness of heart, and eternal perdition.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLI.] V. 1. *Two full years.*] Joseph must have been some time in prison before it can be supposed that he would be so far trusted, as to have the two state prisoners under his charge: they were a considerable time in prison; and two years more elapsed, without any tokens of approaching deliverance. Doubtless Joseph would be oft ready to say, "Lord, how long?"

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3 And behold, ſeven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill-favoured, and lean-fleſhed; and ſtood by the *other* kine, upon the brink of the river.

4 And the ill-favoured and lean-fleſhed kine, did eat up the ſeven well-favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke.

5 And he ſlept and dreamed the ſecond time: and behold, ſeven ears of corn came up upon one ſtalk, rank and good.

6 And behold, ſeven thin ears and blaſted with the eaſt-wind ſprung up after them.

7 And the ſeven thin ears devoured the ſeven rank and full ears: and Pharaoh awoke, and behold, *it was* a dream.

8 And it came to paſs in the morning, that his ſpirit was troubled; and he ſent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wiſe-men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but *there was* none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.

9 Then ſpake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, ſaying, I do remember my faults this day.

10 Pharaoh was wroth with his ſervants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guards houſe, *both* me, and the chief baker.

11 And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he: we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream.

12 And *there was* there with us a young man an Hebrew, ſervant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams: to each man according to his dream he did interpret.

13 And it came to paſs, as he interpreted to us, ſo it was: me he reſtored unto mine office, and him he hanged.

14 Then Pharaoh ſent and called Joſeph, and they brought him haſtily out of the dungeon: and he ſhaved *himſelf*, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh.

15 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, I have dreamed a dream, and *there is* none that can interpret it: and I have heard ſay of thee, *that* thou canſt underſtand a dream, to interpret it.

16 And Joſeph anſwered Pharaoh, ſaying, *It is* not in me: God ſhall give Pharaoh an anſwer of peace.

17 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, In my dream, behold, I ſtood upon the bank of the river.

18 And behold, there came up out of the river ſeven kine, fat-fleſhed, and well-favoured; and they fed in a meadow.

19 And behold, ſeven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill-favoured, and lean-fleſhed, ſuch as I never ſaw in all the land of Egypt for badneſs.

20 And the lean and the ill-favoured kine did eat up the firſt ſeven fat kine.

21 And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they *were* ſtill ill-favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke.

22 And I ſaw in my dream, and behold, ſeven ears came up in one ſtalk, full and good.

23 And behold, ſeven ears withered, thin, *and* blaſted with the eaſt-wind, ſprung up after them.

By the river.] The ſcene of theſe dreams is laid at the river Nile, whoſe annual overflowing occaſioned the fertility of Egypt; which failed when that failed.

V. 2—7.] There ſeems in theſe dreams an alluſion to the graſs for the uſe of cattle, and to the corn for the food of man.

V. 8. *His ſpirit was troubled*, &c.] Although in theſe dreams we perceive many of thoſe incoherencies, which are in ordinary dreams: yet they were ſo impreſſed of God upon his mind, that he regarded them as a preſage of ſome great events to himſelf, or kingdom.

None that could, &c.] God ſo ordered it, to forward Joſeph's advancement; that with all their rules, the magicians could not ſo much as make a plauſible conjecture of the meaning of theſe dreams.

V. 9. *My faults.*] Either formerly againſt Pharaoh, or in forgetting Joſeph.

V. 16. *It is not in me, God*, &c.] He will ſpeak of the Lord, and his ſtatutes, before kings, and not be aſhamed: thus he tacitly condemns all the pretended ſkill of their magicians, and endeavours to draw the king himſelf from ſuch lying vanities unto the living God: at the ſame time, he modeſtly renounces all pretenſions to ſuperior ſagacity, and expreſſes his good-will to Pharaoh, and his kingdom.

24 And the thin ears devoured the ſeven good ears: and I told *this* unto the magicians; but *there was* none that could declare *it* unto me.

25 And Joſeph ſaid unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh *is* one: God hath ſhewed Pharaoh what he *is* about to do.

26 The ſeven good kine *are* ſeven years; and the ſeven good ears *are* ſeven years: the dream *is* one.

27 And the ſeven thin and ill-favoured kine that came up after them, *are* ſeven years; and the ſeven empty ears blaſted with the eaſt-wind, ſhall be ſeven years of famine.

28 This *is* the thing which I have ſpoken unto Pharaoh: What God *is* about to do, he ſheweth unto Pharaoh.

29 Behold, there come ſeven years of great plenty, throughout all the land of Egypt.

30 And there ſhall ariſe after them ſeven years of famine, and all the plenty ſhall be forgotten in the land of Egypt: and the famine ſhall conſume the land.

31 And the plenty ſhall not be known in the land, by reaſon of that famine following: for it *ſhall be* very grievous.

32 And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; *it is* becauſe the thing *is* eſtabliſhed by God, and God will ſhortly bring it to paſs.

33 Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man diſcreet and wiſe, and ſet him over the land of Egypt.

34 Let Pharaoh do *this*, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the ſeven plenteous years.

35 And let them gather all the food of thoſe good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities.

36 And that food ſhall be for ſtore to the land, againſt the ſeven years of famine, which ſhall be in the land of Egypt; that the land periſh not through the famine.

37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his ſervants.

38 And Pharaoh ſaid unto his ſervants, Can we find *ſuch a one* as this *is*, a man in whom the ſpirit of God *is*?

39 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, Foraſmuch as God hath ſhewed thee all this, *there is* none ſo diſcreet and wiſe as thou *art*.

40 Thou ſhalt be over my houſe, and according unto thy word ſhall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou.

41 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, See, I have ſet thee over all the land of Egypt.

42 And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joſeph's hand, and arrayed him in veſtures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.

43 And he made him to ride in the ſecond chariot which he had; and they cried before him,

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V. 25. *The dream—is one.*] Both dreams have one meaning.

V. 26. *Are ſeven years.*] That is, a repreſentation of ſeven years: a very common mode of expreſſion; however, in one inſtance, multitudes have managed to infer things abſurd and impoſſible, from one ſimilar to it: viz. "This is my body."

V. 33—36.] He preſumes to offer this counſel, as the practical inference from the revelation, which God had afforded them: as being intended in order to their making preparation.

V. 37. *The thing was good*, &c.] Under the preſent impreſſion of his interpretation of the dream, they approved the counſel, as undeniably good; perhaps not without each expecting for himſelf, or his friend, this lucrative and honourable employment.

V. 38. *In whom the Spirit of God is.*] A remainder probably of a traditional opinion, that the higheſt and nobleſt wiſdom was derived from the inſpiration of the Spirit of God: this judgment of Joſeph was doubtleſs produced not only from the interpretation, excelling all the ſkill of the magicians; but from the advice equally ſuperior to all the ſagacity of his counſellors. All parties were ſilent on this occaſion, and we may well aſcribe it to God's overawing their minds, that no oppoſition was made; when we conſider how much the ſpirit, which is in us, luſteth to envy.

V. 40. *Shall all my people be ruled.*] Thus was he not only ſet over the buſineſs of collecting the corn, but made chief miniſter, and ruler in every department of government.

V. 41. *See I have*, &c.] Joſeph ſeems to have been modeſtly diſpoſed to decline ſuch a weighty and exalted ſtation; and intimidated at the difficulty and danger of it: and therefore needed theſe repeated aſſurances to encourage him.

V. 42—43.] By theſe ſeveral tokens, he publicly avowed

him, Bow the knee: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt.

44 And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I *am* Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.

45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On: and Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 And Joseph *was* thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt: And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt.

47 And in the seven plenteous years the earth brought forth by handfuls.

48 And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field which *was* round about every city, laid he up in the same.

49 And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering: for *it was* without number.

50 And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came: which Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah priest of On, bare unto him.

51 And Joseph called the name of the first-born Manasseh: for God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

52 And the name of the second called he Ephraim: for God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction.

53 And the seven years of plenteousness that was in the land of Egypt, were ended.

54 And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.

55 And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do.

56 And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt.

57 And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy *corn*; because that the famine was *so* sore in all lands.

CHAP.

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avowed his appointment, and shewed that it would be at the peril of any one, who dared to oppose it.

V. 44. *I am Pharaoh*, &c.] As sure as I am king of Egypt I will stand by thee in this matter.

Shall no man lift, &c.] Contrary to thy command, and allowance.

V. 45. *Zaphnath-paaneah.*] Means, a revealer of secrets. Some say, a saviour of the land.

Priest of On.] Or prince, some great lord of his court.

V. 46. *Went throughout*, &c.] To take surveys, build granaries, and make preparations for the execution of his design.

V. 47. *By handfuls.*] An uncommon, and vast encrease.

V. 49. *Corn as the sand*, &c.] We may conjecture that the fifth before mentioned, (verse 34) was imposed as a public tax upon the whole land: and that he moreover bought vast quantities, now corn was so plentiful and cheap, which he stored up in granaries upon the spot; thereby consulting both ease, and conveniency; and giving them a pledge, that it was laid up for them, not taken from them.

V. 51. *Manasseh.*] Signifies forgetfulness.

For God hath made me forget all my toil.] By the prosperous event of his captivity, slavery, and imprisonment.

All my father's house.] Perhaps when he sought enlargement through the chief butler, he had thoughts of returning home, out of regard to his father and family: but now settled and engaged otherwise in God's providence, he had dropt such thoughts. We must ascribe it to the peculiar disposal of God, that he was kept from sending to enquire about them.

V. 52. *Ephraim.*] Signifies fruitfulness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In his appointed time the Lord will bring his people out of trouble, purified as gold from the furnace: but seldom either in the way, or at the season, which they expected; or until he hath brought them off from other dependances to a simple trust in, and submission to him. In the multitude of dreams there are divers vanities, and in general they are neither worth repeating, nor capable of any interpretation: yet so absolutely is our imagination, sleeping, as well as waking, in the Lord's hand, that without supposing any thing prophetical in them, (as in Pharaoh's dreams) he may thereby make and leave an impression upon the mind, which may have the most important consequences to ourselves and others. We are not to deem those expectations frustrated, which are not immediately answered; nor that seed of the word thrown

CHAP. XLII.

Returns back to the history of Jacob and his family, and contains, 1st. Jacob's sending his ten sons down to Egypt to buy corn, v. 1—5. 2d. The harsh reception and treatment, which they met with from Joseph, v. 6—20. 3d. Their remorse of conscience, v. 21—23. 4th. Simeon detained, the others sent home, and charged to bring their younger brother, v. 24—28. 5th. Their fright upon the road, on finding their money in their sacks mouth; their report to Jacob, and his complaint, lamentation, and resolution, v. 29—38.

NOW when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another?

2 And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live and not die.

3 And Joseph's ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt.

4 But Benjamin, Joseph's brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren: for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befal him.

5 And the sons of Israel came to buy *corn* among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan.

6 And Joseph *was* the governor over the land, *and* he *it was* that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph's brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him, *with* their faces to the earth.

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away, which doth not immediately spring up: the most negligent and forgetful may hereafter remember, and be humbled for their present inattention. Deliverances both from temporal and spiritual distress oft surprise the praying soul, when he least expects them; and he becomes like them, that dream. And as God frequently pours contempt upon princes, and takes pleasure in abasing the haughty; so he delights as much in advancing the humble from the dunghill, to inherit the throne of glory. Humility, and a regard to the glory of God are requisite, in order to behave suitably in prosperous circumstances: and an answer of peace may be expected, when those are consulted, in whom is the Spirit of God: and to honour those, who honour him, the Lord frequently confounds the wisdom of the wise, and brings to nothing the understanding of the prudent. When he pleases to give wisdom and favour, he can conciliate the affections, or overawe the spirits of all; and prevent all opposition from the jarring counsels, and selfish passions of the ambitious, and aspiring. Important trusts, however unexceptionably obtained, and managed, are an encumbrance, rather than an advantage to the possessor; who might be more comfortable, though not so useful, in an obscure situation. Nay indeed, all worldly prosperity, like the years of plenty, is fleeting away, and will soon be forgotten and swallowed up in the afflictions, which are coming upon the wicked. In Joseph, however, we still see a bright example of fidelity, activity, and equity: and an instance of the extensive good, which, in some circumstances, may be done by one man, when called forth, furnished and prospered of God. The knowledge of future temporal events might in some instances be useful, but would seldom be pleasant: but the knowledge of the future state and eternal world will be both useful and pleasant, if we will but labour for that meat, which endureth unto everlasting life, which the son of man shall give us; for him hath God the Father sealed. He is the great antitype of Joseph; risen, ascended, and on the throne of glory, all power vests in him as mediator: he is the revealer of secrets, and the preserver of the land: through the whole earth is a famine of the bread of life; but he hath provided inexhaustible supplies: to him the Father bears testimony, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye him;" go to Jesus, and what he bids you, do; attending to this voice, and applying to him, he will open his treasuries, and satisfy the hungry soul of every age and nation with goodness, yea without money, and without price. But they, who slight this provision, must starve; and they, who bow not the knee before him, and will not that he should reign over them, will, as enemies, be inevitably destroyed.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLII.] V. 1. *Jacob saw*, &c.] He understood from common report, that in this time of general scarcity, there was abundance of corn in Egypt, which was freely sold to those of other nations.

Why look ye, &c.] This implies that already they were reduced to great distress, and scarce knew what to do: and if this was the case in Jacob's family, after the first year of the famine, what must have been the case of multitudes before the seven years were expired?

V. 3. *Joseph's ten brethren*, &c.] They all seem to have been married, and to have had families at this time: perhaps the wealth of the family being thus divided, and by the badness of the times diminished, they had parted with at least some of those servants, whom we before read of; and perhaps they disposed of the rest, previous to their going to reside in Egypt; for we read no more of servants, nor that any went down but Jacob, and his descendants, and their wives.

V. 4. *Lest mischief*, &c.] As he supposed had befallen his beloved Joseph.

V. 6. *Bowed down themselves*, &c.] Now Joseph's dreams began to be accomplished: their sheaves bowed to his sheaf; for his was full, and their's were empty.

7 And

7 And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food.

8 And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.

9 And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye *are* spies; to see the nakedness of the land you are come.

10 And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.

11 We *are* all one man's sons: we *are* true men, thy servants are no spies.

12 And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land you are come.

13 And they said, Thy servants *are* twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest *is* this day with our father, and one *is* not.

14 And Joseph said unto them, That *it is* that I spake unto you, saying, Ye *are* spies.

15 Hereby ye shall be proved: by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither.

16 Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether *there be any* truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye *are* spies.

17 And he put them all together into ward, three days.

18 And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live: *for* I fear God.

19 If ye *be* true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses.

20 But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so.

V. 7. *He made himself strange unto them*, &c.] We are sure that this was not out of any resentment; for in the whole transaction, he exceedingly denied himself, and put a force on his own inclinations: doubtless he would be unwilling to augment the load of his father's grief, as he must know that his conduct would; but would rather have rejoiced to have set his heart at ease by an immediate message. Indeed it is most probable that the whole of the business, from his first advancement, to Jacob's descent into Egypt, was conducted either by express direction, or more secret impulse from God, in order to the accomplishment of his purposes respecting Jacob and his posterity.—Nor indeed would it have been proper for Joseph immediately to have received his offending brethren into full favour, until it appeared that they were sensible of their guilt, and shewed some symptoms of remorse; and by being concealed he had a fair opportunity of discovering the real state of their mind, from time to time: and by virtue of his authority, he was able not only to make strict trial of them, but to employ means exactly suited to produce that state of mind, which he wished to see; and both to awaken, and keep awake that remorse of conscience, which was profitable for them; and to abate that pride and stoutness of heart, which was natural to them. By his own experience he knew the good effects of sharp and long continued troubles, and he was willing to try the same medicine upon them.—At the same time he seems to have been very solicitous about the state of the family; and to have aimed to obtain information on that head, especially as he saw not his own brother Benjamin.

V. 9. *Joseph remembered the dreams.*] He now experienced in part their accomplishment, of which perhaps he had once despaired; and was satisfied that it was a divine monition, though once he might question, whether it were not a delusion.

Ye are spies, &c.] You are sent by some foreign prince, who intends to invade Egypt, that you may spy out the most defenseless quarter for his attack; and you only cover your real business under the pretext of buying corn.

V. 11. *All one man's sons.*] It would not appear likely that one man, would venture ten sons on such a hazardous enterprise: and thus Joseph drew from them the information, which he wanted.

V. 15. *By the life of Pharaoh*, &c.] We are sorry to find occasion to censure so favourite a character, as that of Joseph, but in this he must be blamed: it could be no other than a sort of court oath, and a profane flattery of the prince, in swearing by his name; which Joseph should have protested against, at least not sanctioned by his example; and even if we suppose, that he did not customarily use this expression, but only now assumed it, as a more effectual blind; still we cannot excuse it, it was at best doing evil, that good might come. Let your communication (that is in ordinary conversation) be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

V. 17. *Into ward three days.*] Considering his authority, and the nature of the crime, of which he pretended to suspect them, and the roughness of his behaviour, they perhaps expected little else during these three days, than to be put to death.

V. 18. *I fear God.*] This expression might surprise, and perhaps encourage them: but the chief design of Joseph seems to have been; that by declaring, that he, a supposed Egyptian, feared God, and would therefore not do them any injustice, he might awaken the remorse of their consciences; who, though educated as Israelites in the true worship of God, had not been restrained by his fear from such unjust and cruel treatment of their brother.

21 And they ſaid one to another, We *are* verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us; and we would not hear: therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us.

22 And Reuben anſwered them, ſaying, Spake I not unto you, ſaying, Do not ſin againſt the child; and ye would not hear? therefore behold alſo, his blood is required.

23 And they knew not that Joſeph underſtood *them*; for he ſpake unto them by an interpreter.

24 And he turned himſelf about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.

25 Then Joſeph commanded to fill their ſacks with corn, and to reſtore every man's money into his ſack, and to give them proviſion for the way: and thus did he unto them.

26 And they laded their aſſes with the corn, and departed thence.

27 And as one of them opened his ſack to give his aſs provender in the inn, he eſpied his money: for behold it *was* in his ſack's mouth.

28 And he ſaid unto his brethren, My money is reſtored; and lo *it is* even in my ſack: and their hearts failed *them*, and they were afraid, ſaying one to another, What *is* this *that* God hath done unto us?

29 And they came unto Jacob their father, unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befel unto them, ſaying,

30 The man *who is* the lord of the land, ſpake roughly to us, and took us for ſpies of the country.

31 And we ſaid unto him, We *are* true men; we are no ſpies.

32 We *be* twelve brethren, ſons of our father: one *is* not, and the youngeſt *is* this day with our father in the land of Canaan.

33 And the man the lord of the country ſaid unto us, Hereby ſhall I know that ye *are* true men; leave one of your brethren *here* with me, and take *food for* the famine of your houſholds, and be gone.

34 And bring your youngeſt brother unto me: then ſhall I know that you *are* no ſpies, *but* that you *are* true men: *ſo* will I deliver you your brother, and ye ſhall traffick in the land.

35 And it came to paſs as they emptied their ſacks, that behold, every man's bundle of money *was* in his ſack: and when *both* they and their father ſaw the bundles of money, they were afraid.

36 And Jacob their father ſaid unto them, Me have ye bereaved *of my children*: Joſeph *is* not, and Simeon *is* not, and ye will take Benjamin *away*: all theſe things are againſt me.

37 And Reuben ſpake unto his father, ſaying, Slay my two ſons, if I bring him not to

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V. 21. *We are verily guilty.*] They ſeem to have continued inſenſible, whilſt in priſon, but now their conſciences are touched: and conſidering how the fear of God influenced this ſuppoſed Egyptian, Joſeph's anguiſh, and intreaties, and their unrelenting malice, recurred to their remembrance, and they begin to conclude that God was about to take vengeance upon them for that cruelty.

V. 23. *They knew not*, &c.] Thus Joſeph was favoured with an encouraging token of the ſucceſs of his plan, to ſupport his mind till he ſhould witneſs the final iſſue.

V. 24. *Took Simeon.*] He was one of the murderers of the Shechemites, and probably of a daring hardy ſpirit: it is not unlikely that he was peculiarly vehement againſt Joſeph before, or ſeemed the leaſt affected now: therefore Joſeph allots him this additional diſcipline.

V. 27. *Inn.*] Probably nothing more than a ſhelter provided for travellers, to which every one brought his own proviſions.

V. 28. *Their hearts failed them.*] Expecting no favour, they deemed this a ſnare laid for them, and were afraid of being purſued, and proſecuted as thieves. This was doubtleſs the effect, that Joſeph intended to produce, in order to augment their convictions, and humiliation.

What is this that God, &c.] Conſidering that they had before eſcaped when guilty, they ſeem ready to conclude, that they ſhould now ſuffer for a crime, of which they were innocent; and acknowledge the hand of God in it.

V. 35. *Afraid*, &c.] Probably Jacob ſuſpected ſome fallacy in their relation, and that they really had committed ſome crime, which occaſioned Simeon's being left behind, and perhaps that they had ſome deſign upon Benjamin: at leaſt he charges the blame upon them in the next verſe, in language implying ſuch diſtruſt.—"Me have ye bereaved, &c."

V. 37. *Slay my two ſons*, &c.] A very raſh, and abſurd propoſal: what right had he over the lives of his children? and what ſatisfaction could the murder of two grand-children give Jacob, for the loſs of his Benjamin?

I will

to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again.

38 And he said, My son shall not go down with you: for his brother is dead, and he is left alone; if mischief befal him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.

CHAP. XLIII.

Contains, 1st. Jacob induced to send Benjamin with his sons, v. 1—14. 2d. Their second journey to Egypt, v. 15. 3d. Their fear, and their apology, when brought into Joseph's house, v. 16—22. 4th. Joseph's kindness, enquiries about their father, and tenderness to Benjamin; and their obeisance to him, v. 23—29. 5th. Joseph's retiring to weep, and returning to entertain them, v. 30—34.

AND the famine *was* sore in the land.

2 And it came to pass when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food.

3 And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother *be* with you.

4 If

I will bring, &c.] Without so much as adding, by the blessing of God, or if the Lord will: as if his puny arm could both defend and uphold him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Even when the Lord rendereth a fruitful land barren for the wickedness of them, that dwell therein; he shews that he doth not as yet intend to proceed to extremities. Though much misery is endured upon the whole; yet there is some redress, and respite: one country supplies that, of which another is destitute; and one year furnishes a redundance to help out the scarcity of another: in the other world alone will happiness, or misery be unmixed; no scarcity in the Canaan above; no redress in hell beneath. In distress, or danger our business is, not to stand looking one at another, desponding, and inactive, but having discovered where help is to be had, to apply for it without delay, and without shrinking from labour, or grudging expence: especially in the dangers, to which our immortal souls are exposed. Provision there is in Christ; but to him we must come, and from him we must diligently seek it; even though in obtaining it we be called to deny ourselves, take up our cross, and forsake all that we have. We have need, when we, or our friends go from home, to commend ourselves and them to the divine protection; for we know not what unexpected dangers may be in the way: and when returned in safety, we should not forget the tribute of praise; for many meet with terrible disasters. In the mystery of providence, it is worthy observation how God's purposes, slowly but certainly unfold, and are accomplished, oft by the most improbable means: nay that those enemies, who have set themselves to defeat his designs, are made the instruments of their fulfilment.—As the guilt of sin will not wear out by time, no more will the consciousness of it: and though men may commit crimes with unconcern, and remain insensible for many years, conscience being struck dumb, and stupified; yet there may be a time even in this world, when it shall awake, and inspire such terrors, as cannot be described: and it is well when it is so; otherwise it will certainly awake, and torment the soul for ever in another world. In order therefore to awaken serious reflection in the guilty breast, the most afflictive dispensations of God's providence are precious blessings; and in some cases it is the result of wise love in us, to treat the proud and careless with roughness, and distance; and as far as equity, and the fear of God will allow, to shew them in our dealings with them, the picture of their conduct to others, in order to bring their sins to their remembrance, and excite a salutary remorse.—They, therefore who are of a very tender nature, if they would do good, must sometimes disguise their feelings under an assumed sternness; as the surgeon probes the wound, or cuts the limb, with firmness, and apparent unconcern; whilst his heart bleeds for the anguish he occasions. But when conscience is once awakened, there needs no accuser; and when it's terrors have seized the heart, every circumstance will increase the dismay; and under common calamities, the consciousness of having avoided and protested against those crimes, which are thereby called to remembrance, will afford a singular support.—Many are the troubles of the righteous: yet imagination and error oft magnify them; and many things appear to be against them, which are most effectually conducive to their good. The Lord will make such ashamed of their distrustful complaints; nor shall their grey hairs descend with that sorrow to the grave, which they have presaged: for the latter end of the upright man shall be peace. But in this narration let us look unto Jesus: thus does he conceal himself, and his favour from; thus does he rebuke and chasten those, for whom he hath purposes of love; and by sharp corrections, and humiliating conviction by the spirit of bondage, will he break the stoutness, and mar the pride of their hearts, and bring them to true repentance: nor will he disclose his reconciled countenance, until he hath fully humbled, and broken the heart by perhaps long continued discouragements; till he have proved their sincerity, and led them to the simplicity of faith, and dependance on him: then by the spirit of adoption he will manifest himself unto them as their brother, and their friend. Yet before they fully know him, or taste that he is gracious, he both consults their good, and sustains their souls, preserves them from despair, and strengthens them to wait upon, and wait for him.—Thus may we do continually, never yielding to discouragement, still determining to seek no other refuge, and humbling ourselves more and more under his mighty hand: and then in due time he will answer our petitions, and far exceed our expectation.

4 If thou wilt ſend our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food.

5 But if thou wilt not ſend *him*, we will not go down: for the man ſaid unto us, Ye ſhall not ſee my face, except your brother *be* with you.

6 And Iſrael ſaid, Wherefore dealt ye *ſo* ill with me, *as* to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother?

7 And they ſaid, The man aſked us ſtraitly of our ſtate, and of our kindred, ſaying, *Is* your father yet alive? have ye *another* brother: and we told him according to the tenour of theſe words: Could we certainly know that he would ſay, Bring your brother down?

8 And Judah ſaid unto Iſrael his father, Send the lad with me, and we will ariſe and go; that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, *and* alſo our little ones.

9 I will be ſurety for him; of my hand ſhalt thou require him: If I bring him not unto thee, and ſet him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever.

10 For except we had lingered, ſurely now we had returned this ſecond time.

11 And their father Iſrael ſaid unto them, If *it muſt be* ſo now, do this; take of the beſt fruits in the land in your veſſels, and carry down the man a preſent, a little balm, and a little honey, ſpices, and mirrh, nuts, and almonds.

12 And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your ſacks, carry *it* again in your hand; peradventure it *was* an overſight.

13 Take alſo your brother, and ariſe, go again unto the man.

14 And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may ſend away your other brother, and Benjamin: If I be bereaved *of my children*, I am bereaved.

15 And the men took that preſent, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and roſe up, and went down to Egypt, and ſtood before Joſeph.

16 And when Joſeph ſaw Benjamin with them, he ſaid to the ruler of his houſe, Bring *theſe* men home, and ſlay, and make ready: for *theſe* men ſhall dine with me at noon.

17 And the man did as Joſeph bade: and the man brought the men into Joſeph's houſe.

18 And the men were afraid, becauſe they were brought into Joſeph's houſe, and they ſaid, Becauſe of the money, that was returned in our ſacks at the firſt time, are we brought in; that he may ſeek occaſion againſt us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our aſſes.

19 And they came near to the ſteward of Joſeph's houſe, and they communed with him at the door of the houſe,

20 And ſaid, O ſir, we came indeed down at the firſt time to buy food.

21 And it came to paſs when we came to the inn, that we opened our ſacks, and behold, *every* man's money *was* in the mouth of his ſack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand.

22 And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our ſacks.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLIII.] V. 9. *I will be ſurety*, &c.] Probably Judah, whom we obſerved before to have ſhewn ſome tokens of repentance, had acquired more of the confidence of Jacob, than Reuben had: and he ſeems in the whole buſineſs ſincerely deſirous of the welfare of Benjamin, as well as of the family; remembering perhaps, with inward anguiſh, his former treatment of Joſeph.

V. 10. *Except we had lingered*, &c.] Through Jacob's unwillingneſs to conſent to Benjamin's accompanying them. He intimates that the whole family was like to periſh, out of his unreaſonable timidity reſpecting one individual.

V. 12. *Double money*, &c.] The money, that was returned, and other money, with which to purchaſe corn: perhaps double the ſum which they took before, in caſe the price ſhould be advanced, and to ſhew that they meant fairly.

V. 14. *And God Almighty*, &c.] Jacob knew by experience the influence, which the Lord hath over every heart, to incline it favourably to his people: and it is obſervable that in this ſpeech, in which he has recourſe to his former method of prevailing with man, by faith in, and prayer to God; he is again dignified with the name of Iſrael. (Verſe 11.)

23 And he said, Peace *be* to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them.

24 And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave *them* water, and they washed their feet, and he gave their asses provender.

25 And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth.

27 And he asked them of *their* welfare, and said, *Is* your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? *Is* he yet alive?

28 And they answered, Thy servant our father *is* in good health, he *is* yet alive: and they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance.

29 And he lift up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, *Is* this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son.

30 And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought *where* to weep, and he entered into *his* chamber, and wept there.

31 And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread.

32 And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

33 And they sat before him, the first-born according to his birth-right, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another.

34 And he took *and sent* messes unto them, from before him: but Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.

CHAP.

V. 28. *They bowed down*, &c.] As if they did obeisance in their father's name and stead, according to the second dream. (See *Gen.* c. 37. v. 9—10.)

V. 32. *By himself.*] As an Hebrew he probably humoured the superstitious prejudices of the Egyptians; though he would not sit with his brethren, lest it should excite suspicion. The abomination, in which the Egyptians held eating with the Hebrews, may be ascribed to the latter's eating the flesh of those animals, which they held sacred: therefore shepherds were also an abomination to the Egyptians, (ch. 46. v. 34.) though they had flocks and herds. Probably only such shepherds, as fed upon the flesh of their flocks.

V. 33. *They sat before him*, &c.] That is, by his appointment; which made them marvel, but probably they ascribed it to some extraordinary sagacity, or to the power of divination, which he afterwards mentions.

V. 34. *Five times*, &c.] A token of respect customary in those days, which is not to be judged of by modern manners. Thus he tried whether they would envy Benjamin this distinction, as they had envied him his coat of many colours.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should use great caution in forming resolutions concerning our future conduct in things indifferent; for our perseverance so much depends on the events of Providence, that those things, which we most fully purpose, may become impracticable: in all things therefore, in which duty is not concerned, we are best ruled by circumstances, as they arise.—And if we have formed a rash resolution, to which we cannot with propriety adhere, we must virtually, or explicitly acknowledge our mistake, and forego our determination; for though firmness be very advantageous, obstinacy is both foolish, and ruinous. But when all our contrivances are over-ruled, and necessity compels us to say, "it must be so now;" then submission to the will of the all-wise Disposer, and a believing dependance on the Almighty Lord, who hath all hearts in his hands, will yield us a seasonable support: and whilst we use every prudent conciliatory means; our way to prevail with man, is by first prevailing with the Lord in fervent prayer: this is to approve ourselves of the true Israel of God: And thy will be done should close every petition for temporal benefits, or against temporal afflictions. Though men generally value very highly their gold and silver, and the luxuries, which are accounted the best fruits of every land; yet in a time of famine, men willingly barter them away for bread: how little then will they stand us in stead in the day of wrath! and how ready should we be, if truly wise, to renounce them all, as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. There may be cases, in which obedience to an earthly superior may be refused, as superseded by a higher obligation: but this refusal should never be made, except in cases of evident necessity, should ever be backed with unanswerable reasons; and couched in terms of the utmost respect, and meekness: seldom, even when the refusal is unexceptionable, can an impartial by-

stander

CHAP. XLIV.

Contains, 1st. The money, by Joseph's orders, put into his brethren's sacks, and his silver cup into Benjamin's, v. 1—2. *2d. Their being pursued, overtaken, and accused of theft, v.* 3—6. *3d. Their plea of innocence, search made, the cup found, their distress, and return to Joseph, v.* 7—13. *4th. Their humiliation, his remonstrance, and Judah's most pathetic speech, v.* 14—34.

AND he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the mens sacks with food as much as they can carry, and put every man's money in his sack's mouth.

2 And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack's mouth of the youngest, and his corn-money: and he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken.

3 As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.

4 *And* when they were gone out of the city, *and* not *yet* far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good?

5 *Is* not this *it*, in which my lord drinketh? and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing.

6 And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words.

7 And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing.

8 Behold, the money which we found in our sacks mouths we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold?

9 With whom *soever* of thy servants it be found, *both* let him die, and we also will be my lord's bond-men.

10 And

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stander wholly approve the manner, in which it is given. When the Lord seems to frown upon us, we are prone to blame, and to murmur against others; as venting our dissatisfaction upon the instruments, when we are afraid and ashamed to reflect upon the author of our trouble; and much rebellion is often thus committed. When men mean sincerely, they are apt to engage for more, than they can perform: and, if we feel our passions much stirred, the mouth should then be held in as with a bridle; or it may afterwards occasion much trouble. Though terror, once excited, is increased by every event; yet innocence gives confidence, and supplies the want of, or furnishes the most simple and expressive eloquence. He that walketh with wise men, will be wise, and the good and pious words of the Egyptian, Joseph's steward, shew us that a godly man's conversation is never useless; and teaches us to abound in that speech, which is good for the use of edifying. Even those, who inadvertently, and by oversight have got possession of other's property, are bound to restore it, when they discover it: and from whatever quarter we get honest gain, we are to look to the Lord as the giver. God's purposes are continually advancing to their full accomplishment; but they, who would have his special blessings, must wait for them: and they, who would do special good, must learn to bridle and conceal their tenderest passions. Thus Jesus shews those, whom he loves, more and more of their perishing necessity; makes them perceive that he is their only refuge from destruction: and, consulting their future good, more than their present comfort, by salutary terrors, and troubles, overcomes their reluctance, and brings them to himself: then, in his wise and holy sovereignty, in that proportion which he sees good, he gives them some taste of his exhilerating love, and welcomes them to the provisions of his house, as earnests of what he further intends them; yet so, as still to prove and try them, and with a view to their still deeper humiliation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLIV.] V. 2. *Put my cup, the silver cup.*] This had probably been used at the entertainment. Joseph seems to be desirous of ascertaining how they stood affected to Benjamin, Jacob's present favourite, and to their father on his account. Had they envied and hated Benjamin, (the other son of Rachel, Leah's rival) as they had him; and had they been influenced by the same unfeeling indignation against Jacob, as heretofore: they would now have discovered it. When the cup was found upon Benjamin, they would have had a plausible pretext for leaving him to be a slave, and returning home without him. In which case Joseph would have known how to have acted: but doubtless not as he now did, when the event proved them to be very differently disposed both towards Benjamin, and their father. At the same time this trial was exceedingly calculated to increase their humiliation.

V. 4. *Say unto them*, &c.] The abruptness of this unexpected address was much suited to surprise, and confuse them, and to favour the design.

V. 5. *Whereby indeed he divineth.*] Joseph seems to mean, that by divination he had discovered that they had stolen the cup: (See v. 15.) which could not have been, had he divined by means of the cup: it should therefore probably be translated; "that, about which he hath used "divination."

V. 9. *Let him die*, &c.] Probably Joseph expected, that conscious of their innocency, they would make use of some such

10 And he said, Now also *let* it *be* according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless.

11 Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack.

12 And he searched, *and* began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.

13 Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city.

14 And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph's house, (for he *was* yet there) and they fell before him on the ground.

15 And Joseph said unto them, What deed *is* this that ye have done? wot ye not, that such a man as I can certainly divine?

16 And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we *are* my lord's servants, both we, and *he* also with whom the cup is found.

17 And he said, God forbid that I should do so: *but* the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father.

18 Then Judah came near unto him, and said, O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou *art* even as Pharaoh.

19 My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father or a brother?

20 And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one: and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.

21 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him.

22 And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, *his father* would die.

23 And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, you shall see my face no more.

24 And it came to pass, when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.

25 And our father said, Go again, *and* buy us a little food.

26 And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down; for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother *be* with us.

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such language; which still favoured his design of proving their affection for Benjamin.

V. 14. *They fell before him*, &c.] Now indeed he had the dominion over them, according to their interpretation of his dreams.

V. 15. *Wot ye not*, &c.] We may be sure Joseph did not use divination, the criminality of which may hereafter be evinced: but he merely, as a supposed Egyptian, pretends to it, in order to conceal the real reason of his so readily detecting them.

V. 16. *God hath found out*, &c.] Perhaps he inwardly meant their former guilt, which was now visited upon them. Conscious of his own innocence in this matter, he very prudently waves all mention of it, whatever he thought: for otherwise he must either have allowed Benjamin's guilt; or have reflected on Joseph's equity.

V. 17. *Get you up*, &c.] Now the experiment is at the crisis, and Joseph anxiously expects the event.

V. 18. *Even as Pharaoh.*] Equally to be respected, and feared: we should keep the dreams still in mind: they will soon know what is become of them. (See ch. 37. v. 20.) Judah being entrusted with Benjamin, and perhaps more affectionate than the rest both to him and his father; and having conceived the generous design mentioned in the close, assumes the office of speaker in the name of the rest.—Probably they also expressed their concurrence, when he had concluded.

V. 20. *His brother is dead*, &c.] To Jacob he had been long dead; and they had so long been accustomed to speak of him as dead, that they seem to have forgot, that it was false or uncertain.

He alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him.] Every word in this verse is simplicity, and pathos itself. No man of the least taste, or sensibility, can read it, at this distance of time, without great emotion.—Indeed the whole speech is exquisitely beautiful: had Joseph been merely an humane judge, and no relation; and had Benjamin been guilty, such natural eloquence must have been almost irresistibly forcible: with what feelings then must Joseph have heard him!—when we read this generous speech, we forgive Judah all the past, and cannot refuse to say, "thou art he, whom thy brethren shall praise."

V. 26. *We cannot go down.*] He had said, we will not, but he here mollifies the harshness of that expression.

27 And thy ſervant my father ſaid unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two *ſons*.

28 And the one went out from me, and I ſaid, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I ſaw him not ſince.

29 And if ye take this alſo from me, and miſchief befal him, ye ſhall bring down my gray hairs with ſorrow to the grave.

30 Now therefore when I come to thy ſervant my father, and the lad *be* not with us; (ſeeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life.)

31 It ſhall come to paſs, when he ſeeth that the lad *is* not *with us*, that he will die: and thy ſervants ſhall bring down the gray hairs of thy ſervant our father with ſorrow to the grave.

32 For thy ſervant became ſurety for the lad unto my father, ſaying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I ſhall bear the blame to my father for ever.

33 Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy ſervant abide, inſtead of the lad, a bond-man to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren.

34 For how ſhall I go up to my father, and the lad *be* not with me? leſt peradventure I ſee the evil that ſhall come on my father.

CHAP.

V. 28. *And I ſaid ſurely*, &c.] Judah touches on this with trembling heſitation: as a part of his plea it muſt not be omitted: yet his conſcience ſeems to make him faulter in reporting Jacob's language, which he knew reſulted from a deception. One wonders how Joſeph could refrain on hearing this.

V. 30. *Seeing that his life*, &c.] Nothing can exceed the tender affection expreſſed for Jacob in this ſpeech: which confirms the ſentiment, that from the diſcovery of his inceſt with Tamar, he had been a true penitent, and conſequently a more dutiful ſon than before.

V. 31. *Thy ſervants ſhall bring down*, &c.] By ſuch tidings: perhaps, conſidering their former guilt reſpecting Joſeph, as the cauſe of this ſevere viſitation; as alſo the means of rendering the affliction of loſing Benjamin inſupportable to Jacob; he began, in deep anguiſh of conſcience, to apprehend that he and his brethren would actually be chargeable in the ſight of God with the guilt of murdering their father.

V. 33. *Inſtead of the lad, a bondman*, &c.] He would be as uſeful a ſervant, Joſeph would be no loſer, and his father could perhaps ſurvive the loſs of him, and he was willing to ſubmit to any hardſhip, rather than occaſion, and witneſs his aged father's death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who have been guilty of deceit and injuſtice, muſt blame themſelves, when afterwards ſuſpected, and put upon repeated trials, before they recover the confidence of thoſe, whom they have injured: but if they are now ſincere, the event will make amends for the ſevereſt ſcrutiny. Though open and direct meaſures are generally preferable; yet in ſome caſes ſtratagems are lawful, and never more ſo, than when they are intended for the benefit of the perſons, for whom they are laid; and in order that being foiled at their own weapons, they may remember and repent of their own treacherous dealings. To reward evil for good is ſo evidently baſe, that nothing can be urged in excuſe of it: how then ſhall we ſtand in judgment before that God, whom we have ſo ungratefully requited for his multiplied benefits? Men think it hard to be ſuſpected of crimes, which are contrary to a few of the overt actions of their lives: though they are inwardly conſcious of much worſe, which they conceal from their fellow-creatures. Yet conſcious innocence need fear no fair trial: but as all hearts are totally concealed from us, except our own, we ſhould be cautious in anſwering for others alſo: and they, who are moſt confident in ſelf-juſtification, may ſoon have their mouths ſtopped, and ſcarce know what to ſay. If before the powerful of the earth it is ſometimes prudent to wave the queſtion of right, and to make our appeal to their compaſſion, and generoſity; and never ſafe to impeach, or reflect upon their equity: much more ſhould we ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God; and renouncing all other pleas, caſt ourſelves upon his infinite compaſſion; for he is both perfectly righteous, and will be acknowledged to be ſo, by all who would approach him with acceptance. In many caſes, undiſſembled narrations form the moſt concluſive and affecting arguments: and ſuch addreſſes to the tender paſſions, as are grounded upon evident reaſon, truth, and fact; and carry with them internal teſtimony of diſintereſtedneſs, generoſity, and relative affection, are almoſt irreſiſtible. And amongſt the reſt the glow of filial affection, through manly ſenſe, and fortitude, has a peculiar beauty, and energy. How careful ſhould children be not to grieve their parents, leſt by embittering their infirm age, they ſhould ſhorten their days, and be indicted now at the bar of their own conſciences, or hereafter at the judgment ſeat of God, for the horrible crime of parricide; which many are guilty of, who never ſuſpect themſelves, or are ſuſpected by others. True penitents will ſhew that a total revolution has taken place in their principles and practice: were it poſſible they would undo; and therefore will endeavour to make amends for, and to prevent the further ill effects of their former miſconduct, though in the moſt ſelf-denying manner: and this will evidence that their ſins are pardoned, and prepare the way for their receiving the comfort of it. Thus Jeſus, the antitype, proceeds to humble, and prove his people, even after they have had ſome taſtes of his loving kindneſs: thus he brings their ſins renewedly to their remembrance, that they may exerciſe, and evidence their repentance: thus he tries, that he may manifeſt their graces: thus his bowels yearn over them, whilſt his face wears a frown, and

CHAP. XLV.

Contains, 1st. Joseph's making himself known to his brethren, their confusion, his kindness, and message to his father, v. 1—16. *2d. Pharaoh's behaviour, and proposal on the occasion, v.* 17—20. *3d. Joseph's dismission of his brethren with provisions, and counsel, v.* 21—24. *4th. Their relation of the matter to Jacob, with it's effects upon him, v.* 25—28.

THEN Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me: and there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? and his brethren could not answer him: for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you; and they came near: and he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you, to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath* the famine *been* in the land: and yet *there are* five years, in the which *there shall* neither *be* earing nor harvest.

7 And God sent me before you, to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was* not you *that* sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste

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and his hand holds the rod: and thus by rebukes and chastenings, he prepares them for comfort here, and glory hereafter.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLV.] V. 3. *I am Joseph.*] He had doubtless been addressed, and spoken of by his Egyptian name, or by his titles of office: so that though the historian all along calls him Joseph, probably they had never heard that name before, from any person in Egypt.—It is impossible that the tongue, the pen, or the pencil can ever do justice to the mixed emotions of surprise, fear, grief, remorse, hope, natural affection, joy, &c. which must alternately, yet almost at the same instant, seize upon their minds at this unexpected discovery.—But it seems that Joseph perceived that confusion, and terror were likely to predominate, and to fill them with apprehension, that he would now avenge the injustice, and cruelty, of which they had been guilty:—therefore he proceeds in the language, and demeanour of love.

V. 4. *Whom ye sold*, &c.] Though the mention of his name, would probably have led them to a recollection of his features and voice; yet the mention of this circumstance was necessary, though painful: both to remove all doubts of his being their brother; and also to introduce the kind attempt, which he intended to make, to obviate their fears, and to inspire confidence, and comfort.—But perhaps he calls them thus near to him, lest the Egyptians should listen to, and overhear this circumstance, with which it was not proper they should be acquainted.

V. 5. *Be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves*, &c.] Every passion has its proper boundaries, which it ought not to exceed. The skillful physician, though, in his intention of cure, he aim to produce an effect; yet, having produced that desired effect, he will often see occasion to check, and even sometimes to counteract his first intention, lest it prove excessive, and expose the patient to the opposite danger. Joseph's intention had been to humble, and to reprove his brethren, to bring their sin to their remembrance, to fill them with remorse for it; and to evince that they really repented of, and were not disposed to repeat their crime.—But having produced these effects, he perceives from their confusion, and dismay, that they are in danger of being overwhelmed of over-much sorrow, (See 1 *Cor.* c. 5. v. 1—5. compared with 2 *Cor.* c. 2. v. 6—11.) and of sinking under despondency: therefore he now endeavours to comfort, and encourage them.—And indeed, not only would his authority, whom they had so grossly injured, affright them: but the excellency of his character; and the reputation, which he had acquired; and the accomplishment of those dreams, as divine predictions, which they had contemptuously opposed, would shew their crime more horrid, than before they saw it; and all together, might render them ready to conclude, that they had sinned beyond the reach of mercy and forgiveness.—And though the merciful purposes of God in sending him into Egypt by no means excused their sin, nor should prevent their humiliation and repentance; yet it might very properly abate their anguish of spirit, and encourage their hope of forgiveness from so merciful a God: and might assure them of Joseph's forgiveness, who clearly saw the wisdom, and richly experienced the goodness of God in that event: and thus might turn their despondency into believing prayers for forgiveness; and their self-indignation into admiring gratitude to God.

V. 8. *So now it was not you*, &c.] As if he would say, pore no longer upon your own misconduct in that affair: but see and admire the wonderful contrivance of God in it, who sent me hither for such important benefits, especially to you, and, your families.

A father

9 Haſte you and go up to my father, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith thy ſon Joſeph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt; come down unto me, tarry not.

10 And thou ſhalt dwell in the land of Goſhen, and thou ſhalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children's children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou haſt.

11 And there will I nouriſh thee (for yet *there are* five years of famine); leſt thou, and thy houſhold, and all that thou haſt, come to poverty.

12 And behold, your eyes ſee, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that *it is* my mouth that ſpeaketh unto you.

13 And you ſhall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have ſeen; and ye ſhall haſte, and bring down my father hither.

14 And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck.

15 Moreover he kiſſed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.

16 And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh's houſe, ſaying, Joſeph's brethren are come: and it pleaſed Pharaoh well, and his ſervants.

17 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Joſeph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beaſts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan.

18 And take your father, and your houſholds, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye ſhall eat the fat of the land.

19 Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you waggons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father and come.

20 Alſo regard not your ſtuff: for the good of all the land of Egypt *is* your's.

21 And the children of Iſrael did ſo: and Joſeph gave them waggons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them proviſion for the way.

22 To all them he gave each man changes of raiment: but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of ſilver, and five changes of raiment.

23 And to his father he ſent after this *manner*; ten aſſes laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten ſhe aſſes laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.

24 So he ſent his brethren away, and they departed: and he ſaid unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.

25 And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father.

26 And told him, ſaying, Joſeph *is* yet alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not.

27 And they told him all the words of Joſeph, which he had ſaid unto them: and when he ſaw the waggons which Joſeph had ſent to carry him, the ſpirit of Jacob their father revived.

28 And Iſrael ſaid, *It is* enough; Joſeph my ſon *is* yet alive: I will go and ſee him before I die.

A father to Pharaoh.] As being an inſtrument in the preſervation, of him, and his kingdom.

V. 13. *Tell my father*, &c.] Not in oſtentation, but to rejoice his heart, and encourage him to come down into Egypt.

V. 15. *Kiſſed them*, &c.] As a token of entire reconciliation.

V. 16. *It pleaſed Pharaoh well, and his ſervants.*] This is a concluſive teſtimony how much Joſeph was eſteemed, and how little he was envied.

V. 20. *Your ſtuff.*] Such furniture, &c. as could not conveniently be removed ſo far.

V. 22. *To Benjamin*, &c.] Thus he ſtill keeps up the trial of their ſpirits, whether they were diſpoſed to envy their brother or not.

V. 24. *See that ye fall not out by the way.*] It would be natural for them to diſcourſe over the whole affair of Joſeph's being ſold; and of the account, that they muſt give Jacob reſpecting it: and as ſome of them had been much more criminal in that matter, than others, this might eaſily produce altercations, and quarrels of fatal conſequence.

V. 28. *It is enough*, &c.] I ſhall then account myſelf to have lived long enough.

CHAP.

CHAP. XLVI.

Contains, 1st. Jacob's sacrifices, and encouraging vision, v. 1—4. 2d. His journey with his family into Egypt, v. 5—7. 3d. The names, and the number of his descendants, v. 8—27. 4th. His meeting and conference with Joseph, v. 26—34.

AND Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beer-sheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac.

2 And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob: And he said, Here *am* I.

3 And he said, I *am* God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation.

4 I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up *again:* and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

5 And Jacob rose up from Beer-sheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the waggons

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In endeavouring to render men sensible of their faults, we should be careful not needlessly to expose them before others.—True excellency consists not in being devoid of passions, but in having the strongest of them under the government of reason and conscience; so as to know how to refrain, and how to yield to them with prudence, and expediency: and true wisdom discovers itself very much, in being able to suit our conduct, and conversation to the persons, with whom we have to do, and to the circumstances, in which they are placed: and in speaking to men about the concerns of their souls, the two grand objects are, to awaken the careless conscience to an adequate sense of guilt, and danger: and to inspire the burdened, and desponding heart, with the hope of pardon, and peace. It is very profitable for us to observe the footsteps of providence, and to note how infinite wisdom, and goodness educe the most beneficial effects from the crimes, and follies of men, and especially we should in this view study the history of our own lives: and we shall not want proof, that the only wise God hath over-ruled many of our mistakes, and sins, to our important good; and we may therein also perceive the outlines of his plan, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. This can by no means lead us to entertain a slighter sense of the evil of sin, or better thoughts of ourselves; it cannot encourage us to go on in sin, or lessen our humiliation and self-abasement: rather it will convince us the more of our own ignorance and folly; and rendere us more ashamed of offending against so kind a benefactor. But it will prevent our despairing of forgiveness, and check that sorrow, which unfits for duty, and damps our gratitude: and will excite that admiration, love, and confidence, which produce chearful obedience. We should ever manifest brotherly love even to those, who have treated us injuriously; and shew ourselves ready to forgive, and in haste to disperse those fears, and jealousies, which the recollection of past offences may excite: as uniting the most compassionate affection, with our faithful attempts to make men sensible, that they have offended.—But what haste should children make, and what gratification should they account it, to contribute to the comfort of their tender parents! They should check every mean desire, and spur themselves on to every laudable pursuit, with the idea, that the one would grieve and the other gladden a kind parent's heart: they ought to value prosperity especially as enabling them to share it with them: and spare a considerable portion even of a moderate provision, to requite the cares, and toils, and anxieties of an aged father, or mother. How shamefully unlike Joseph are they, who in comparative affluence, through pride, covetousness, or self-indulgence, neglect and leave to languish in indigence, such near relations!—Oh! how it adorns the doctrine of God our Saviour, when believers by a blameless, useful, and prudent conduct, conciliate the good-will of many, and silence the reproaches of all! If men may without injustice confer unmerited favours on whom, and in what proportion they please: who shall dare find fault, if our *righteous* God, punishing none above their deservings, has mercy on whom he will have mercy? When the reasons of the divine appointments are made known to us, we shall clearly perceive the Lord's wisdom, love, and faithfulness: shall know that all those things are for us, which once we thought against us: and that our murmurs sprung from ignorance, and unbelief: and shall say, it is enough, I am now satisfied: in the exercise of faith we should therefore endeavour to anticipate that discovery. Here also we behold Jesus, having previously humbled them in true repentance, manifesting himself as a brother and friend to those, who once were his despisers, enemies, and in some sense his murderers: preventing most kindly their dismay; and confusion; assuring them of his love, and of the provisions of his grace; explaining to them the mysteries of his cross, and the designs of the Father in his sufferings, and glory: admitting them into sweet fellowship with himself; bidding them go, and inform others of his love and grace, that they may come and share it also; commanding them to lay aside envy, anger, malice, and contention, and live in peace with each other; teaching them willingly to renounce the world for him, and his fulness; giving them earnests of his love, and supplying all that is needful to bring them home to himself, that where he is, there they may be also. And though when he sends for his people at last, they may at first feel some discouraging apprehensions; yet the thoughts of seeing his glory, and being with him, will enable them at length to say; it is enough, I am willing to die, and go to see, and be with the beloved of my soul.

waggons which Pharaoh had ſent to carry him.

6 And they took their cattle, and their goods which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob and all his ſeed with him:

7 His ſons and his ſons' ſons with him, his daughters, and his ſons' daughters, and all his ſeed brought he with him into Egypt.

8 And theſe *are* the names of the children of Iſrael, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his ſons: Reuben Jacob's firſt-born.

9 And the ſons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi.

10 And the ſons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the ſon of a Canaanitiſh woman.

11 And the ſons of Levi; Gerſhon, Kohath, and Merari.

12 And the ſons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zerah: But Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the ſons of Pharez, were Hezron, and Hamul.

13 And the ſons of Iſſachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron.

14 And the ſons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel.

15 Theſe *be* the ſons of Leah, which ſhe bare unto Jacob in Padan-aram, with his daughter Dinah: all the ſouls of his ſons and his daughters *were* thirty and three.

16 And the ſons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggai, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli.

17 And the ſons of Aſher; Jimnah, and Iſhuah, and Iſui, and Beriah, and Serah their ſiſter: And the ſons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel.

18 Theſe *are* the ſons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter: and theſe ſhe bare unto Jacob, *even* ſixteen ſouls.

19 The ſons of Rachel Jacob's wife; Joſeph, and Benjamin.

20 And unto Joſeph in the land of Egypt were born Manaſſeh and Ephraim, which Aſenath the daughter of Potipherah prieſt of On bare unto him.

21 And the ſons of Benjamin *were* Belah, and Becher, and Aſhbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Roſh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard.

22 Theſe *are* the ſons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the ſouls *were* fourteen.

23 And the ſons of Dan; Huſhim.

24 And the ſons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem.

25 Theſe *are* the ſons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and ſhe bare theſe unto Jacob: all the ſouls *were* ſeven.

26 All the ſouls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, beſides Jacobs ſons wives, all the ſouls *were* threeſcore and ſix;

NOTES.

CHAP. XLVI.] V. 1. *Beer-ſheba.*] Perhaps Jacob choſe this place, as having been frequently the ſcene of his father's communion with God; perhaps as the laſt place in Canaan, which he was now leaving, never to ſee again. Probably, though he ſpake at firſt with ſuch rapture of going to ſee Joſeph; yet reflecting that Iſaac was forbid to go down to Egypt, and recollecting the revelation made to Abraham, of the oppreſſion which his poſterity were there to endure; he pauſed, before he bid a final adieu to Canaan, and with ſolemn ſacrifices ſought both direction, and protection, if the Lord allowed him to proceed.

V. 4 *Surely bring thee up again*, &c.] That is, in thy poſterity, of which his burial in Canaan was an earneſt.

Joſeph ſhall put, &c.] Be preſent with thee in thy dying moments, to cloſe thine eyes.

V. 21. *The ſons of Benjamin.*] From other Scriptures, (See *Numbers*, c. 26. v. 40. and 1 *Chron.* c. 8. v. 3—5.) we learn that ſeveral of theſe were Benjamin's grandchildren; Benjamin's birth was evidently after Dinah was defiled, who was about Joſeph's age: ſuppoſing her but in her fourteenth year at that time, Benjamin could not now be more than 26, or 27. It is ſcarce conceivable that at that age he could have had ſeveral grand-children. It ſeems, therefore, moſt probable, that the hiſtorian mentions ſome born in Egypt, during Jacob's life-time, who afterwards became heads of families in Iſrael. The ſame ſeems the eaſieſt way of accounting for Judah's having in this regiſter grand-children mentioned by Tamar, of whom he begat Pharez after the death of Er, and Onan, who had been both married to her: though Judah at this time ſeems to have been under 50 years of age.

27 And

27 And the ſons of Joſeph which were born him in Egypt, *were* two ſouls: all the ſouls of the houſe of Jacob, which came into Egypt, *were* threeſcore and ten.

28 And he ſent Judah before him unto Joſeph, to direct his face unto Goſhen; and they came into the land of Goſhen.

29 And Joſeph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Iſrael his father, to Goſhen; and preſented himſelf unto him: and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, Now let me die, ſince I have ſeen thy face, becauſe thou *art* yet alive.

31 And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, and unto his father's houſe, I will go up and ſhew Pharaoh, and ſay unto him, My brethren, and my father's houſe, which *were* in the land of Canaan, are come unto me:

32 And the men *are* ſhepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have.

33 And it ſhall come to paſs when Pharaoh ſhall call you, and ſhall ſay, What *is* your occupation?

34 That ye ſhall ſay, Thy ſervants trade hath been about cattle, from our youth even until now, both we *and* alſo our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goſhen; for every ſhepherd *is* an abomination unto the Egyptians.

CHAP. XLVII.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſeph preſenting firſt his Brethren, and then his Father to Pharaoh, with their conference, v. 1—10. *2d. His ſupporting them in Egypt, v.* 11—12. *3d. The conduct of Joſeph towards the Egyptians, and their gratitude, v.* 13—26. *4th. Jacob on the approach of death, calling Joſeph to him, and giving orders concerning his burial, v.* 27—31.

THEN Joſeph came and told Pharaoh, and ſaid, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and behold they are in the land of Goſhen.

2 And he took ſome of his brethren, *even* five men, and preſented them unto Pharaoh.

3 And

V. 27. *Threeſcore and ten.*] It is ſaid (v. 26.) threeſcore and ſix: and Stephen, full of the Holy Ghoſt, quoting from the Septuagint, ſays, threeſcore and fifteen ſouls; which gives us the hint, to wave ſuch critical niceties, and to proceed with matters more important.

V. 28. *To direct his face unto Goſhen.*] To give Joſeph notice of his arrival, that he might be reminded to meet him in Goſhen.

V. 29. *Chariot.*] As a prince, he thus went forth to meet his father, thereby ſhewing him proper reſpect: but for Jacob, always a plain man, and now an old man, he ſends a convenient, but leſs ſplendid conveyance.

V. 34. *Abomination.*] See note, c. 43. v. 32. This would more effectually keep them diſtinct and ſeparate from the Egyptians.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

In thoſe events, and undertakings, which appear moſt joyful, there are probable conſequences involved, which may mind us to rejoice with trembling; and warn us not to proceed without ſeeking counſel, aſſiſtance, and a bleſſing from the Lord. Attending on his ordinances, and receiving the pledges of his covenant love, we may expect his preſence, and that peace, which it confers: and when we are ſatisfied that we are his people, and in the path, which he marks out to us, aſſured of his ſupports and conſolations, we may not only venture into the iron furnace of bondage and oppreſſion; but into the fiery furnace of perſecution. In all our removals, we are to be reminded of our removal out of this world; and though it be deſirable to be ſurrounded at the eve of life with our beloved friends, and children; yet nothing can encourage us to fear no evil, when paſſing through the valley of the ſhadow of death, but the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt to cloſe our eyes, and receive our ſouls. Be our families ever ſo large, God's providence can with perfect eaſe ſupport them: and be repenting ſinners ever ſo numerous, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt are ſufficient, and in Heaven there is room enough for them all. However generous our friends, it is prudent to be modeſt, and give no ground to any to ſuſpect us of encroaching, or to complain that we are burdenſome. In general, the farther from courts, the nearer to Canaan; and however obſcure, and deſpiſed our lot, if it be advantageous to our ſouls, and favourable to communion with God, we ought to be thankful for it. Our lives are in the Lord's hand, whatever we wiſh and deſire, and though we ſhould be willing to die, yet we ſhould be alſo willing to wait his time. In the mean while, if even the abhorrence of the world keep us ſeparate from it, we have cauſe to rejoice and be glad on that account.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLVII.] V. 2. *Took ſome of*, &c.] By this Joſeph at the ſame time ſhewed reſpect to Pharaoh, and intimated that he would do nothing without his knowledge

3 And Pharaoh ſaid unto his brethren, What *is* your occupation? And they ſaid unto Pharaoh, Thy ſervants *are* ſhepherds, both we *and* alſo our fathers.

4 They ſaid moreover unto Pharaoh, For to ſojourn in the land are we come: for thy ſervants have no paſture for their flocks, for the famine *is* ſore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy ſervants dwell in the land of Goſhen.

5 And Pharaoh ſpake unto Joſeph, ſaying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee.

6 The land of Egypt *is* before thee; in the beſt of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell, in the land of Goſhen let them dwell: and if thou knoweſt any men of activity amongſt them, then make them rulers over my cattle.

7 And Joſeph brought in Jacob his father, and ſet him before Pharaoh: and Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh.

8 And Pharaoh ſaid unto Jacob, How old *art* thou?

9 And Jacob ſaid unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

10 And

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knowledge and approbation; and put honour upon his brethren; manifeſting that he was not aſhamed of them, tho' now his inferiors, nor harboured reſentment againſt them, though formerly injurious.

Even five men.] Joſeph had doubtleſs ſome good reaſon for ſelecting theſe from among his brethren, though we are neither made acquainted with them, nor even with the names of thoſe, whom he preſented. Thus Chriſt diſpenſeth his ſpecial favours to every one, ſeverally as he will; not without reaſons, but without informing us of them: and thus, neither deſpiſing our meanneſs, nor reſenting our former contempt, and perverſeneſs, nor being aſhamed to call us brethren, he preſents us redeemed ſinners before his Father's throne.

V. 3. *What is your occupation?*] From their appearance, and becauſe every one, who would not be worthleſs, and an uſeleſs incumbrance upon the public, ſhould have ſome employment, Pharaoh takes it for granted that they had one.

Are ſhepherds, &c.] Though a ſhepherd was had in abomination among the Egyptians, yet they attempt not to conceal their occupation. Whatever the maxims of the World, and the faſhion of the time may be, every honeſt calling is honourable; and a man ſhould be aſhamed of nothing at any time, or in any place, but, of that which is diſgraceful in the judgement of God, and of wiſe and good men.

V. 4. *To ſojourn in the Land,* &c.] Probably they only meant to ſojourn in Egypt, till the famine was over; but meeting with kind treatment, they tarried, till another King aroſe; and at length they were detained in bondage; beſides their purpoſe, but according to the purpoſe and prediction of God.

V. 6. *In the beſt of the Land,* &c.] This was done in gratitude to Joſeph, of whoſe ſervices Pharaoh ſeems fully ſenſible.

If thou knoweſt any man of activity, &c.] For Pharaoh would have no others preferred even in this line.—It does not ſeem to have been the cuſtom at courts at that time, to prefer the dependants of great ſtateſmen, out of compliment to them, whether fit for ſuch preferment or not; as has ſince unhappily been too much the caſe. Joſeph does not require, nor does Pharaoh propoſe, nor do the ſons of Jacob expect any advancement: they only deſire, and are content with paſturage for their flocks. We muſt allow, that if the rich, and great are oft diſpoſed to overlook and neglect their poor relatives; they on the other hand are equally culpable, in expecting ſuch things from them, as they are utterly unfit for, and which it would be very improper to confer.

My cattle.] Which was kept for other uſes, and ſlain in ſacrifice, though not at other times eaten, as is generally ſuppoſed.

V. 7. *Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh.*] With the gravity of old age, and the piety of a true believer, and even with the authority of a patriarch, and a prophet, Jacob ſolemnly pronounced a bleſſing upon Pharoah; that is ſolemnly ſupplicated the Lord to beſtow his bleſſing upon him. Thus he acted in character, as a man who was not aſhamed of his religion: and who *in his own way,* would expreſs his gratitude, and recompenſe, as far as he could, the benefactor of himſelf and his family with a prophet's reward. And though Jacob by ſo doing in ſome ſenſe aſſumed the ſuperiority (See *Heb.* c. 7. v. 7.) yet for ought appears, Pharoah was well pleaſed with this token of his regard: having in the character and uſefulneſs of Joſeph, abundant experience of the value of the bleſſing of Jacob's God; and perhaps being himſelf favourably diſpoſed to his worſhip.

V. 8. *How old art thou?*] Probably Pharaoh obſerved ſomewhat peculiarly venerable in the aſpect of Jacob; and conceiving that he was older than indeed he was, (to which appearance his various hardſhips and trials might contribute) was curious to know his age.

V. 9. *The days of the years,* &c.] We have here a very uncommon anſwer given to a very common queſtion: but an anſwer full of pertinent inſtruction and admonition. Jacob calls his life a pilgrimage; that is the ſojourning of a ſtranger in a foreign country; or his journey home to his own country: intimating that he was not home upon earth

10 And Jacob bleſſed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11 And Joſeph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a poſſeſſion in the land of Egypt, in the beſt of the land in the land of Rameſes, as Pharaoh had commanded.

12 And Joſeph nouriſhed his father and his brethren, and all his father's houſhold with bread according to *their* families.

13 And *there was* no bread in all the land: for the famine *was* very ſore, ſo that the land of Egypt and *all* the land of Canaan fainted by reaſon of the famine.

14 And Joſeph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joſeph brought the money into Pharaoh's houſe.

15 And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joſeph, and ſaid, Give us bread: for why ſhould we die in thy preſence? for the money faileth.

16 And Joſeph ſaid, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail.

17 And they brought their cattle unto Joſeph: and Joſeph gave them bread in *exchange* for horſes, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the aſſes; and he fed them with bread, for all their cattle, for that year.

18 When that year was ended, they came unto him the ſecond year, and ſaid unto him, We will not hide *it* from my lord, how that our money is ſpent, my lord alſo hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the ſight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands.

19 Wherefore ſhall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be ſervants unto Pharaoh: and give *us* ſeed that we may live and not die, that the land be not deſolate.

20 And Joſeph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians ſold every man his field, becauſe the famine prevailed over them: ſo the land became Pharaoh's.

21 And as for the people he removed them to cities from *one* end of the borders of Egypt, even to the *other* end thereof.

22 Only the land of the prieſts bought he not: for the prieſts had a portion *aſſigned them* of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them; wherefore they ſold not their lands.

23 Then Joſeph ſaid unto the people, Behold

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earth; that his habitation, his inheritance, his treaſures were in Heaven, whither he was daily journeying in the bent, and deſires of his heart, and the tenor of his conduct. "For they which ſay ſuch things confeſs that they ſeek a "better, that is a heavenly country." (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 13—16.) Again, he numbers his life "by the days of his years:" A few years, each year compoſed of a few days: thus one day goes, and another, & ſoon a year is gone: and thus one year glides away after another, till life is ended, with all its many ſorrows, and its few pleaſures; juſt as a weariſome journey gradually is finiſhed, and we arrive at home. Tho' he had now lived 130 Years; yet he accounts them but few, in compariſon of the lives of his forefathers; and much more compared with eternity: they were *evil* alſo, not only as the lives of others are, but in that he had had an uncommon ſhare of troubles. Such an anſwer from ſo venerable a perſon, could not fail to impreſs the mind of Pharaoh, and almoſt to extort the reluctant ſigh, by reminding him of the inſufficiency and ſhort continuance of all human proſperity and felicity; and that after a life of vanity and vexation, man goes down into the grave, equally from the throne, as from the cottage; and that nothing can make us happy, but the proſpect of an everlaſting home in Heaven, after the cloſe of our ſhort weary pilgrimage on earth.

V. 12. *In the beſt of the land.*] Egypt lying low might afford perhaps good paſturage, eſpecially in the plains near the Nile; though the upland countries were totally burnt up; and though there was not any where moiſture enough to encourage ſowing corn.

V. 13. *Fainted*, &c.] A ſtrong metaphor, taken from the fainting of an individual for want of ſuſtenance, and applied, in a manner emphatically deſcriptive, to the diſtreſs of the whole nation.

V. 14. *Into Pharaoh's houſe.*] None of it being appropriated to his own uſe, or given in preſents, or penſions to his family.

V. 21. *He removed them*, &c.] The ſtate of affairs in Egypt might require ſuch regulations; and it might conduce to public tranquility, and to the more equitable diſtribution of property, thus to wean them from their former lands, and habitations, and after the expiration of the famine to aſſign them others, as ſeemed beſt.

V. 22. *Prieſts*, &c.] This word is ſometimes tranſlated princes; and ſeems here uſed not only for the miniſters of their ſuperſtitious worſhips but for the officers of ſtate,

hold, I have bought you this day, and your *land* for Pharaoh: lo, here *is* ſeed for you, and ye ſhall ſow the land.

24 And it ſhall come to paſs in the increaſe, that you ſhall give the fifth *part* unto Pharaoh, and four parts ſhall be your own, for ſeed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your houſholds, and for food for your little ones.

25 And they ſaid, Thou haſt ſaved our lives: let us find grace in the ſight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's ſervants.

26 And Joſeph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, *that* Pharaoh ſhould have the fifth *part;* except the land of the prieſts only, *which* became not Pharaoh's.

27 And Iſrael dwelt in the land of Egypt in the country of Goſhen; and they had poſſeſſions therein, and grew and multiplied exceedingly.

28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt ſeventeen years: ſo the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and ſeven years.

29 And the time drew nigh that Iſrael muſt die: and he called his ſon Joſeph, and ſaid unto him, If now I have found grace in thy ſight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt.

30 But I will lie with my fathers, and thou ſhalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying place. And he ſaid, I will do as thou haſt ſaid.

31 And he ſaid, Swear unto me: And he ſware unto him. And Iſrael bowed himſelf upon the bed's head.

CHAP.

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and for their wiſe men, and diviners, who having their maintenance from Pharaoh, would not be under the neceſſity of ſelling their lands.

V. 24. *A fifth part*, &c.] Our land tax at its preſent rate is one fifth of the rent, if it were equally levied; but this is the fifth of the clear produce, which is much more: yet taken in lieu of all other taxes it does not appear exorbitant.

V. 25. *Thou haſt ſaved*, &c.] We are not to judge of this tranſaction by the rules of modern politics: it is plain that the Egyptians regarded Joſeph as a public benefactor: and though we may not perceive the reaſon of ſome arrangements; yet the whole tranſaction is ſtrongly marked with equity, benevolence, diſintereſtedneſs, and impartiality, ſeldom, if ever equalled. The whole appears conſiſtent with Joſeph's character, as acting betwixt Pharaoh, and his ſubjects, in the fear of God, and without any undue attachment to the intereſts of his brethren, or even of his own children, whom we find not in better circumſtances than the other Iſraelites.

V. 29. *Muſt die.*] Jacob was ſenſible that death was now ſpeedily approaching.

And he called, &c.] Joſeph lived at court, Jacob at a conſiderable diſtance; and not even affection to his parent could induce Joſeph to relax his unremitting attention to the important duties of his ſtation.

Bury me not, &c.] Thus he evidenced his belief of the Lord's promiſe concerning Canaan, of which land he would thus take and keep poſſeſſion: and alſo intimated, that he deſired to have his lot after death not with the Egyptians, but with his fathers Abraham and Iſaac, in that heavenly reſt, which Canaan typified.

V. 31. *Iſrael bowed*, &c.] In an act of ſolemn worſhip, yet in feebleneſs thus ſupporting himſelf, and expreſſing his full ſatisfaction, and his willingneſs to leave the World.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The kindneſs of liberal benefactors, ſo far from encouraging us to encroach upon them, ſhould remind us to ſhew them all proper attention, and deference: and in attending to ſome *peculiar relative duties*, we ſhould look round upon the *whole circle*, and ſo proportion them, as not to entrench upon others.—Though diligence is exceedingly commendable, and generally is connected with advancement in life; yet it is ordinarily beſt to abide with God in our own proper calling; for what the world calls, mending ourſelves, is oft little better than renouncing peace, content, and a ſituation favourable to the proſperity of our ſouls, for gilded cares, incumbrances, and manifold temptations.—Indeed our life is but a pilgrimage, few and evil are the days of it, and if they are ſpent with God, and to his glory, the reſt matters very little. If we have a proſpect that when we go hence, and are no more ſeen, we ſhall go home to our father's houſe, we ſhall not want, and ought not to deſire the paltry intereſts of the World; why ſhould we burthen ourſelves with unavailing cares, and ſorrows? Why covet riches, ſhortly to be left behind? Why engage in projects to be left unfiniſhed, or aſpire at diſtinctions, which death will terminate? We act not thus on a journey, when our heart is at home: the conveniencies, or inconveniencies, which we meet with, but little affect us, or retard our progreſs; we want not to erect ſtately manſions, or lay up wealth in a foreign country, which we are leaving, and to which we ſhall return no more; nor encumber ourſelves with luggage, which we need not before, and which muſt be left behind, when we embark for our native country. Having therefore food and raiment let us be therewith content; for we "brought "nothing into this World, neither may we carry any thing "out,"—But O how miſerable they, who have all *their* good things during the few and evil days of this preſent life

CHAP. XLVIII.

Contains, 1st. Joseph, and his two sons visiting his father in his last sickness, v. 1—2. *2d. Jacob adopting Joseph's two sons; and admitting them to an equal share in the promised inheritance with his own children, v.* 3—11. *3d. Pronouncing a prophetical blessing upon them, with some concurrent circumstances, v.* 12—20. *4th. Predicting the return of his family to Canaan, and leaving a legacy there to Joseph, v.* 21—22.

AND it came to pass after these things, that *one* told Joseph, Behold, thy father *is* sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim.

2 And *one* told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed.

3 And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me.

4 And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people, and will give this land to thy seed after thee *for* an everlasting possession.

5 And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt, before I came unto thee into Egypt, *are* mine: as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine.

6 And

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life! and whose last comfort is like to expire, with their dying breath!—Let us then give diligence to make our calling and election sure, and as our days are so much more curtailed than Jacob's were, let us oft ask ourselves seriously, how old we are? That our life may not vanish, nor death approach unobserved, or unprepared for. A hoary head is only then a crown of glory, when it is found in the way of righteousness; and they whose consistency of character will bear them out, need neither be ashamed, nor afraid to bear testimony for God before the greatest princes; who if wise will highly value their pious prayers. They, who have been exalted, cannot too carefully avoid the appearance of despising their former equals; nor they, who have been injured, the appearance of resenting former ill treatment: and when we receive kindness from men, we should in that acknowledge the kindness of God, in raising us up such friends. An useful life consists in a constant succession of duties; and exalted stations properly filled, call for unremitting labour, and attention: and such persons have need of great wisdom, firmness, disinterestedness, impartiality and equity, in order to ward off envy, silence reproach, and to keep a clear conscience, rendering to God, to Cæsar, and to the people, each their due. But if God's providence call a man to such a station, he ought to seek, and expect that he will furnish him with grace sufficient for it. If the with-holding the rain from Heaven so soon reduce the most opulent nations to poverty and distress; how absolute must our dependance be upon that God, whom we so oft wantonly offend, and foolishly forget: And if Joseph extorted this confession from the Egyptians, "Thou hast saved our lives;" What multitudes will gratefully say to Jesus at last Thou hast saved our souls, from the most tremendous destruction, and in the season of uttermost distress! The Egyptians were willing to part with all their property, and even their liberty, for the saving of their lives: can it then be too much, for us to count all but loss, and part with all, at his command, and for his sake; who will thus both save our souls, and give us for all an hundred fold even in this present World? And surely, if saved by Christ, we shall willingly become at his appointment the devoted servants of him, and his Father; whose glory he consults, in harmony with our salvation.—Yet they, who lived on Joseph's provision, and even Jacob, who was so dear to him, must die: but Jesus gives us the true bread, that we may eat and live for ever: to him let us come, and yield ourselves, and when we draw near to death, he, who supported us through life will meet us, and assure us of an everlasting inheritance. Then, on the very bed of death, we may bow down and worship with joyful hearts, and breathe out our spirits into his faithful hands, with the most entire satisfaction.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLVIII. V. 1. *Behold thy father is sick,* &c.] Jacob not being before like immediate death, Joseph had returned to his important employments: but now hearing of his sickness, and expecting his death, he goes to visit him, and takes his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, with him; either by Jacob's express desire, or in hopes that the solemn scene, together with the dying benediction, and discourse of the venerable Patriarch, would make some useful impressions upon their youthful minds. They were at this time above twenty years of age.

V. 2. *Strengthened,* &c.] Not only being animated by the presence of Joseph and his sons, did Jacob exert all his strength to improve this last opportunity: but he was endued with inward strength, and raised above himself by the holy Spirit, that he might utter those prophecies, with which he was inspired.

V. 3. *At Luz.*] Which he called Bethel. This unexpected visit of a gracious God, made to him in his extreme distress, could never be erased from his memory: and as he had already experienced much of the fulfilment of the promises, then made to him, which he enumerates with thankfulness: so he grounds the following blessings on his posterity upon them, as the warrant of his expectations.

V. 5. *Are mine, as,* &c.] That is, I adopt them, that being

6 And thy iſſue which thou begetteſt after them, ſhall be thine, *and* ſhall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.

7 And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way, when yet *there was* but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the ſame *is* Beth-lehem.

8 And Iſrael beheld Joſeph's ſons, and ſaid, Who *are* theſe?

9 And Joſeph ſaid unto his father, They *are* my ſons, whom God hath given me in this *place:* And he ſaid, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bleſs them.

10 (Now the eyes of Iſrael were dim for age, *ſo that* he could not ſee:) And he brought them near unto him; and he kiſſed them, and embraced them.

11 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, I had not thought to ſee thy face: and lo, God hath ſhewed me alſo thy ſeed.

12 And Joſeph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himſelf with his face to the earth.

13 And Joſeph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand towards Iſrael's left hand, and Manaſſeh in his left hand towards Iſrael's right hand, and brought *them* near unto him.

14 And Iſrael ſtretched out his right hand, and laid *it* upon Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand upon Manaſſeh's head: guiding his hands wittingly; for Manaſſeh *was* the firſt-born.

15 And he bleſſed Joſeph, and ſaid, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Iſaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day,

16 The

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being numbered with my own ſons, they may, as heads of diſtinct tribes, have a proportionable ſhare in the inheritance of Canaan. He ſpake by the ſpirit of prophecy. Conſidering Joſeph's rank in Egypt, the carnal mind would eſtimate this remote inheritance with the reſt of Jacob's ſons, as a very inconſiderable matter. But we do not find that Joſeph either purchaſed eſtates, or amaſſed wealth in Egypt for his ſons: not only becauſe he was diſintereſted; but becauſe he was a believer, and wanted not to attach his children to Egypt; but to lead their thoughts to Canaan, and to the inheritance of the children of Iſrael, as their proper portion. Alas, that ſo many profeſſing parents ſhould act ſo contrary to this example; and, by anxiouſly, not to ſay covetouſly, heaping up wealth for their children, ſhould teach them to forget Canaan, and Iſrael, and take up with a portion in the Egypt of this world! Jacob alſo bleſſed them (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 21.) *in faith*, and conſidered, and wiſhed *them* to conſider, that to be numbered with the ſons of Jacob, and to have an inheritance in Canaan, was more honourable and deſirable, than to be the richeſt of Pharaoh's courtiers. Probably this was intended, and had it's effects, to lead them to unite intereſts with the Iſraelites, and to adhere to the worſhip of God, in preference to the Egyptians, and their ſuperſtition, with which, in their ſtation, they were peculiarly in danger of being infected.

V. 6. *Thy iſſue, which*, &c.] We do not find that Joſeph had any other children; but if he had had any, according to this limitation, they muſt have been incorporated with the tribes of Ephraim and Manaſſeh.

V. 7. *Rachel died*, &c.] The manner, in which this is introduced, intimates how much Jacob laid that ſtroke to heart; he ſeems to feel the anguiſh of it ſtill; and to mention it here as a reaſon of his peculiar attachment to the poſterity, which he had by her.

V. 9. *Whom God hath*, &c.] In this place, whither I was ſold as a ſlave, where I was ſo long impriſoned, and where I have received ſo many mercies. The piety of the language ſhould not paſs unnoticed.

V. 10. *Could not ſee*, &c.] Not diſtinctly.

V. 12. *He bowed himſelf*, &c.] Joſeph thus ſhewed, that his external greatneſs did not render him forgetful of the reſpect due to his father; of the veneration, to which his age and piety entitled him; or of the high value, which he put upon the adoption of his children to be partakers of the promiſed bleſſings.

V. 14. *For Manaſſeh was*, &c.] Though he was the firſt-born, and Jacob knew it; yet under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, he, by this token, gave Ephraim the preference, as before he had firſt mentioned his name. (v. 5.)

V. 15. *He bleſſed Joſeph*, &c.] Firſt he bleſſed Joſeph, and then his ſons; or he bleſſed Joſeph *in bleſſing his ſons.*

God before whom, &c.] They walked before God, as habitually, and by faith, maintaining communion with him in his ordinances, devoting themſelves to his ſervice, acting as under his eye, depending on his protection, and rejoicing in his loving kindneſs and mercy.

Which fed me, &c.] Jacob had oft been in outward ſtraits, and eſpecially with his numerous poſterity had been in great diſtreſs by famine: but God had always provided for him; and had ſent Joſeph before-hand to make preparation for him in Egypt. There God had fed him ſeventeen years in his infirm old age by Joſeph; juſt as long as he had fed Joſeph by Jacob's hand in his infancy, and youth: thus enabling Joſeph to requite his parents.

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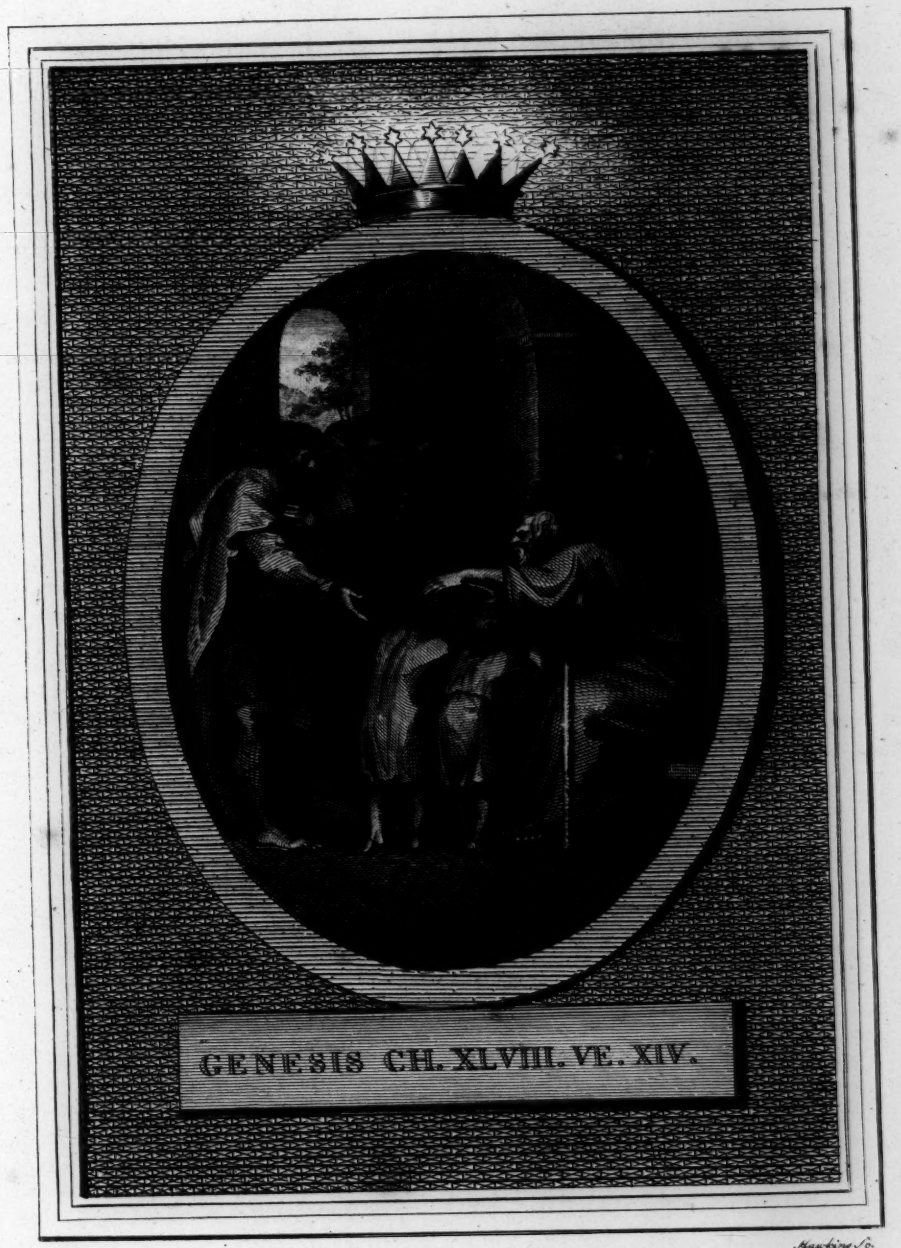

Ryley del. Hawkins Sc.

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16 The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bleſs the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Iſaac: and let them grow into a multitude in the midſt of the earth.

17 And when Joſeph ſaw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it diſpleaſed him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manaſſeh's head.

18 And Joſeph ſaid unto his father, Not ſo, my father: for this *is* the firſt-born; put thy right hand upon his head.

19 And his father refuſed, and ſaid, I know *it* my ſon, I know *it*; he alſo ſhall become a people, and he alſo ſhall be great: but truly his younger brother ſhall be greater than he, and his ſeed ſhall become a multitude of nations.

20 And he bleſſed them that day, ſaying, In thee ſhall Iſrael bleſs, ſaying, God make thee as Ephraim, and as Manaſſeh: and he ſet Ephraim before Manaſſeh.

21 And Iſrael ſaid unto Joſeph, Behold, I die; but God ſhall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers.

22 Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my ſword and with my bow.

CHAP.

This divine interpoſition is therefore very properly introduced: and as he had been fed, he complains not; though he had not been enriched, but rather impoveriſhed.

V. 16. *The angel*, &c.] He here calls the God, before whom Abraham and Iſaac had walked, and who had fed him all his life long, *the Angel*. As God giveth not his glory to the creatures, we may be ſure that ſuch things are not ſpoken of a created angel: but that this is one proof amongſt many, that he, who is by Malachi called the Meſſenger, or Angel of the Covenant, even Jeſus Chriſt, was known as diſtinct from, yet one with the Father by the Patriarchs; and that as ſuch he manifeſted himſelf to, and was worſhipped by them.

Redeemed me, &c.] The deliverances of believing ſinners from miſery, and danger, by the interpoſition of the power of God, coming through the ranſom of the blood of Chriſt, are frequently in Scripture entitled redemptions.

From all evil, &c.] Jacob now cloſing his eyes in death, joyfully conſiders himſelf as redeemed from *all* evil; and therefore expects henceforth good, and nothing but good.

And let my name, &c.] Let them ſtand in the place, inherit the privileges, and walk in the ſteps of theſe their progenitors: which would be a NAME of nobler import, than Egypt could afford.

V. 17. *It diſpleaſed him*, &c.] Suppoſing that it was done out of a groundleſs partiality, and not under the guidance of the prophetic ſpirit.

V. 18. *This is the firſt-born.*] To him therefore by right, and cuſtom, the pre-eminence belongs: thus it was afterwards commanded in the law. Yet all through the Scriptures we have inſtances of the younger being preferred to the elder. The law teaches us what is juſt and proper for us to do: but a ſovereign God, in conferring *unmerited favours*, claims an indiſputable right of doing what he will with his own; yet always exerciſes it in perfect equity, faithfulneſs, and wiſdom; and conſiſtent with his largeſt invitations and promiſes.

V. 19. *Younger brother*, &c.] We ſhall ſee an abundant accompliſhment of this prediction in the following hiſtory.

V. 22. *I took out of*, &c.] Jacob firſt bought this ground (See *Gen.* c. 33. v. 19. and *Joſh.* c. 24. v. 32.) of Hamor: but probably after the ſlaughter of the Shechemites, the Amorites ſeized upon it; and afterwards he recovered it by force of arms, in a way, and at a time, of which we are not informed. And though it appears not that he, or his ſons, at this time, or for long after, had any advantage from it; yet in faith he bequeaths it to Joſeph, as an acceſſion to the allotted portion, which would be aſſigned to his poſterity, when they ſhould be put in poſſeſſion of Canaan. And here Joſeph's bones were at length depoſited. (*Joſhua*, c. 24. v. 32.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The death-beds of eminent believers oft-times affords moſt inſtructive leſſons to thoſe around them. This is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart; and ſuch ſcenes, together with the prayers and counſels of dying perſons, are ſo ſuited to make ſerious impreſſions on the young, the gay, and the proſperous; that we ſhall do well to take our children with us on ſuch occaſions, when it can be done with propriety. It is very deſirable, if the Lord pleaſe, to bear our dying teſtimony to the truths of God, to his faithfulneſs, and to the pleaſantneſs of his ways; and one would wiſh to be ſtrengthened at ſuch a ſolemn ſeaſon to render our laſt ſervice to our ſurvivors; and ſhould have an eye thereto, in our whole conduct, that we may ſo live, as may give energy and weight to our dying exhortations: yet at laſt the Spirit diſpenſeth in this matter ſeverally, as he will. Abraham and Iſaac died in faith, and in peace, yet we have no record of their dying teſtimony; but Jacob here ſpeaks with great copiouſneſs and energy. All true believers are bleſſed in, and at their death; but all do not depart equally full of ſpiritual conſolation; nor are all alike edifying to the ſpectators.

The joint inheritance of the promiſed bleſſing with the true Iſrael of God, let who will deſpiſe it, is infinitely

CHAP. XLIX.

Contains, 1ſt. Jacob calling his ſons together to hear his prophetical benediction, v. 1—2. *2d. A particular addreſs to, and prediction reſpecting each of them, v.* 3—28. *3d. The charge which Jacob gave about his burial, v.* 29—32. *4th. His death, v.* 33.

AND Jacob called unto his ſons, and ſaid, Gather yourſelves together, that I may tell you *that* which ſhall befal you in the laſt days.

2 Gather yourſelves together, and hear, ye ſons of Jacob; and hearken unto Iſrael your father.

3 Reuben thou *art* my firſt-born, my might, and the beginning of my ſtrength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.

4 Unſtable as water, thou ſhalt not excel, becauſe thou wenteſt up to thy father's bed: then defiledſt thou *it*; he went up to my couch.

5 Simeon

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preferable to the ſole inheritance of all the kingdoms of the world: and the beſt expreſſion of our particular affection for our children and relatives is, to recommend our God, and our religion to them; and to recommend them to the grace of God in our earneſt prayers for them, that they may be his adopted children, and heirs, according to the promiſe. And though we cannot bleſs them in Jacob's Spirit of prophecy; yet we may with his ſpirit of faith, and humbly hope that our prayers for them will be anſwered, and our exhortations followed, even after we are dead. Nor is there any thing more comfortable to the dying believer himſelf, or more edifying, or affecting to thoſe around him, than to reflect upon, and ſpeak of the promiſes of God, and his experience of their faithful accompliſhment in his providence, and by his grace: to be mindful of our Bethels, and Peniels, and to acknowledge that, notwithſtanding trials and troubles, all hath been done wiſely and graciouſly. In this view even temporal mercies, and deliverances, yea our daily bread, when conſidered as the gifts of the great angel of the covenant, and the purchaſe of his redemption, and as earneſts of better things reſerved for us, become moſt precious bleſſings. And when a dying man can conſider himſelf with confidence redeemed from *all* evil, as pardoned, and ſanctified, as ready to have done with conflict, labour, ſin, temptation, darkneſs and ſorrow, and danger of any more offending, or diſhonouring God: and as having good, and nothing but good before him to all eternity: with what comfort may he walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death! and though fleſh and heart fail, though the eyes grow dim, and nature ſink in decay, how may he triumph in that God, who is the ſtrength of his heart, and his portion for ever! Having experienced, that God hath been better to him, not only than his deſponding fears, but even than his moſt ſanguine hopes, he may chearfully deſcend into the grave, leaning on the tried faithfulneſs of a promiſing God. But would we thus die the death of the righteous, we muſt walk *before God* in the land of the living; and in the exerciſe and obedience of faith, bear the name, and tread in the ſteps of theſe ancient believers: then though our comforts are dying all around us, God will be with us, countervail all loſſes, and fulfil his largeſt promiſes. Whatever we think whilſt we live, we ſhall at death know that to be fed all our life long, is all that the World can do for us. Little indeed can all thoſe poſſeſſions profit us, about which there is ſo much contention, and ſo many cares: though it may be proper to adjuſt all with exactneſs reſpecting them, leſt we bequeath diſcord to our poſterity, yet a burying place is all that the ampleſt patrimony will ſhortly afford.—How poor then are they, who have no other riches! and how miſerable a death-bed to thoſe, who have no well-grounded hope of good, but dreadful apprehenſions of evil, and nothing but evil for ever! Let us then fear being put off with a portion in this world; or with an hypocritical religion, or with a preſumptuous hope, which will at laſt leave us in deſpair: rather, whatever we loſe, or go without, let us chuſe that good part, which ſhall never be taken from us; and then poverty, pain, reproach, and death itſelf, will be ſo many favourable gales to waft us to the haven of eternal bliſs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XLIX.] V. 1. *Gather yourſelves*, &c.] All Jacob's ſons were ſtill living; and now at his command collected themſelves together round his bed, perhaps with their children, to hear his dying words. The exhortation to gather themſelves together is repeated in the ſecond verſe, and may intimate his deſire, that they ſhould keep together, and live in harmony as one family, without intermingling with the Egyptians.

Which ſhall befall you, &c.] We are therefore not to conſider this addreſs, as the expreſſion of his private affection, or reſentment, or partiality: but as the language of the Holy Ghoſt, declaring the purpoſes of God, reſpecting the character, circumſtances, and ſituation of the ſeveral tribes, deſcended from them.

In the laſt days, &c.] That is in after ages: the prophecy evidently looks forward beyond the coming of Chriſt; and perhaps may ſome of it be yet unaccompliſhed. We may here obſerve that in this, and ſome other paſſages, ſuch as Noah's prophecy, (*Gen.* c. 9.) and Moſes bleſſing the tribes, (*Deut.* c. 33.) there is ſo large an extent of prophecy compriſed in few words, that brevity will not allow us to adduce, in a publication of this nature, all that might properly be ſaid by way of elucidating them, and we muſt be content with a compendious abſtract. We ſhould alſo note, that we have only the Scripture hiſtory, which mentions very little of ſeveral of the tribes, to proceed upon in many caſes, if we attempt to illuſtrate the prophecy by it's accompliſhment: but

5 Simeon and Levi, *are* brethren: instruments of cruelty *are in* their habitations.

6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall.

7 Cursed *be* their anger, for *it was* fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.

8 Judah, thou *art he* whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand *shall be* in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee.

9 Judah

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but had we a more particular account of the distinguishing character, situation, and success of each tribe; we should probably perceive a more striking exactness in all, than we now discern in any of them: and might see very clearly, that the whole was foreknown by divine prescience, and fulfilled by omnipotence. But as matters now are, full satisfaction must not be expected by the reader; nor more than a few of the most interesting of those observations, which have been copiously made upon it.

V. 3. *Reuben, thou art*, &c.] Jacob begins with Reuben, who being the eldest son, might expect the precedency; and that the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of authority would have devolved upon him: but he had incurred a forfeiture; and therefore he, as it were, arrays him with the insignia of royalty, that he might more solemnly, and judicially degrade him.

Unstable as water, &c.] This may describe either his character, or that of his tribe, or both: like water they were at no stay, apt to break through the appointed bounds, and not to be at all depended on.

Thou shalt not excel.] The tribe of Reuben had neither the pre-eminence in one respect or another: there is not mentioned in Scipture either king, judge, prophet, or renowned person of this tribe; except Dathan, and Abiram, who were noted for their rebellion against Moses, and against God.

Because thou wentest up, &c.] This crime had been committed forty years before, and probably was repented of, and pardoned as to it's eternal punishment: yet being of so infamous a nature, it is here remembered, and his tribe degraded on that account. This was intended to testify not only Jacob's, but God's abhorrence of such abominable practices, for a warning to the Israelites, and to others in all future ages. Thus children actually do suffer for their parent's crimes in this world, but for wise, equitable, and merciful reasons; namely, to warn them not to imitate their sins, lest they both suffer themselves, and entail suffering on their beloved offspring.

He went up, &c.] The former clauses are addressed to Reuben himself; but this Jacob addresses to the others, that they may note, and profit by the warning.

V. 5. *Simeon and Levi*, &c.] These were next in seniority, but are degraded also, and with still deeper abhorrence of the crime, which they had committed.

Are brethren.] Not only descended from the same parents, but of the same fierce, and untractable disposition.

Instruments of cruelty, &c.] The swords, with which they massacred the Shechemites.

V. 6. *O my soul, come not*, &c.] Jacob had probably been suspected of allowing that treacherous revenge, and cruelty; but he here enters his dying protest against it.—No, says he, my soul would have abhorred such a villainous project; and had I been admitted into their secret, I would have immediately divulged it.

Mine honour, &c.] Jacob's honour was intimately connected with the honour of his religion, and the glory of the God, whom he worshipped: therefore, says he, let it never be imputed to me, that I was one of this scandalous confederacy; it would not only be a disgrace to my character, but it would discredit the worship of Jehovah in future ages, and in distant nations, were it said that Israel, who had power with God and prevailed, was guilty of such a crime: let then Simeon, and Levi, though my own sons, bear the blame, and let the degraded state of their tribes still proclaim my abhorrence, yea my God's abhorrence of their wickedness.

They slew a man.] Namely, Shechem; but they scorned to lay hands on him alone, and therefore slew numbers with him.

In their self-will.] They were too conceited, and headstrong in their own way, either to ask, or take any wholesome counsel.

They digged down a wall.] That is desolated and plundered the city.

V. 7. *Cursed be their anger.*] He does not curse *them*; nay afterwards he is said to have blessed them all, and we hope they were blessed: but he execrates, and calls upon all to detest their fierce anger, and cruel wrath.

I will divide them, &c.] He pronounces this prophetic sentence upon them in God's name: they shall be divided from each other, and one part of their descendants from another; but it is still to be in Jacob and in Israel. Though degraded from the pre-eminence, yet they shall share in the promised land, in the ordinances of God, and in the benefits of the covenant of peculiarity. Accordingly the tribe of Simeon had only a portion within the lot of Judah, which was too large for him; (*Joshua* c. 19. v. 1—9.) where being straitned, part of them went in quest of new settlements, (1 *Chron.* c. 4. v. 24—39.) and were thus divided in Jacob. Tradition also reports, that numbers of this tribe were dispersed amongst the other tribes, as instructors of children, for their support. The sentence in Levi's case was not reversed, but converted into a blessing, and being separated, and consecrated to God, as the priestly tribe, became honourably and profitably dispersed in that character through Israel.

V. 8. *Judah, thou art he*, &c.] Here is an elegant allusion to the name of Judah, which signifies praise:—He too had been guilty of some misdemeanors, but not of so flagrant a nature. Had Jacob however been influenced by his own spirit, and not by the Spirit of God, he would probably

9 Judah *is* a lion's whelp; from the prey, my ſon, thou art gone up: he ſtooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who ſhall rouſe him up?

10 The ſceptre ſhall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him *ſhall* the gathering of the people *be*.

11 Binding his fole unto the vine, and his aſſes colt unto the choice vine; he waſhed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes.

12 His eyes *ſhall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.

13 Zebulun ſhall dwell at the haven of the

probably have paſſed him by alſo, that the birthright and bleſſing might have been given to his beloved Joſeph, the ſon of his beloved Rachel.—But indeed the Spirit of God alone could communicate ſuch knowledge of future, and diſtant events, as is evidently contained in this chapter.

Thy hand ſhall be, &c.] Subjecting, triumphing over, and deſtroying his enemies.

Thy father's children ſhall, &c.] By willingly ſubmitting to thy authority.—Accordingly this tribe took the lead by God's appointment in their encampments in the wilderneſs; marched firſt againſt the Canaanites, after Joſhua's death; and obtained the firſt ſettlement in Canaan.—David and Solomon of this tribe were ſignally proſperous, both in extending their dominions, and in domeſtic affairs: and their deſcendants until, and even after the Babyloniſh captivity were in power, and authority.

V. 9. *Judah is a lion's whelp*, &c.] The tribe of Judah, and the princes of it were very courageous, and victorious; yet not cruel, and tyrannical.

He couched as a lion, &c.] Oft indeed they were diſpoſed to live in peace, but ever warlike, and victorious when rouſed to arms.

V. 10. *The ſceptre*, &c.] This word is ſometimes tranſlated *tribe* as in verſe 16th of this chapter, and ſometimes rod, or ſtaff: ſo that it may mean either the ſceptre of kingly government over all Iſrael; or their diſtinct ſubſiſtence, and internal government as a tribe, or both.

Shall not depart, &c.] The tribe of Judah had in many things the pre-eminence before the times of David: in his days, and Solomon's, it had the whole kingly authority: after the revolt of the other tribes, Benjamin adhered to it, and the Levites, and numbers beſides flocked to it from all the other tribes; and the kingdom in the line of David was called the kingdom of Judah, and continued till the captivity.—After the captivity, all who remained of the other tribes, were incorporated with them, and were all called Jews, or Judeans. The government continued with them, and with thoſe, who united with them, till they were conquered by other nations: yet, even when in Babylon, they appeared to have had an internal government: ſo they had afterwards, even when under the Roman power, and notwithſtanding the kings, tetrarchs and governors, which were placed over them, much authority veſted in the ſanhedrim, who were chiefly of this tribe, until the coming of Chriſt, and ſome ſhort time after; as is evident from the concurrent teſtimony of Jewiſh, and Chriſtian hiſtorians. The tribe of Judah alſo was preſerved more diſtinct than any of the reſt, and it's geneaologies could be traced back in the time of Chriſt even to Judah.—But for many a century all this has been otherwiſe, all their authority is gone, and their diſtinctions ſwallowed up.

A lawgiver, &c.] Or a governor, and Judge, as the word is oft uſed: ſome deſcended from Judah, who ſhould exerciſe authority, and execute judgment, in one form or other, amongſt them.

Till Shiloh come.] Shiloh is by ſome rendered, he, who is ſent; by others the peaceable one; and by others the Seed: but all muſt interpret it of the Meſſiah, who was ſent into the world, as the promiſed Seed, and the Prince of Peace. It has been ſhewn that the ſceptre did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet; but that authority was in one way or other veſted in this tribe, until the time of Chriſt.—But ſoon after Jeruſalem was deſolated, their whole civil, and eccleſiaſtical ſtate was overturned, the whole people was ſcattered over the earth, all their diſtinctions were confounded; and they have remained to this day, (above 1700 years) more entirely deſtitute of ſceptre, lawgiver, or ſhadow of authority, than ever they were even in the Babyloniſh captivity: therefore Shiloh is come, and Jeſus Chriſt is he.

And unto him ſhall the, &c.] If we underſtand this of Judah, it had it's accompliſhment in ſeveral of the events before mentioned; and alſo in the gathering of the people to Mount Zion, which was in this tribe, to keep their ſolemn feaſts: and to the court of David and his deſcendants; and alſo in Benjamin's uniting intereſts with Judah, in the Levites adhering to him; and in the people flocking to him from the other tribes, in the days of Jereboam. And to Shiloh the gathering of the people, both Jews and Gentiles hath been, is and will be more and more, until the earth ſhall be full of his glory; yea until all the world ſhall be gathered before his judgment ſeat; and all the redeemed from all the kindreds and nations of the earth, ſhall be gathered with him into heaven.

V. 11. *Binding his fole*, &c.] The Meſſiah could deſcend only from one tribe: only one could have the precedency; but a lot in the land of Canaan, and many temporal, and ſpiritual bleſſings might be enjoyed in common by many.—This ſeems therefore primarily to foretel that Judah's lot in Canaan ſhould abound in vines; ſo ſtrong, that they ſhould tie their young aſſes to them; ſo fruitful, that they ſhould load them from them: and that they ſhould be ſo much employed about them, as to have their garments ſtained with their juice.

V. 12. *Their eyes*, &c.] They ſhould have plenty of wine for their exhileration, which would ſometimes be abuſed in intemperance.

Their teeth white with milk.] With which alſo their lot ſhould abound. We have ſeen much of this prophecy applied

the sea: and he *shall be* for an haven of ships; and his border *shall be* unto Zidon.

14 Issachar *is* a strong ass, couching down between two burdens.

15 And he saw that rest *was* good, and the land that *it was* pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.

16 Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.

17 Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse-heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.

18 I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.

19 Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.

20 Out of Asher his bread *shall be* fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.

21 Naphtali *is* a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.

22 Joseph *is* a fruitful bough, *even* a fruitful

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applied to Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, terrible to his obstinate foes, but merciful to those, who submit—

"*Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.*"

And kind to his meanest servant. When he came, he took the sceptre from Judah's hand; and all their kings, and rulers had been but types of him, to whom the gathering of the people is. No wonder therefore the Jews are now bereft of it.—Nor need we shun to observe that he is the true vine: that wine is the appointed symbol of his blood, which is drink indeed, as shed for sinners, and applied in faith: and that all the blessings of his Gospel are wine and milk without money, and without price, to which every thirsty soul is welcome.

V. 13. *Zebulun shall dwell*, &c.] According to this prediction, this tribe had his portion assigned *by lot*, which reached nearly, if not entirely from the Mediterranean sea to the sea of Galilee. (*Joshua* c. 19. v. 10—16. *Deuter.* c. 33. v. 18.)

V. 14. *Issachar is a strong ass*, &c.] Issachar is here described, as to his character, industrious, and unambitious; bearing labour, and tribute peaceably; of which burdens others so grievously complain.

V. 15. *Rest was good.*] Not rest from labour, but from war, and contention.

And the land was pleasant, &c.] Satisfied with the pleasantness of a remote part of the country, he little intermeddled with the affairs of the state, or of war. Accordingly this tribe is little mentioned in the subsequent history.

V. 16, *Dan shall judge*, &c.] Dan signifies judgment: and Jacob foretels, that though he was the son of one of his concubines, and the first of them, whom he mentions, he shall be the head of a separate tribe, and have a share in the management of affairs, as if he had been descended from Leah, or Rachel.

V. 17. *A serpent by the way, an adder*, &c.] This is a sketch of the character of the Danites, as subtle and mischievous, like serpents, and adders; and of their success in these practices; which would probably appear to us with striking propriety, had we their history as a tribe: as indeed it might to their contemporaries.—Sampson was of this tribe, who unexpectedly buried the Philistines in the ruins of the temple of Dagon, as "the adder causes the horse to throw his rider."

V. 18. *I have waited for*, &c.] Jacob, as exhausted with speaking to his sons, here pauses, and speaks unto the Lord, by way of refreshing his spirits in the recollection of the near approach of that salvation, for which he had so long waited. Mr. Henry here observes, "That "the pious ejaculations of lively devotion may sometimes "appear incoherent, but ought never to be censured, as "impertinent."

V. 19. *Gad, a troop*, &c.] Gad signifies a troop; and the character, and situation of his tribe are both here described. The Gadites were renowned for valour: (See 1 *Chron.* c. 12. v. 8.) and having their inheritance beyond Jordan eastward, they lay open to incursions from troops of Ammonites, Moabites, Syrians, &c. by whom doubtless they were frequently annoyed: but they still maintained their ground, and under David and his posterity subjugated their enemies. It is an emblem of a Christian's conflict: he is overcome in many combats, but is more than conquerer in the final event of the war.

V. 20. *Out of Asher*, &c.] Asher signifies the blessed; and Jacob by the spirit of prophecy allots him a plentiful country, yielding abundance for themselves and others: even royal dainties, to supply the tables of princes at home and abroad.

V. 21. *Naphtali is a hind*, &c.] None of these concise prophecies are more obscure, or have given learned men more trouble, and afforded them less satisfaction, than this verse.—But without entering into these difficulties, we may take it as it stands in our translation, and consider it as a sketch of the character of this tribe: unlike the laborious ox, and ass; affecting ease and liberty; insinuating, and affectionate; active, but volatile; more noted for quick dispatch, than steady labour, and perseverance; and more disposed to exult in national blessings, than to fight in defence of them; like the hind which flees from, not like the lion, who faces, and overcomes his enemy; like the suppliant, who with goodly words craves mercy; not like the warrior, who disdains to ask, or even accept of quarter. Barak and many of his soldiers were of this tribe, and though they fought successfully at last, at first they were very timorous; and I recollect not any other warriors of this tribe.

V. 22. *Joseph is a fruitful bough*, &c.] Much of what Jacob says of his beloved Joseph is historical, and relates to his past life; yet much also is prophetical.—He is here called a fruitful bough, or young tree planted by

ful bough by a well; *whoſe* branches run over the wall.

23 The archers have ſorely grieved him, and ſhot *at him*, and hated him.

24 But his bow abode in ſtrength, and the arms of his hands were made ſtrong, by the hands of the mighty *God* of Jacob: from thence *is* the ſhepherd, the ſtone of Iſrael.

25 *Even* by the God of thy father, who ſhall help thee, and by the Almighty, who ſhall bleſs thee with bleſſings of heaven above, bleſſings of the deep that lieth under, bleſſings of the breaſts and of the womb.

26 The bleſſings of thy father have prevailed above the bleſſings of my progenitors, unto the utmoſt bound of the everlaſting hills; they ſhall be on the head of Joſeph, and on the crown of the head of him that was ſeparate from his brethren.

27 Benjamin ſhall ravin *as* a wolf: in the morning he ſhall devour the prey, and at night he ſhall divide the ſpoil.

28 All

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the water ſide: he had no more than two ſons, that we know of, but from them ſprung two tribes, which ſeem in time to have become very numerous; eſpecially Ephraim, which was ſo eminent in Iſrael, that the whole kingdom is frequently denominated from it.

The archers, &c.] This is retroſpective to Joſeph: his brethren hated, and perſecuted him: Potiphar's wife tempted, and then ſlandered him: Potiphar condemned and impriſoned him; and it is a ſingular caſe indeed, if ſome of the Egyptians did not hate, revile, and envy him; though we read not of it. Theſe things muſt needs ſorely grieve, though they did not eventually hurt him. It may likewiſe look forward to the terrible wars, which his deſcendants waged, eſpecially with the kingdom of Judah.

V. 24. *His bow abode*, &c.] His weapons in this warfare failed him not, as a broken or weakened bow: and his hands, and arms were ſtrengthened to uſe them, by the mighty power of God. That is, the providence of God outwardly protected, and proſpered him; and the Spirit of God endued him inwardly with ſuch ſtrength of faith, and grace, as produced invincible courage, reſolution, and perſeverance: thus he was enabled to ſtand his ground, and to repel every attack of his enemies: thus his life was preſerved, his reputation was cleared, his integrity remained unimpeached; and riſing ſuperior to all oppoſition, his brethren ſued to him, and became dependant on him, and all his enemies bowed before him, and ſought his favour.

From thence is the ſhepherd, &c.] From this divine aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, and through all theſe trials, and troubles, he at length became the ſhepherd of Iſrael, to ſuſtain his father and family, and to take care of them: and the ſtone of Iſrael, the foundation, and ſtrong ſupport of their intereſts.—In which as in many other things he was a remarkable type of the good ſhepherd, and tried corner ſtone of the whole church of God.—And indeed, though the kingdom, and the honour of being the progenitor of Chriſt were intended for Judah: yet Joſeph was the eſpecial type of the Saviour, amongſt Jacob's ſons; and all, which is here ſpoken of him may be, and ought to be conſidered as deſcriptive of the great Antitype. He too was greatly grieved, ſhot at, and hated; but his bow abode in ſtrength and by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, he fails not, nor is diſcouraged, until his enemies are put under his footſtool; and his brethren are brought to be with him where he is, to behold, and ſhare his glory.

V. 25. *Even by the God of thy father, who ſhall*, &c.] The God of thy father hath helped, and will continue his aſſiſtance to thee, and to thy poſterity.—Joſhua, who commanded, and was ſo ſignally victorious in the wars of Canaan, was of Joſeph's deſcendants.

Who ſhall bleſs thee, &c.] A temperate climate; a fruitful ſoil; the treaſures that are dug from the bowels of the earth; a numerous and healthful progeny; and extenſive and durable bleſſings of every kind, even like the mountains, which ſhall endure as long as the earth itſelf, are here entailed on Joſeph's poſterity which things are typical of the vaſt, and everlaſting bleſſings, which come upon the ſpiritual Seed of Chriſt.

V. 26. *The bleſſings*, &c.] Jacob bleſſed *all his ſons*, and more particularly, copiouſly, and clearly, than Abraham, and Iſaac had done: the promiſes alſo drew near their accompliſhment, and his ſeed were multiplying very faſt.

That was ſeparate from his brethren.] Not only ſeparated from them in Egypt; but, as it may be rendered, a Nazarite from among his brethren, more devoted unto God, and more excellent than they: and the expreſſion, on the *crown* of *the head*, may refer to the Nazarite's vow, which ſeems to have ſubſiſted before, and only to have been regulated by the law. (*Numbers* c. 6.)

In this alſo, he was a type of him, who was holy, ſeparate from ſinners, and called a Nazarene.

V. 27. *Benjamin ſhall ravin as a wolf.*] Accordingly the character of this tribe was fierceneſs, and cruelty; as eſpecially appears in the hiſtory of the Levite's concubine: (*Judges* c. 19. and 20.) when after the wickedneſs was committed, they ſingly withſtood all the other tribes, and had the advantage in two battles, nor ceaſed till they were almoſt entirely deſtroyed.

In the morning, &c.] Ehud the ſecond Judge, and Saul the firſt king were of this tribe: and in the former part of the hiſtory we read frequently of the Benjamites as a warlike people.

In the evening, &c.] In the latter times they joined themſelves to the tribe of Judah, and thus divided the ſpoil, and ſhared with them in their privileges.—Paul was of this tribe, who, as it were in the morning of his life, ravined as a wolf, and devoured the prey in perſecuting

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel: and this *is it* that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them.

29 And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers, in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite,

30 In the cave that *is* in the field of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place.

31 (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah)

32 The purchase of the field and of the cave that *is* therein, *was* from the children of Heth.

33 And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.

CHAP.

cuting the Christians: but in the evening of his life, as a preacher of the Gospel, dividing the spoils, shared the blessings with Judah's lion, and assisted in his victories.

V. 28. *Every one according to his blessing*, &c.] According to the blessing, which God intended in after times to bestow upon them. Though some of Jacob's sons are here put under a rebuke from God: yet none were excluded as Ishmael and Esau were, from the promised land, and the peculiar privileges of Abraham's seed; and when we compare their situation with the Gentile nations, we shall easily see that they were all indeed blessed with most invaluable blessings.

V. 29. *And he charged them*, &c.] As he had done Joseph before. One design of Jacob seems to have been to draw off their thoughts from, and weaken their attachment to Egypt, and to lead them to fix their hearts upon Canaan.

V. 31. *There I buried Leah.*] By burying Leah, and wishing to be buried himself, not where his beloved Rachel lay, but where Abraham and Isaac lay, he expressed his faith in the God of Abraham, &c. and his desire of having his portion with them beyond the grave.

V. 32. *He gathered*, &c.] Having been thus enabled to finish all, for which he wished to live, he died with the utmost serenity, and composure.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The assistance of the Holy Spirit can make men forget pain, raise them above the feeling of their exhausted frame, and enable them to speak on a death-bed with pleasure to themselves, and profit to others. But views into futurity, except as they look through into the future felicity of Heaven, would afford us little satisfaction. Had not Jacob looked forward to the coming of Shiloh, and waited for his salvation, he could but little have rejoiced in his prophetical benediction of his family, when the whole is considered: so vain is the best estate of earthly bliss!—Whatever therefore tends to draw off our affections from things below, and raise them to things above; whatever tends to cement our union with the people of God, and to disunite us from the world, must be good for us: such in general is the tendency of the admonitions, and even rebukes of pious parents, especially at the close of their life, and when mixed with prayers for their childrens' welfare.

Sins long since committed, if not washed away in the blood of Christ, will at last rise up against us to our condemnation: and even when repented of, and pardoned, may oft be remembered against us to our confusion: we may both in the correction of a merciful father, the rebukes of kind friends, and the upbraidings of unkind enemies, be made to bear the reproach, and to possess the iniquities of our youth, in our circumstances, constitutions, and reputations. We should therefore remember them for our humiliation, and that we may bear such rebukes with patience, and meekness: for if our violations of God's law do not exclude us from Heaven, we have great cause for thankfulness; and if we are truly penitent, our very sufferings shall be converted into blessings to ourselves, and others.

Those, who are of eminence in the profession of religion, should be peculiarly stedfast in protesting against the wickedness of other professors: and in wiping away every suspicion of conniving at their sins; though it should leave infamy upon their nearest relations: *they* had better bear the reproach, than that it should rest upon the Gospel.

Revenge, or sensual pleasure may be sweet at the time, but they will leave a lasting sting behind them. Such men, as are unstable in their ways, will never be eminent, either in the world, or in the church: and they, who are self-willed, will make themselves and others miserable. But though some are to be blamed, we must not condemn families, or people indiscriminately; nor magnify every offence into a crime of deep malignity: notwithstanding defects, some merit our commendation; and though men are not all of the same disposition, nor alike prosperous, God dispensing to them variously, as he pleases: yet he blesses all with many unmerited mercies, and especially those, who live under the ordinances of God, and enjoy the means of grace.—But chiefly praise is due to him, who sprang out of Judah, in whom the most opposite excellencies harmonize.—As the lion of the tribe of Judah, he will terribly avenge upon his enemies his slighted love: as the Lamb of God, by his sacrifice he taketh away the sin of the world. His sceptre of grace he stretches forth from the mercy seat, and invites us perishing sinners to draw near, and accept of his Salvation, that we may not feel the stroke of his iron rod: and if his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, blessed are all they, who trust in him. Assuredly this Messenger of Peace is

come

CHAP. L.

Contains, 1ſt. The mourning for and embalming of Jacob, v. 1—3. 2d. Joſeph's requeſt and Pharaoh's conſent for him to go, and bury his father, v. 4—6. 3d. The burial of Jacob in Machpelah, v. 7—13. 4th. The ſuſpicious fears of the ſons of Jacob, and Joſeph's kindneſs to them, v. 14—22. 5th. Joſeph's prophecy, charge concerning his bones; his age, and death, v. 24—26.

AND Joſeph fell upon his father's face, and wept upon him, and kiſſed him.

2 And Joſeph commanded his ſervants the phyſicians to embalm his father: and the phyſicians embalmed Iſrael.

3 And forty days were fulfilled for him (for ſo are fulfilled the days of thoſe which are embalmed) and the Egyptians mourned for him threeſcore and ten days.

4 And when the days of his mourning were paſt, Joſeph ſpake unto the houſe of Pharaoh, ſaying, if now I have found grace in your eyes, ſpeak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, ſaying.

5 My father made me ſwear, ſaying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me, in the land of Canaan, there ſhalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again.

6 And Pharaoh ſaid, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee ſwear.

7 And Joſeph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the ſervants of Pharaoh, the elders of his houſe, and all the elders of the land of Egypt.

8 And all the houſe of Joſeph, and his brethren, and his father's houſe: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goſhen.

9 And there went up with him both chariots and horſemen: and it was a very great company.

10. And they came to the threſhing-floor of Atad, which *is* beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very ſore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father ſeven days.

11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites ſaw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they ſaid, This *is* a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abel-mizraim, which *is* beyond Jordan.

12 And

come, and unbelieving Jews without ſceptre or governor are his unwilling witneſſes.—But may they, and the fulneſs of the Gentiles be gathered unto him, and with us enjoy bleſſings incomparably better, than the richeſt fruit of the vine, and the cornfield, and all royal dainties: than treaſures dug from mines, gained by commerce, or ſeized by conqueſt: bleſſings more firmly ſecured, than the foundations of the hills, and more durable than creation itſelf; even everlaſting felicity. With the earneſts of this happineſs comforting our hearts, his yoke will be eaſy, and his burden light; nor will the hardeſt ſervice, or the heavieſt tribute, which he impoſes, prevent our finding reſt for our ſouls: his grace will be ſufficient for us; ſo that we ſhall conquer our moſt powerful, and ſupplant our moſt ſubtle foes; we may indeed be grieved with, and ſhall be ſhot at by the arrows of temptation, and ſlander; but no weapon formed againſt us ſhall proſper, and every tongue that ariſeth againſt us in judgment, we ſhall condemn; becauſe Jacob's God will be on our ſide.—Under the care of the Shepherd of Iſrael we ſhall lack nothing for body or ſoul: built upon the rock of ſalvation, we ſhall abide immoveable; until our work be finiſhed: then breathing out our ſouls into his hands, for whoſe ſalvation we have waited, we ſhall depart in peace, and leave a bleſſing on our children after us.

NOTES.

CHAP. L.] V. 2. *The phyſicians embalmed him*, &c.] The Egyptians were eminent for this art of preſerving dead bodies from putrefaction, by a certain proceſs in the uſe of ſpices, and drugs, &c. Some of theſe bodies remain to this day, and are called Egyptian Mummies, being preſerved as great curioſities; and ſome of them have probably continued in this ſtate much above 2000 years. This cuſtom, not being ſinful, was on this occaſion attended to; and might have ſome expediency, as Jacob was to be carried into Canaan.

V. 4. *Joſeph ſpake*, &c.] Perhaps it was not allowed to come into the preſence of the King in mourning; (See *Eſther*, c. 4. v. 2.) or Joſeph would thus make his requeſt with all the modeſty, and decorum poſſible; and ſending his meſſage by others would at once ſhew his reſpect to Pharaoh, and to them.

V. 5. *My father made me ſwear*, &c.] He would not appear weary of his cloſe application to buſineſs, or negligent of the intereſts of Egypt, and of Pharaoh, in thus craving leave of abſence: therefore he is careful to repreſent the matter, not as any inclination of his own: but as the dying requeſt of his father, who was ſo earneſt in it, as to bring him under the ſolemn obligation of an oath.

V. 10. *Beyond Jordan*] Moſes wrote, or reviſed his hiſtory

12 And his ſons did unto him according as he commanded them.

13 For his ſons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah; which Abraham bought with the field for a poſſeſſion of a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre.

14 And Joſeph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.

15 And when Joſeph's brethren ſaw that their father was dead, they ſaid, Joſeph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

16 And they ſent meſſengers unto Joſeph, ſaying, Thy father did command before he died, ſaying,

17 So ſhall ye ſay unto Joſeph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the treſpaſs of thy brethren, and their ſin; for they did unto thee evil: and now we pray thee forgive the treſpaſs of the ſervants of the God of thy father. And Joſeph wept when they ſpake unto him.

18 And his brethren alſo wept and fell down before his face: and they ſaid, Behold, we *be* thy ſervants.

19 And Joſeph ſaid unto them, Fear not: for *am* I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil againſt me; *but* God meant it unto good, to bring to paſs, as *it is* this day, to ſave much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nouriſh you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and ſpake kindly unto them.

22 And Joſeph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's houſe: and Joſeph lived an hundred and ten years.

23 And Joſeph ſaw Ephraim's children, of the third *generations:* the children alſo of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, were brought up upon Joſeph's knees.

24 And Joſeph ſaid unto his brethren, I die: and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he ſware to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob.

25 And

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hiſtory on the eaſt-ſide of Jordan; therefore in his five books *beyond Jordan* means *weſt-ward*: elſewhere it generally means *eaſt-ward*.

Seven Days.] During which time they performed ſolemn funeral obſequies.

V. 12. *Egyptians*, &c.] Thus the Inhabitants of Canaan naturally called *them all*, as coming out of Egypt; though ſome of them muſt know to whom this ſepulchre belonged.

V. 14. *Returned into Egypt.*] Various motives might induce the ſons of Jacob to continue in Egypt, notwithſtanding the prophetic viſion, which Abraham had of their bondage there. Some might diſregard it, if it was known to and remembered by them; others might ſubmit to it, and not deem themſelves allowed to move without command from God; whilſt fear, intereſt, eaſe, and the plenty, which they enjoyed would concur in detaining them, and effecting the purpoſe of God.

V. 15. *Joſeph will hate*, &c.] They ſuppoſed that tenderneſs to Jacob had hitherto reſtrained him from executing the puniſhment, which they were conſcious, that they merited: and judging of him from the general temper of human nature, they apprehended, that he would now avenge himſelf on them, who had hated and injured him without cauſe. Therefore not being able either to reſiſt, or to flee away, they attempt to ſoften him by humiliations.

V. 16—18. *Thy Father did command*, &c.] They ſay not, "our father," but more pathetically, "thy father." Probably Jacob had given them ſome injunction to this purpoſe; which they firſt report as introductory to their own ſupplication; and then plead with him for pardon in the character of the ſervants of Jacob's God: this ſhews with what care and prudence they had concerted this buſineſs: and we need not wonder that Joſeph was much affected at witneſſing this complete accompliſhment of his dreams.

V. 19. *Am I in the place of God?*] To God it belongs to execute vengeance, and Joſeph means not to uſurp his prerogative. Thus he directs them not to fear him, but God; and to humble themſelves before him, and ſeek his forgiveneſs.

V. 20. *Ye thought evil, but*, &c.] Joſeph's brethren in ſelling him acted with extreme malice, and wickedneſs, and meant that he ſhould live, and die a deſtitute ſlave: but God in permitting it meant *good* to Joſeph, to Jacob, to his brethren, to their families, to Egypt, to Canaan, and to the neighbouring nations; nor can we ever number up all the important purpoſes anſwered by it to the Church, and to the World; or calculate how many important events depended on it, through all ſucceeding generations. The ſame is obſervable in many other inſtances in Scripture; nor can we poſſibly account for the diſpenſations of providence without admitting, that God leaves evil men, and evil ſpirits to themſelves to commit wickedneſs, as far, and no further, than he intends to educe good from it. They ſeeking the gratification of their own vile affections, and looking no further are juſtly condemned: He, in omniſcience and infinite wiſdom,

25 And Joſeph took an oath of the children of Iſrael, ſaying, God will ſurely viſit you, and ye ſhall carry up my bones from hence.

26 So Joſeph died, *being* an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

purpoſing good, moſt extenſive and durable, is worthy of all adoration, and praiſe on that account.

V. 22. *An hundred and ten years.*] Joſeph ſurvived Jacob 53, or 54 Years, and probably continued in authority to the laſt.

V. 23. *Upon Joſeph's knees.*] Expreſſing his affection for them, and pleaſure in them.

V. 25. *Carry up my bones*, &c.] This he did in faith, (See *Heb.* c. 11. v. 22.) He fully expected that the promiſe of God would be verified; and deſired to have his lot beyond the grave with the Iſraelites, and not with the Egyptians.

V. 26. *In a coffin in Egypt.*] This would keep alive their expectation of a ſpeedy departure from Egypt, and keep Canaan continually in their mind. This would alſo attach Joſeph's poſterity to their brethren and tend to prevent them from incorporating with the Egyptians.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though our pious friends have lived to a good old age, and we are confident are gone to glory; yet we may well regret our own loſs, and pay reſpect to their memory by lamenting for them: nor does grace deſtroy, but purify, moderate, and regulate natural affection. Others beſides relatives have cauſe to mourn the death of eminent believers; for as their prayers, example and influence were a public benefit; ſo their death is a public loſs. But alas! generally ſuch mournings, are a mere compliment; and men are ſcarce in earneſt about any thing but the purſuits of ambition, wealth or pleaſure. The attention paid to the dead, though commonly the effect of cuſtom, or ſuperſtition, ſhould reſult from faith in the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and the reſurrection of the body. Our deceaſed friends ſtill live, and we ſhall meet again: though ſeparated from the body, a re-union ſhall certainly take place. Therefore we commit the body, with decent reſpect, unto the ground, in *ſure*, and certain hope of *the* reſurrection to eternal life of all true believers: and whatever our hopes, or fears are, God is the only infallible judge, who are, and who are not true believers. We ought ſcrupulouſly to obſerve the laſt will, and dying requeſts of our deceaſed friends; but much more conſcientiouſly to reverence the oath of God. However in the moſt exact attention to ſuch neceſſary affairs, we ſhould conſult in what manner ſo to do them, as to give as little umbrage, and to interfere with other duties, as little as poſſible.—There are many devices in the heart of man, but the counſel of the lord ſhall ſtand: and whilſt men oft are influenced by the worſt of motives; God is, by means of them, effecting his own moſt righteous purpoſes. How guilt diſmays the heart in times of danger! it would be well, indeed, if it put us upon as diligent and humble endeavours to obtain forgiveneſs from God; as it oft does to appeaſe the diſpleaſure of man, and to avert temporal calamities. True religion will teach us, not only to forgive thoſe, who are conſcious of having injured us, and whom we have in our power; but effectually by kind actions, as well as words, to obviate their ſuſpicions, aſſure them of our forgiveneſs, and exhort them to ſeek pardon from him to whom vengeance belongs. But the kindeſt friends, and the moſt durable of our earthly comforts muſt die: let us then look off even from Joſeph that we may look unto Jeſus, who ever liveth to bleſs thoſe, who truſt in him: notwithſtanding our former crimes, and preſent unbelieving injurious ſuſpicions, he acknowledges every humbled ſinner, who ſupplicates his mercy, as his brother; as ſuch he will comfort his heart, provide for his wants, and receive him to glory. To him let us ſeek, on him rely, and to him ſubmit: and when we come to die, give him charge of both ſoul and body: and we ſhall find him faithful and able to keep that, which is committed to him, until the judgment day.

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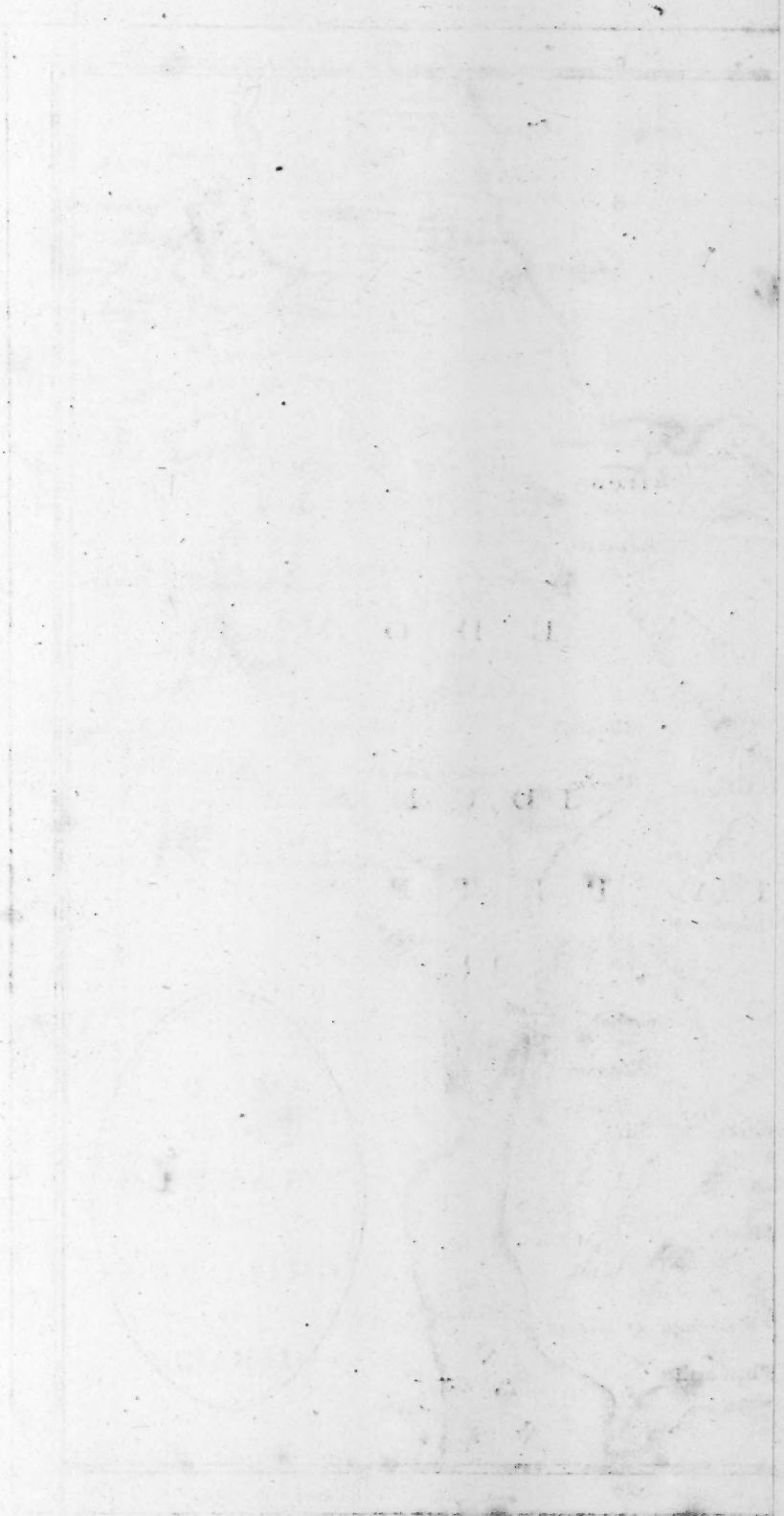

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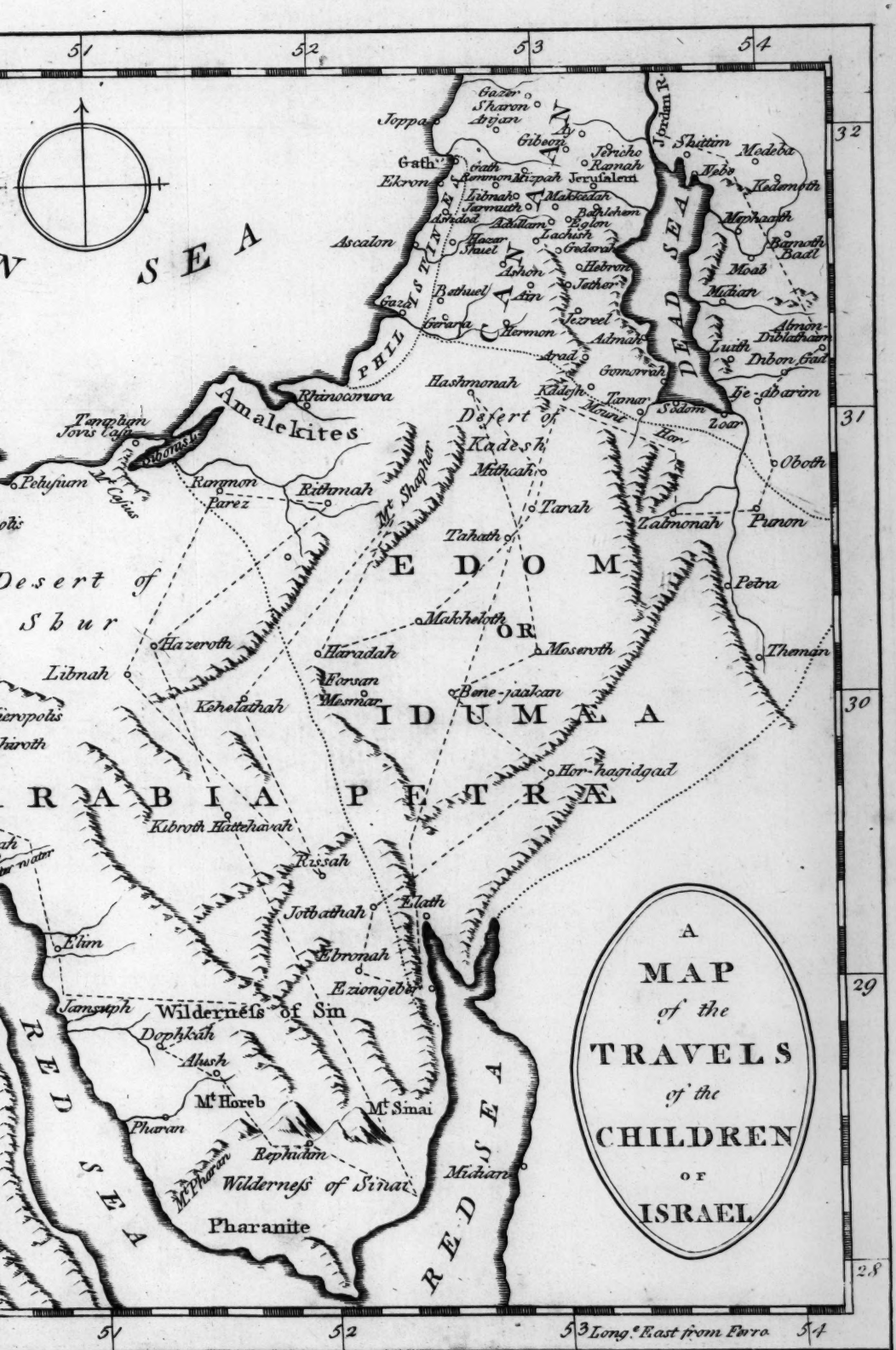

...cts by Bellamy & Roberts, March 24, 1792.

THE SECOND BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

E X O D U S.

As the Book of Geneſis contained the Hiſtory of the Creation of the World; ſo this Book of Exodus relates to the formation of Iſrael into a Church and Nation: And as we have hitherto ſeen true Religion exemplified in domeſtic Life; So now we begin to trace it's effects upon the great concerns of Kingdoms and Nations.

The Greek Tranſlators call the Book EXODUS, *which ſignifies, the* Departure: *Becauſe the grand event therein recorded is the departure of Iſrael from Egypt, and Egyptian bondage; which took place about* 145 *years after the death of Joſeph.*

Much of the book is hiſtorical, concerning Iſrael, and the Egyptians in general; and Moſes himſelf in particular: But it contains alſo the delivery of the Moral Law from Mount Sinai; And the inſtitution of part of the Ceremonial Law; The covenant made with Iſrael, and the worſhip of God inſtituted amongſt them: And eſpecially is remarkable for being more replete with Types, and Shadows of good things to come, than any other Book in the Scripture.

Before Chriſt 1635.] [*Before Chriſt* 1635.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. The names of the ſons of Jacob, with the death of all that generation, and the vaſt increaſe of their poſterity, v. 1—7. *2d. The politic, but vain attempts of the king of Egypt to check this increaſe of them. v.* 8—14. *3d. His cruel orders to the midwives, their pious diſobedience, and God's acceptance of it; together with Pharaoh's injunctions to his own ſubjects to deſtroy the male infants, v.* 15—22.

NOW theſe *are* the names of the children of Iſrael, which came into Egypt, every man and his houſhold came with Jacob.

2 Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.

3 Iſſachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin,

4 Dan, and Napthali, Gad, and Aſher.

5 And all the ſouls that came out of the loins of Jacob, were ſeventy ſouls; for Joſeph was in Egypt *already*.

6 And Joſeph died, and all his brethren, and all that generation.

7 And the children of Iſrael were fruitful, and increaſed abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them.

8 Now there aroſe up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joſeph.

9 And he ſaid unto his people, Behold, the

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Were fruitful, and increaſed exceedingly.* Theſe expreſſions are taken from the immenſely rapid increaſe of inſects, and of the inhabitants of the waters. It is computed that the numbers of the Iſraelites were doubled every fourteen years, from their going down into Egypt until the Exodus.

Waxed exceedingly mighty.] Their numbers became ſo great that they were very formidable to the Egyptians.

V. 8. *Which knew not*, &c.] This muſt have been many years after Joſeph's death, perhaps not leſs than 60;

the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we.

10 Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the land.

11 Therefore they did set over them task-masters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses,

12 But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were grieved because of the children of Israel.

13 And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour.

14 And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve, *was* with rigour.

15 And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives (of which the name of one *was* Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah:)

16 And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him, but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live.

17 But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men-children alive.

18 And the king of Egypt called for the midwives, and said unto them, Why have ye done

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60; and whether he were of another family, or a descendant of him, who was Joseph's friend; having no personal knowledge of him, he had no regard to his memory, esteem for his excellency, or sense of the benefits Egypt had received from him: and therefore, he preferred his supposed political interests, to the claims of honour, and gratitude, after the too general maxims of kings, and rulers.

V. 9. *More, and mightier than we.*] Pharaoh takes occasion, from the increase of the Israelites being proportionably greater, than that of the Egyptians, to excite suspicions of them, with which to cover his intentions of enslaving them.—As if he had said, if we would deal with them, "we must begin directly, or they will be "too powerful." For when he afterwards says, "so "get them up out of the land," he discovers that he fears nothing but the loss of an opportunity of subjugating them, and of enriching himself by their labours.—We have some intimations that, about this time, the Israelites began to comply with the idolatry of the Egyptians; (See *Joshua* c. 24. v. 14. *Ezek.* c. 20. v. 7—8. c. 23. v. 8.) for which they were thus chastised by them.

V. 11. *Task-masters, to afflict them.*] Labours seem to have been exacted of them, as a tax, but in that degree which reduced them to a state of slavery: and these task-masters were Egyptians, by public authority placed over them, to enforce these iniquitous exactions. By this policy the Egyptians intended, not only to enrich themselves, but to break their spirits, that they might not affect liberty, or aspire after dominion; and also to prevent their *too rapid increase*, by embittering their domestic life.

Treasure cities.] These were either intended, after the pattern, which Joseph had set them, for granaries to lay up corn in store against a year of scarcity; or they were fortified cities.—However as they were useful works, and as Israel's toil saved both the labour, and the purses of the Egyptians; we may be sure they would favour the oppression.

V. 12. *And they were grieved*, &c.] It exceedingly chagrined them to find their schemes prove abortive, and excited alarms in their minds, lest in process of time they should resent, and revenge the inhuman treatment, which they had received. Thus Egypt's persecution could not prevent Israel's increase; but Israel's increase could disturb Egypt's comfort: such is the warfare betwixt the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent.

V. 13. *In the field.*] In cultivating their land.

With rigour, &c.] Both in the excess of their labours, and the severity of their punishments. It is generally supposed, that, besides the useful labours here mentioned, the Israelites were employed in making bricks for, and building those enormous, useless piles, called the pyramids; which continue to this day, and probably will continue to the end of the world; monuments, not of the greatness, and wisdom, but of the folly, caprice, and cruel tyranny of the monarchs, who projected them. Yet could the Egyptians give as good reasons for thus cruelly oppressing the Israelites, as any at this day can urge in favour of the *slave trade:* the sum of which arguments is as follows: "Without this oppression we cannot amass such large "estates, nor gratify our sensual appetites with such re"fined excess."

V. 15. *Hebrew midwives.*] It seems most natural to suppose these midwives, who thus feared God, to have been Hebrew women, and not Egyptians appointed to this office, as some have conjectured. Pharaoh might naturally suppose that he could awe or bribe them into compliance, though in so inhuman, and treacherous a conduct to their own nation: for princes are not often refused in such cases. We may consider these two as the chief of the midwives, whose conduct would influence that of the others; for there must have been many.

V. 16. *If it be a daughter*, &c.] They would not fear female slaves, however numerous, but account them their riches.

done this thing, and have saved the men-children alive?

19 And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, because the Hebrew women *are* not as the Egyptian women: for they *are* lively, and are delivered ere the midwives come in unto them.

20 Therefore God dealt well with the midwives: and the people multiplied and waxed very mighty.

21 And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that he made them houses.

22 And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.

V. 19. *Are lively*, &c.] Through the peculiar blessing of God, we may suppose, that this was generally the case; yet not so but that the midwives might have had many opportunities of murdering the infants, had they been so disposed. Provided we do not at any time speak falsehood, the strictest veracity does not at all times require us to speak all we know, though our silence lead men into error; provided that such error be no injury to them, or to others; much more allowable is such silence, when it prevents the commission of sin.—And furthermore, when people act uprightly in the fear of God, though there be infirmity mixed with it, the Lord will graciously *pardon* the infirmity, and recompence the good intention.

V. 21. *Made them houses*, &c.] God rewarded their concurrence in the increase, and prosperity of Israel, by the increase, and prosperity of their own families.

V. 22. *Pharaoh charged*, &c.] Probably he proposed considerable rewards for such a service: thus the land would be filled with mercenary informers, and murderers; and numbers of infants would doubtless be slain in the arms, and before the eyes of their distressed, and almost distracted mothers: and had not he, who says to the swelling ocean, "Hitherto shalt thou go and no further," undertaken for the increase of Israel, they must now have been desolated.—Pharaoh at this time, as Herod long after, proved his relation to that great dragon, who sought to destroy the man-child, as soon as it was born. (See *Rev.* c. 12. v. 4.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The very names of these two first books remind us, that the history of man is little more, than a narrative of his beginning, and of his departure. Thus one generation is swept away after another, and nothing remains except the names of a very few, and some of them covered with infamy. Happy they, whose names are written in the Book of Life, and enrolled there as true Israelites, and heirs of heaven! How soon may the sun of prosperity be darkened by the deepest cloud of adversity! and the place of our refuge become the scene of our misery! our best friends succeeded by enemies, and our best services repaid with ingratitude! We should therefore trust the Lord alone; for as nothing can hasten the accomplishment of his purpose before the appointed time; so nothing can retard it, when that season arrives.—For the space of above 200 years, whilst Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their families had lived at liberty, in peace, and in considerable prosperity and affluence, they were only increased to 70 persons: but now in about the same number of years under much oppression, and cruel bondage, they multiply into a large nation: nor was their chief increase, till after the death of Joseph, their chief friend; for God will secure to himself the glory of fulfilling his own promises. Thus was the Christian church more especially increased after the death of Jesus; and thus hath vital religion, in all ages, most prospered under the pressure of severe persecutions. By this the Lord covers his enemies with confusion, as with a cloak; and teaches his people, not to fear them, who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. It is an old practice of the accuser of the brethren, and his instruments, to vindicate their cruel treatment of God's people, by aspersing their characters, pretending to suspect them of bad designs, or averring that their increase would be dangerous to the state: They therefore should endeavour, by well-doing, and patient suffering to confute such calumnies, and prove themselves quiet, and useful members of society. But though we may suffer unjustly from man, yet God is *just* in all that he inflicts upon us by their instrumentality: and it is a singular favour to be kept from sinful compliances with, or conformity to the world, though by sharp corrections.

That which politicians call acting wisely, the word of God oft denominates deceit, injustice, cruelty, yea folly; for such wisdom is earthly, sensual, devilish, and such wise persons are eventually taken in their own craftiness.

There is no degree of treachery and inhumanity, to which, the spirit of persecution will not prompt; and they who are actuated by it, will seldom fail of finding instruments, as destitute of honour, and conscience, as themselves.—But if they meet with those, who truly *fear God*, neither their bribes, nor their terrors will prevail upon them to sin against him: and God will plead their cause, and recompense their conscientious disobedience to the unlawful commands of men.—But as we see in this history, the church of God groaning under persecution: so we may, by viewing the object in another light, see the miserable condition of Satan's wretched bond-slaves; who are so enslaved to their lusts, that they never can deliver themselves, however miserable, or affrighted, until he send them redemption, by his word, and powerful grace; nor should we here forget, that this enemy, who by Pharaoh aimed to destroy the church in its very infancy, is equally busy to stifle the first risings of serious reflections in the heart of man; and thence to take away the seed of the word, lest we should believe, and be saved: lest these feeble beginnings should increase, and we grow strong enough to renounce his service.—Let them therefore, who would escape, take earnest heed to the things, which they hear, be afraid of sinning against the testimony of their consciences, and cry directly, and fervently to the Lord for deliverance.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt, the birth of Moſes, the perils of his infancy, and his preſervation by Phraoh's daughter, v. 1—6. *2d. His mother employed to nurſe him, and his education in Pharaoh's court, v.* 7—10. *3d. His viſiting his brethren, ſlaying the Egyptian, and flight upon the diſcovery, v.* 11—15. *4th. His being entertained and employed by the prieſt of Midian, his marriage & offspring, v.* 16—22. *5th. The death of Pharaoh, the continuance of Iſrael's bondage, and God's of their groans and cries, &c. v.* 20—25.

AND there went a man of the houſe of Levi, and took *to wife* a daughter of Levi.

2 And the woman conceived, and bare a ſon: and when ſhe ſaw him that he *was a* goodly *child*, ſhe hid him three months.

3 And when ſhe could not longer hide him, ſhe took for him an ark of bulruſhes, and daubed it with ſlime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and ſhe laid *it* in the flags by the river's brink.

4 And his ſiſter ſtood afar off, to wit what would be done to him.

5 And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to waſh herſelf at the river, and her maidens walked along by the river's ſide: and when ſhe ſaw the ark among the flags, ſhe ſent her maid to fetch it.

6 And when ſhe had opened *it*, ſhe ſaw the child: and behold the babe wept. And ſhe had compaſſion on him, and ſaid, This *is one* of the Hebrew's children.

7 Then ſaid his ſiſter to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go, and call to thee a nurſe of the Hebrew women, that ſhe may nurſe the child for thee?

8 And Pharaoh's daughter ſaid unto her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother.

9 And Pharaoh's daughter ſaid unto her, Take this child away and nurſe it for me, and I will give *thee* thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nurſed it.

10 And the child grew, and ſhe brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her ſon. And ſhe called his name Moſes: and ſhe ſaid, Becauſe I drew him out of the water.

11 And

NOTES.

CHAP. II. v. 1. *Bare a ſon*, &c.] Miriam Moſes' ſiſter, muſt have been about ten years older than he, as appears by the hiſtory of this chapter. Aaron was three years older than Moſes. It does not appear that Amran, and Jochebed, (See c. 66. v. 20.) had any difficulty in preſerving the life of Aaron; whence we may infer, that the laſt bloody edict was not then enacted: now Aaron was born 83 years before the Exodus, and Joſeph died about 145 years before that event: therefore the edict could not be paſſed leſs than 62 years after the death of Joſeph. But how long that prince, who knew not Joſeph, had reigned before that edict was made, is not known.

A goodly child.] The notice taken of this circumſtance in ſeveral places, (See *Acts*, c. 7. v. 26. *Heb.* c. 11. v. 23.) indicates that his appearance had ſomewhat in it very extraordinary, and was conſidered as an intimation of his future greatneſs.

She hid him three months, &c.] This was done in faith, as we are told by the apoſtle; either ſhe had ſome peculiar aſſurance given of his preſervation, which ſhe believed; or in general believing the promiſes of deliverance to Iſrael, was encouraged to conceal her infant in dependance upon God, though perhaps at the hazard of her own life.

V. 3. *She could no longer hide him.*] Having probably ſome intimation that he was diſcovered, and expecting that the executioners would come and murder him in her houſe and before her eyes.

She took for him an ark, &c.] A ſmall baſket: this ſhe did alſo in faith; not yet deſpairing of his preſervation, but expecting ſome providential interpoſition in his behalf; under the ſecret guidance of the Lord ſhe uſed this unlikely expedient, as all ſhe could do.

She put it in the flags, &c.] In this ſituation the infant muſt ſoon have periſhed by the cold, or by the water, or by the crocodiles, with which that river abounds, had not relief been ſpeedily afforded.

V. 4. *His ſiſter*, &c.] Doubtleſs by her mother's orders, to watch what would become of the child; perhaps intending to take him home again in the evening, if nothing intervened; and to have carried him out again in the morning, that if ſought for he might not be found.

V. 5. *And the daughter of Pharaoh*, &c.] Had any others found the child, they would not have dared to have preſerved its life, had they been ſo diſpoſed: but God ſecretly influenced the king's daughter to walk that way at that criſis, And his providence is to be noticed in ſuch apparently minute events, on which the moſt important conſequences depend; for even the very hairs of our heads are all numbered.

V. 8. *Said to her, Go.*] Here again we muſt notice the ſecret interpoſition of God; his humanity induced her to bring up the infant, it might have been expected, that ſhe would have employed an Egyptian woman to nurſe it;

THE REVD Mr SCOTT's BIBLE.

EXODUS CH. II. VE. VI.

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MUSEUM

11 And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and looked on their burdens: and he spied an Egyptian smiting an Hebrew, one of his brethren.

12 And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that *there was* no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.

13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two men of the Hebrews strove together: and he said to him that did the wrong, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

14 And he said; Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian? And Moses feared, and said, Surely this thing is known.

15 Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well.

16 Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew *water*, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

17 And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

18 And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How *is it that* you are come so soon to day?

19 And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew *water* enough for us, and watered the flock.

20 And

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it: but he, in whose hand is every human heart, ordered it otherwise.

V. 10. *He became her son*, &c.] He was adopted, educated, and provided for as her son. Tradition reports that she was Pharaoh's only daughter, and had no child of her own, and that Moses was looked upon as presumptive heir to the crown. However we know from better authority, that he was learned in "all the wisdom "of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in "deeds." He was certainly much trusted and employed, and there acquired those accomplishments, which were afterwards requisite for him, in the important stations, which he was to fill up, in standing before Pharaoh, and in governing Israel.

V. 11. *Was grown.*] Was forty years of age. During this space we have reason to think that he lived as an Egyptian, and such a life, as men generally do in those high stations, without much regarding his oppressed brethren.

He went out to his brethren, &c.] It is plain from Hebrews the eleventh, that this was done in faith, and with deliberate purpose of renouncing the honours, wealth, and pleasures of his rank amongst the Egyptians, to cast his lot among Abraham's seed, and to participate in their privileges, especially their relation to the promised Saviour; for the sake of which he was willing to share in the reproach, and affliction, which they endured as the people of God. We may suppose that his mother had informed him of his real descent, and that he would naturally feel some feeble attachment to his people. But *these effects* proceeded from a more powerful cause: by the grace of God he was partaker of that faith, which overcomes the world; and supremely valuing the blessings of the new covenant, through the Redeemer, he was willing not only to risque, but to renounce and suffer all for his sake: assured that Israel was the people of God, and that the promises made to them would surely be accomplished. Evidently he also had some sure intimations that he was to deliver Israel; and went out to seek an opportunity of so doing: perhaps he intended openly to join their interests, and expected that they would welcome him amongst them, and concur with him in suitable measures.

V. 12. *He slew the Egyptian.*] Moses considered himself as acting under a divine commission, and as acting in defence of the oppressed, and executing just punishment on the oppressor; and he expected that the Israelites would have understood the same: but their spirits were sunk, their dispositions were servile, and faith, and hope almost extinguished amongst them.

V. 14. *Moses feared.*] Having irritated the Egyptians against him, not only by this action, but by joining the interests, and espousing the cause of Israel, and exciting them to revolt: and finding that the Hebrews were not disposed to concur with him, he deemed his only security to lie in flight. Perhaps he was too hasty both in the attempt, and in the flight: however if now he feared, he afterwards did not fear the wrath of the king. Thus their deliverance was delayed forty years; because they rejected their deliverer: in the mean time Egypt filled up, and Canaan was filling up the measure of their iniquities; and the Israelites were still increasing; and Moses was learning to endure hardship, to exercise faith, patience, and meekness, and to walk with God in the lowly, and retired life of a shepherd.

V. 16. *Priest of Midian.*] Or prince, probably he was both priest and prince of some small district upon the eastern shore of the red Sea; and still retained amongst his people some knowledge of the true God, and regard to his worship.

V. 17. *The shepherds*, &c.] Perhaps these were the servants of some other neighbouring person, who was rich in flocks, and herds. The scarcity of water produced these con-

20 And he said unto his daughters, And where *is* he? Why *is* it *that* ye have left the man? Call him that he may eat bread.

21 And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter.

22 And she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land.

23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried; and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage.

24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto *them*.

CHAP.

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contentions.

V. 21. *Moses was content*, &c.] A rare example of one brought up, as he had been, submitting chearfully to so laborious a business, and to be a servant also in that employment: yet without doubt these forty years were the happiest of Moses' life.

V. 22. *Gershom*.] That is a stranger.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should take occasion from reading of the cruel scenes, which these Hebrew parents witnessed; and the bitter anxieties, which they felt, to be thankful that we can bring up our children, with security and comfort: still however our offspring are exposed to so many perils, that the tender heart of a reflecting parent must oft heave with anxious sighs about them; except as we are enabled by the prayer of faith to commit them to the care of the Almighty; and use all means for their welfare, temporal, and spiritual, in dependanc eupon his providence and grace. Then indeed, we shall be prepared for every event: if the Lord has any service for them to perform for him, he will preserve their lives, though in the midst of dangers; and sure every christian parent would rather resign the dearest infant to death, than wish it to live wicked, mischievous, and miserable. And methinks the Lord says to the believer, when presenting his infant offspring to him in baptism, or pouring out his prayers in its behalf, take home this child, and bring it up for me, and I will pay thee thy wages: in obedience to his command, and in expectation of his blessing, let us bring up our children in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord, and chearfully leave the event with him. Even amongst the blood-thirsty Egyptians we meet with a beautiful example of humanity, which will rise up in judgment against, and condemn the conduct of many, who live under the light of revelation, and are called christians: but who are so far from compassionating the children of others, that they are indolently, and negligently cruel to their own offspring.—They, who carefully watch the movements of God's providence, will experience many signal interpositions in their favour; which will excite their admiration and gratitude, strengthen their faith, and encourage their hope for the future; and thus well recompense their attention: they shall find their wants supplied, perhaps even from their very enemies: their sharpest trials end most comfortably; and that God takes care in his providence to qualify them and their's for whatever service, or situations he intends them. Very often God furnishes the minds of those, whom he means to employ, with such acquisitions of knowledge, whilst they are ignorant of, and careless about religion, as they will have much use for afterwards, but would not have attended to, had they previously minded the one thing needful. But what a powerful principle is the faith, which the word of God insists upon! How it overcomes the love of the World, and the fear of the cross, even when they press against it with their utmost force! The favour of God, an interest in Christ, and an inheritance amongst his people, are the pre-eminent objects of every believer's desire: and this desire joined to the love of Christ, and attachment to his cause, prepares them for making every required sacrifice: and that is not true faith, which refuses to do so. But they, who boldly enter upon services for God, must not only expect fierce opposition from enemies, but great discouragement from the lukewarmness, contempt, cowardice, and ingratitude of the professed servants of God. And whilst the contentions amongst brethren, disgrace and weaken the common cause of religion; he that would set them at one again, however gently, must expect to be reproached as taking too much upon him; perhaps by both parties, but assuredly by that party, that is most in the wrong, which is always most impatient of controul. Yet these disappointments help to correct the forwardness, and self-sufficiency of hasty zeal, and to prepare, men for their work in its due season. But our impatience is apt to interpret delays, as denials, and to yield to discouragement, when we should only be humbled; and from rash impetuosity to sink into unbelieving negligence. And perhaps it requires stronger faith to be contented in obscurity, and neglect; chearfully to labour without any prospect of applause; and patiently to prepare and wait for future opportunities of service, without despondency: than to face danger, out-brave reproach, and suffer persecution in some eminent sphere of usefulness. But the providence of God will find a refuge, and raise up friends for his people; and communion with him, will sweeten every solitude, and trial: and it is our wisdom to inure ourselves to self-denial, that we may be fit for whatever is before us. To assist the weak and vindicate the oppressed, to shew kindness, and use hospitality, and requite, those who have been serviceable to us, are always becoming: nor is modest diligence in any business, a disgrace to the daughters either of a prince, or a priest. When assistance appears to us most

distant

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. Moses humbly employed as a shepherd, v. 1. 2d. The Lord appearing to him in a flame of fire in a Bush, v. 2—6. 3d. God's compassion for Israel, and his appointment of Moses to deliver them, with the instructions, and assurances of success, which he gives him, v. 7—22.

NOW Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the back-side of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb.

2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed.

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I.

5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest *is* holy ground.

6 Moreover he said, *I am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And

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distant, and deliverance most probable, matters are frequently fast ripening for them: to God all things are easy and his whole plan lies before him. He remembers his holy covenant, and for the purposes of his own glory, he will appear for his people, notwithstanding their sins. Even their groans, extorted by oppression, have a share of his compassionate attention; and in the darkest night of affliction, when they begin to cry to him, the day of deliverance will speedily dawn. And finally, if Satan's work ceases not for want, of succession of instruments; the Lord will certainly furnish labourers for his harvest, in all ages unto the end of the world.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *Jethro.*] It is not certain whether Jethro be the same person as Reuel mentioned in the former chapter, or his son, and Moses' brother in law; which the word also signifies.

Mountain of God, &c.] So called by way of anticipation; for Moses wrote for those, who knew it by that title, after the law was there given.

Horeb.] Sinai, and Horeb are supposed to be two summits of a mountain, which had the same base.

V. 2. *The angel of the Lord.*] He is afterwards called Jehovah; "God called to him out of the midst of the "bush;" and the same person says, I AM THAT I AM. I cannot conceive what propriety can be in this kind of phraseology, in a revelation, expressly intended to lead men to the knowledge, and worship of the true God, and off from idolatry of every kind; if we allow not the doctrine of the coequality, and deity of the Son of God; and that he is the speaker in this place.

Flame of fire.] Fire is a scriptural emblem of the divine holiness, and justice; and of that vengeance, which in his righteous indignation, he inflicts on sinners; and of the afflictions, and trials, wherewith he proves, and purifies his people, whether immediately from himself, or by instruments; and even of that baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which the dross of sinful affections is consumed, and the soul transformed into his own nature and image.

In a Bush.] Not a Cedar. A bush is mean, and useless, except for fuel, but easily and speedily burnt: yet was not this bush consumed. This emblem was immediately intended to describe the state of Israel in Egypt: their meanness, and unworthiness; their extreme affliction, and marvellous preservation, by the power and presence of God, But Israel was in this a type of the Church exposed to persecution, and of a believer sorely conflicting with temptation.

V. 4. *Moses, Moses*, &c.] We have not read of any appearance of the Lord, since Jacob's descent into Egypt above 200 years before. Moses, thus addressed by name, must have been as much surprised by what he heard, as by what he saw.

V. 5. *Draw not nigh*, &c.] He might at a distance contemplate the object before him for his instruction, and encouragement, for which it was intended: but must not gratify his curiosity by particular examination; for which it was not intended. Thus divine mysteries, reverently believed, and meditated on, are profitable to our souls; but curiously, and presumptuously intruded into, become the occasion of our sin, and misery.

Put off thy shoes.] As an external customary token of humble reverence.

Holy ground.] It was made holy by this vision of the Almighty, and so was to be regarded by him. (See *Gen.* c. 28. v. 16—17.)

V. 6. *I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham*, &c.] The object of their worship, confidence, love, and obedience: and their salvation, portion, and everlasting recompense. Christ proves the doctrine of the Resurrection from this passage (*Matt.* c. 22. v. 31—32.) We are constituted of body and soul, and if the Lord be our God, he stands engaged to bless both body and soul for ever; which implies that the soul enters at death upon immortal felicity; and that the body shall rise again to

7 And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry, by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows.

8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land, unto a good land, and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9 Now therefore behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

11 And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall* be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, *when* I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What *is* his name? What shall I say unto them?

14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: And he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.

15 And

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share it. This declaration was intended, to remind the Israelites of the promises made to their fathers, especially with reference to the land of Canaan.

V. 7. *I have surely seen.*] Seeing, I have seen: that is, I have seen with attention and compassion.

Of my people.] Notwithstanding the ignorance, idolatry, and vice, which prevailed amongst the Israelites: yet because of their relation to Abraham, because they constituted the visible Church, and because of the remnant of true Israelites amongst them, they are acknowledged as the people of God.

Their cry, by reason of their task-masters.] It was the cry of distress, not of faith; the prayer of nature, not of grace. Nature seeks deliverance from suffering, grace wrestles for deliverance from sin.

I know their sorrows.] Perhaps they almost universally despaired of deliverance; and Moses having been forty years a shepherd, expected and desired no other than to live and die in that situation, and had given up all thoughts of delivering Israel: yet now the very time is come.

V. 8. *I am come down,* &c.] It is spoken after the manner of men, and means that this was the only intent of God's appearance to Moses.

V. 11. *Who am I,* &c.] Formerly Moses deemed himself competent to this work, and set himself to it, perhaps too hastily: now, when he was unspeakably better qualified with wisdom, experience, patience, meekness, stedfastness, humility, and piety; and was without competition the most fit person on earth for it, he is become consciously insufficient. This was in a great measure the effect of increasing knowledge of God, and of himself. But there was also a deep sense of the vast difficulty of the business, not without some culpable fear of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptians, and of the contempt and opposition of Israel. Formerly self-confidence mingled with, and assumed the appearance of strong faith, and great zeal: now some degree of sinful distrust of God crept in under the garb of deep humility, and associated with it; and induced him timidly to shift, as well as humbly to decline the important service: so very defective are the strongest graces, and the best duties of the most eminent saints!

V. 12. *Certainly I will be,* &c.] All objections, expressed, or implied, are thus answered in one word. As I send thee, I will certainly go with thee; and then "all "thy insufficiency, and all possible difficulties can form no "hindrance at all."

And this shall be a token, &c.] This token is made, not to sense, but to faith; and therefore the sign is consequent to the event, which is confirmed by it: as if God had said, "I promise to meet thee, and Israel at this mountain: "this promise is thy assurance of success; depend on my "power and faithfulness, and go fetch them forth nothing "doubting." Such a token is indeed no confirmation to an unbeliever, but faith gives God credit, and takes his promises of future blessings, in prompt payment (*Isai.* c. 7. v. 14.)

V. 13. *What is his name?* &c.] Moses had seen enough in Egypt, 40 years before, to convince him of Israel's ignorance, and ungodliness; and he knew that nature's progress in religious concerns is from bad to worse. He was therefore apprehensive, that they would scarce understand, much less believe him, when he spake to them of the God of their fathers. He had before been scornfully asked, who made him a ruler, and a judge over them? And he had not his answer ready: but if he go now, he would have fuller instructions, and better authenticated credentials.

V. 14. *I AM THAT I AM.*] This name implies, self-existence, independance, unchangeableness, incomprehensibility, eternity, and consummate perfection. I am, and "there

15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations.

16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt.

17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt, unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and you shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go (we beseech thee) three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that when ye go, ye shall not go empty.

22 But

"there is none else besides me." All else have their being from God, and are entirely dependant on him. There is a majestic simplicity, and an expressive dignity in this language, which disgraces beneath contempt the high sounding pompous titles, which mortals have been proud to arrogate to themselves.

JEHOVAH (A name of similar signification) thus distinguishes himself from the idols of the nations, which are nothing in the world; and from all creatures, which have only a derived, dependant mutable existence, in him, and from him: thus he proposes himself as the only object of his people's worship, the sure foundation of their hopes, and the all-sufficient fountain of their felicity. *I AM THAT I AM.* Not I was, but I am, and will be. With him, past, present, and to come are all one. Let us not forget him, whom the Apostle declares to be, "the "same yesterday, to day, and for ever:" (*Heb.* c. 13. v. 8.) whom another Apostle introduces saying, I am Alpha, and Omega, the first, and the last (*Rev.* c. 1. v. 8-11-17.) and who, dwelling in human flesh said, with a noble disregard to the rules of human language, "Before Abraham "was *I AM.*" (*John*, c. 8. v. 58.) Which evident assumption of this title *I AM, THAT I AM*, the unbelieving Jews at that day fully understood, and for it attempted to stone him: though modern unbelievers cannot, or will not perceive it. There is no doubt however but, that the speaker is the same in both places; "for no man hath seen "God, at any time, the only begotten Son, who is in the bo- "som of the Father, he hath declared him," (*John*, c. v. 18.)

I AM hath sent me unto you.] This was intended to give authority to the message, and to ensure the accomplishment of its intention, by his incomprehensible power, and perfection.

V. 15. *The Lord God of*, &c.] This would remind them of his covenant relation to them, as the seed of Abraham; and of his engagements to them.

This is my name for ever, &c.] The most useful knowledge of God is derived from what he hath done for his creatures, and what he hath done for and promised to believers. Therefore he delights more in being remembered, by the manifested glories of his love to his Church, than by the essential glories of his nature.

V. 18. *They shall hearken*, &c.] To be *so* willing to be delivered, as to use the means, encounter the difficulties, and face the dangers, requisite for that purpose, was so contrary to Israel's dispirited, and desponding frame of mind, that it could only be effected by the powerful influence of God upon their hearts.

V. 19. *No not*, &c.] He, who engaged for Israel's willingness, warns Moses of Pharaoh's obstinate, and final unwillingness; that he might know what to expect.

V. 20. *Will let you go*, &c.] He reluctantly consented, when under the smart of God's judgments and the terror of imminent destruction: though he retracted that consent, and perished in opposing Israel's departure.

V. 21. *I will give*, &c.] The Lord still teaches us his power over the human heart, which by his providential dispensations, and by unperceived influence, he can dispose as he pleases. Thus the circumstances, in which the Egyptians were placed, were over-ruled to induce multitudes of them to favour Israel; whilst others were thereby hardened to their destruction.

Borrow.] Or ask. He, who is the great proprietor of all things, and giveth to all men, as he pleases, seeing the Egyptians enriched by oppressing the Israelites; thus constrained them to refund, and to pay them the wages, which their labour justly deserved. Much of this gold and silver went to build, and furnish the tabernacle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord long exercises the faith and patience of his servants, who seek his glory, and submit to his appointments;

22 But every woman ſhall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that ſojourneth in her houſe, jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye ſhall put *them* upon your ſons, and upon your daughters; and ye ſhall ſpoil the Egyptians.

pointments; they may be ſure that it is in wiſdom, and faithfulneſs; and that when they are ripe for the bleſſings, for which they wait, and the beſt time is come, they ſhall be richly recompenſed: but ſuch is the human heart, that much previous humbling diſcipline is almoſt always requiſite, to prepare the beſt of men, for behaving in proſperity in a manner honourable to God and religion. It is therefore good that a man ſhould "both hope, and *quietly* wait "for the Salvation of the Lord:" (*Lam.* c. 3 v. 26.) Quietly and patiently, but not ſlothfully; for the Lord always requires his ſervants to be employed, and meets them at their employments: and the meaneſt honeſt labour is more reputable to the greateſt characters, than indolence and inactivity. The diſcoveries of himſelf, which God vouchſafes us in his holy word, and in his works, are to be regarded with reverent attention, at an equal diſtance from contemptuous indifference, and bold curioſity. Whatever ſtands in relation to God, is thereby conſecrated, and made holy, and muſt be regarded by us as ſuch: and though bodily exerciſe profiteth little; yet it is proper to expreſs our inward humility, reverence, and adoration by ſuch external tokens, as are cuſtomary and ſignificant: ſuch a decent exterior behaviour may be hypocriſy; but the neglect of it betrays a heart not properly impreſſed with awe of the majeſty, and purity of God; nor ſuitably humbled under the ſenſe of meanneſs, and unworthineſs. Nor does the condeſcending kindneſs of the Lord, the liberty, which he allows, or the relations, with which he honours us, tend to remove, but to increaſe this holy awe: in the very epiſtle, in which we are bid "to *come boldly* to the throne of "grace," we are alſo commanded "to ſerve God with re-"verence, and godly fear." (Compare *Heb.* c. 4. v. 16. & c. 10. v. 19—22, with c. 12. v. 28—29.) In accommodation to our infirmities our gracious God condeſcends to preach to our ſenſes, as well as our underſtandings, and in this burning buſh teaches us many an uſeful leſſon.—We need not tremble for the Church of God in its loweſt eſtate, though it appear contemptible to the carnal eye, and ſeem ready to be conſumed by the fierce flames of perſecution, for the Lord is in the buſh, and it cannot be injured. Though we ſhould ſympathize with, we need be apprehenſive for the tempted, and afflicted Chriſtian; he is alſo in himſelf, a buſh indeed, and on fire; but perfectly ſafe, and highly honoured; for the Lord is with him: and never was buſh ſo honourable, as this, in which Jehovah dwelt, though it was on fire. And ſince the Son of God dwelt in frail human nature, and therein paſſed through the hotteſt fire of Satan's temptations, of the world's hatred, and of the wrath of God, for our ſins; we need not fear for any poor burning buſh, wherein Jehovah dwells, (2 *Cor.* c. 4. v. 8—10.) And whilſt men are ſtrengthened to maintain the conflict, and perſevere in the path of duty, they are not deſerted of God, whatever their fears, or feelings may be: nor can the fire however hot, conſume any thing but the droſs of remaining ſinful inclinations. But let the mere profeſſor tremble, who is exempt from temptation, oppoſition, or conflict, becauſe he ſwims with the ſtream, and walks according to the courſe of this world: the fire is not there, becauſe the Lord is not there, and he is a worthleſs buſh, and nothing better. Let the careleſs, and preſumptuous ſinner tremble; for he is fit fuel for the fire of God's vengeance, which will burn for ever, but never conſume thoſe, who finally ſink under it. Oppreſſors alſo ſhould remember, that, however they may elude, or out-brave human juſtice; and however God may defer to take vengeance; yet that all their crimes are noted in his book; that their meaſure of iniquity is filling up; that they ſhall ſpeedily be made to diſgorge the prey, which they have ravenouſly devoured, and experience (except deep repentance, and fruits meet for repentance prevent—*Luke*, c. 19. v. 8.) the vengeance of the Almighty. Let the oppreſſed alſo recollect, that God is their peculiar patron, that he counts their ſighs and groans; and if he anſwer the mere cry of diſtreſs; "ſhall he not avenge his own elect, which "cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with "them? Yea he will avenge them ſpeedily:" (*Luke*, c. 18. v. 7.) But when he comes to avenge his people on their oppreſſors, will he find faith on the earth? Hope deferred maketh the heart ſick; and though faith will not totally fail, yet at ſuch times it will oft be very feeble, and our expectations even of promiſed bleſſings very languid. Alas! that we ſhould ſo diſhonour his power, faithfulneſs, and love! But he is the great I AM; a thouſand years with him is but as one day: he remembers his holy covenant, he deals with his people according to the multitude of his mercies, he forgives the multitude of their tranſgreſſions, and ſends deliverance in it's appointed ſeaſon. When God employs us in his work, he will certainly go with us; and "before honour is humility:" and uſefulneſs is oft delayed, or denied to inſtruments otherwiſe qualified, becauſe they poſſeſs not an humble ſpirit. Yet nothing good is unalloyed in man, and the moſt unaffected humility may prove an occaſion to irreſolution in, or reluctance to the work which the Lord requires of us. They, who would be uſeful, muſt depend upon the Lord to make their endeavours acceptable (*Rom.* c. 15. v. 31.) to their brethren: eſpecially where ſuch benefits are intended, as require them to exert themſelves, to endure hardſhip, and to face danger, in ſecuring them: and, if we go in this dependance, God will ſecure our ſucceſs with ſome; though we muſt deliver our meſſage to all, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. But in Pharaoh's tyranny, and Iſrael's oppreſſion, we ſee a picture of Satan's uſurpation, and the ſinner's miſerable, and abject ſubmiſſion: however galled with the yoke, he ſtill drudges on, till the Lord ſends redemption: with the invitations of his goſpel, he communicates the teachings of his Spirit; thus are they made willing to ſeek and ſtrive for deliverance; conſequently Satan loſes his power, to retain them; and they come forth with all they have, and are, and conſecrate all to the glory of God, and the ſervice of his Church.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. Moses's further objections, and the Lord's answer by miracles, and promises, v. 1—12. *2d. Moses still excusing himself; and the Lord angry with him, yet appointing Aaron to assist him, v.* 13—17. *3d. Moses taking his leave of Jethro, and setting out on his journey, v.* 18—20. *4th. The Lord's message to Pharaoh, v.* 21—23. *5th. Moses's danger, and deliverance by the way; his being met by Aaron, and welcomed by Israel, v.* 24—31.

AND Moses answered, and said, But behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

2 And the LORD said unto him, What *is* that in thine hand? And he said, A rod.

3 And he said, Cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent: and Moses fled from before it.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand.

5 That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

6 And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom; and he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous as snow.

7 And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again: and he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold, it was turned again as his *other* flesh.

8 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign.

9 And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour *it* upon the dry-land: and the water which thou takest out of the river, shall become blood upon the dry-land.

10 And Moses said unto the LORD, O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I *am* slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

11 And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?

12 Now

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *What is that in*, &c.?] The Lord, in answer to the unreasonable objection, which Moses started, thus calls his attention to the sign, which he meant to give.

And he said, a rod.] Probably a common stick, or shepherd's crook; but now consecrated to the sacred service of God; and to be the token of his presence, and operation: therefore called (v. 20.) the rod of God. It was also the type of the preached Gospel, which is called the rod of his power, (*Psalms*, c. 110. v. 2.) Whence he might learn that God can employ the meanest instruments in the most important services.

V. 3. *It became a serpent*, &c.] When afterward waved by the hand of Moses, this rod was to Israel for guidance, encouragement, and protection; but to Egypt, destructive as a serpent. Thus the word of God is to some a savour of life unto life, and to others of death unto death. (2 *Cor.* c. 2. v. 16.)

V. 5. *That they may believe*, &c.] Thus the Lord directed the future performance of this miracle by Moses, before Israel, in proof of his commission.

V. 6—7. *Leprous as snow—Turned as his other flesh.*] Denoting that God could easily remove Israel's sin, though they were unclean as the leprous hand: could employ Moses's ministry, though it were feeble and unworthy in itself; and by him inflict upon, and remove, from Egypt his plagues at pleasure.

V. 10. *I am not eloquent, neither heretofore*, &c.] Moses here supposes that he should want much eloquence both to persuade Israel, and plead before Pharaoh: and he objects, that in the Egyptian Court he had never been remarkable for eloquence, but rather defective in the gift of ready utterance: and that even since the Lord had called him, and he had understood that he was to be employed in this service, he had experienced no alteration in this respect. We read, however, that he was mighty in word; and so was Paul, though he affected no eloquence, and was deemed by some "in speech contemptible:" they could either of them speak with energy, and to the purpose, though not with the enticing words, and delusive charms of human oratory.

V. 11. *Who hath made*, &c.?] The Lord alone is the giver of the inexplicable power of articulate speech, and

12 Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou ſhalt ſay.

13 And he ſaid, O my Lord, ſend I pray thee, by the hand *of him whom* thou wilt ſend.

14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt Moſes, and he ſaid, *Is* not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can ſpeak well. And alſo behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he ſeeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.

15 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye ſhall do.

16 And he ſhall be thy ſpokeſman unto the people: and he ſhall be, *even* he ſhall be to thee inſtead of a mouth, and thou ſhalt be to him inſtead of God.

17 And thou ſhalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou ſhalt do ſigns.

18 And Moſes went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and ſaid unto him, Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren, which *are* in Egypt, and ſee whether they be yet alive. And Jethro ſaid to Moſes, Go in peace.

19 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes in Midian, Go return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which ſought thy life.

20 And Moſes took his wife, and his ſons, and ſet them upon an aſs, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moſes took the rod of God in his hand.

21 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, When thou goeſt to return into Egypt, ſee *that* thou do all thoſe wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine hand: but I will harden his heart, that he ſhall not let the people go.

22 And thou ſhalt ſay unto Pharaoh, Thus ſaith the LORD, Iſrael *is* my ſon, *even* my firſt-born.

23 And

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of every degree, in which one man excels another, in that, or in any other gift.

V. 12. *I will be with thy mouth*, &c.] Let us compare this with the words of Chriſt to his diſciples, "I will "give you a mouth, and wiſdom, &c." (*Luke*, c. 21. v. 14—15.) and then aſk ourſelves, are not both the language of God? Can any one elſe give a mouth, and wiſdom?

V. 13. *Send I pray thee*, &c.] Send by any body elſe; only excuſe me.

V. 14. *The anger of the Lord*, &c.] Moſes's unbelief, and reluctancy to engage in this arduous, and dangerous ſervice, excited the divine diſpleaſure, which probably appeared by ſome ſenſible token: yet he does not ſuperſede his commiſſion, but in condeſcenſion to his weakneſs of faith aſſigns him an aſſiſtant, who would ſhare the danger, the burden, and the honour. Thus Chriſt ſent out his diſciples by two, and two; and ſeveral of them were brethren.

Is not Aaron the Levite, &c.?] We are not informed in what ſtation of life Aaron had lived all the former part of his days: but it is not improbable that he had enjoyed many advantages of education, by means of Moſes; and that he had become remarkable for eloquence: perhaps this might occaſion his being called "Aaron the Levite," as being of ſome eminence, and known to be one of the deſcendants of Levi.

Behold he cometh, &c.] The Lord revealed himſelf to Aaron at the ſame time, and gave him commandment to meet Moſes (v. 27); which concurrence would be a mutual encouragement to them.

V. 15. *With his mouth*, &c.] Though Aaron was eloquent, yet he could not ſpeak to any good purpoſe, without the teaching, and aſſiſtance of the Lord.

V. 16. *Inſtead of God*, &c.] Moſes, though the younger brother, was the ſuperior in this commiſſion; and the word of God came firſt to him; and he dictated to Aaron what he was to ſpeak, as God put his words into the mouth of his prophets.

V. 18. *Let me go*, &c.] Thus he adviſes Jethro of his intention, and prepares to depart amicably, as from one, who had behaved kindly to him.

V. 19. *All the men*, &c.] This was ſpoken to anſwer the ſecret objection againſt this ſervice, which wrought in the heart of Moſes; and to remove that diſcouragement, which aroſe from his fear of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptians, on account of his former conduct.

V. 21. *I will harden his heart.*] God puts not hardneſs, or wickedneſs into the heart of man; "for he cannot be "tempted of evil; neither tempteth he any man:" (*Jam.* c. 1. v. 13.) But, when he is provoked by atrocious crimes, he totally withdraws his influences from the heart, and conſcience, and gives up a man to his own heart's luſts: he allows Satan alſo liberty to entice, deceive, and blind him: (1 *Kings*, c. 24. v. 20—23.) and he takes off his providential reſtraints, by which many are kept from wickedneſs; becauſe they have not opportunity, or power to commit it, or dare not through fear, or ſhame. When a man is thus given up, and let looſe, commands, warnings, judgments, and deliverances; every part of God's revelation in his word, and every diſpenſation of his providence, concur to increaſe obduracy and inſenſibility, pride and preſumption.

V. 22. *My ſon, even my firſt-born*, &c.] Iſrael was deſpiſed by

23 And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, *even* thy first-born.

24 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the LORD met him, and sought to kill him.

25 Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast *it* at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband *art* thou to me.

26 So he let him go: then she said, A bloody husband *thou art*, because of the circumcision.

27 And the LORD said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him.

28 And Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD, who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.

29 And Moses and Aaron went, and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel.

30 And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

31 And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

CHAP.

by the Egyptians as a contemptible people, but was honoured of God, being near and dear to him, as a child is to his father; and as having the pre-eminence among the nations, which the first-born hath among the brethren. By this title Pharaoh might know assuredly, that Jehovah would defend, avenge, deliver, and provide for them; and that if he would detain them, he must contest the matter with the Almighty himself. The true Israel are all children, and first-born, (*Heb.* c. 12. v. 23.) and therefore all heirs, and none can bereave them of their inheritance.

V. 23. *Let my son go, that he may serve me.*] It was not proper that Pharaoh should so enslave the Lord's son, as to forbid him from serving him. The kings of the earth have a right to civil obedience even from the children of God; but they have no right to enslave their consciences, or to prohibit them from serving God according to them: and they may expect severe rebukes, if they attempt it.

V. 24. *The Lord met him*, &c.] Either the Lord appeared to him, and threatened him with death; or he inflicted sickness upon him, which he gave him to understand was the punishment of his sin, in neglecting to circumcise his son; which was probably in compliance with Zipporah, who opposed it.

V. 25. *A sharp stone*, &c.] Of which knives in some countries have been made: this intimates the haste, in which the rite was performed.

A bloody husband, &c.] Zipporah calls Moses a bloody husband, because his religion required such a bloody ordinance; probably it was at this time, and on occasion of this reproach of him, and of this sacred institution, that she was sent back to Jethro for a time.

V. 26. *So he let him go.*] The Lord delivered him from his danger, and allowed him to prosecute his journey. Though some interpret it of Moses sending Zipporah away, and translate it, "So he let her go."

V. 27. *Met him in the mount of God.*] Moses had so many delays occasioned by his family concerns; and Aaron made so much haste, that Aaron met him almost as soon as he had set out upon his journey; which would be a great encouragement to Moses. Probably they had not seen, or heard of each other for a long time before.

V. 30. *Did the signs before*, &c.] He gave them this proof of his divine mission, to ensure their concurrence, before he applied to Pharaoh in their behalf.

V. 31. *They bowed their heads*, &c.] Acknowledging Jehovah as the true God, and the God of their fathers, and Moses as his messenger for their deliverance; and they testified their gratitude and expectation in an act of solemn worship.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How indisposed is man to believe the testimony of God! Whether he denounce vengeance upon obstinate offenders; or promise acceptance, assistance, and salvation to the returning sinner, we are ever prone to question his veracity: thus some are hardened in presumption, others sink into despondency, and others are discouraged, and continue heartless in all they attempt, through unbelief.—But the Lord is slow to anger, and of great mercy, and deals not with any of us according to the multitude of our sins: else the strongest believer upon earth, instead of being saved by his faith, might be righteously condemned for his unbelief.

Whenever we are unwilling to put ourselves to the trouble, or self-denial; or to expose ourselves to the reproach, or danger of any service, which we are called to; self-love will soon suggest some excuse, which will appear sufficient to us, however trivial it appear to others: and it is no uncommon case for those who have rashly set themselves to work, and smarted for their folly, to grow timidly negligent of their evident duty: thus do we warp from one extreme to another, and in all are guilty of disobedience to God. But let unbelief, sloth, and cowardice start never so many objections to our doing our duty in that station of life, to which it hath pleased God to call us; the word of God furnishes us with answers to them

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes and Aaron delivering their meſſage unto Pharaoh, with his anſwer to them, v. 1—5. *2d. Pharaoh's commands to the taſkmaſters, Iſrael's diſtreſs, and deſponding murmurs againſt Moſes, and his complaint unto the Lord, v.* 6—23.

AND afterward Moſes and Aaron went in, and told Pharaoh, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Let my people go, that they may hold a feaſt unto me in the wilderneſs.

2 And Pharaoh ſaid, Who *is* the LORD, that I ſhould obey his voice to let Iſrael go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let Iſrael go.

3 And they ſaid, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days journey into the deſert, and ſacrifice unto the LORD our God; leſt he fall upon us with peſtilence, or with the ſword.

4 And the king of Egypt ſaid unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moſes and Aaron, let the people from their works; get you unto your burdens.

5 And

them all; and the aſſurance of his aſſiſtance, and protection, ſhould fully ſatisfy our minds in every caſe. When God gives revelations of new truths, or introduces new diſpenſations, materially differing from all, which preceded, he always ſets his ſeal to them, and enables his ſervants to authenticate their miſſion, by ſome concluſive ſign: but they, who are employed to enforce the old authenticated revelation, need not ſuch teſtimonials; as both their character, and doctrines, are to be tried by *that word* of God, to which they appeal. And the miracles, which the Lord enabled his ſervants to work, were not doubtful, and equivocal, nor merely effects of power, to excite wonder; but were expreſſive of his juſtice and goodneſs, and inſtructive tokens of his favour to his people, and vengeance on his enemies. God doth not always make it appear that he hath furniſhed men for ſervices, till they are actually called to engage in them: but we may depend on him to qualify us for whatever *he commands us to do*. All knowledge, wiſdom, utterance, and every good gift, are from him: but many endowments are ſuppoſed needful for, or uſeful in, the more public ſervice of God, and his church, which he pours contempt upon, as mere tinſel, worthleſs, if not pernicious: ſuch are all the *ſtudied*, and *affected* arts of human oratory: ſeldom hath God made much uſe of them; and Paul would not condeſcend to make uſe of them, leſt he ſhould be admired, inſtead of Chriſt: "and that their "faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of man, but in "the power of God." (1 *Cor.* c. 2. v. 1—5.) Though the Lord be diſpleaſed with the ſins of his people, yet, when the heart is upright, he condeſcends to their infirmities: and in arduous undertakings, it is a great favour to have helpers, who will cordially unite with us, though they ſhould ſhare in, or even eclipſe our reputation.—Whilſt we cenſure Moſes for ſhrinking from this dangerous ſervice, let us aſk our own hearts, whether we are not neglecting ſuch duties, as are unſpeakably more eaſy, and leſs perilous. We muſt obey God, rather than man; but in obeying God, we ſhould take care not to give *needleſs* offence to our relatives, and friends: yet frequently we muſt be conſtrained to croſs the humours, and draw upon ourſelves the reproaches, and forego the comforts of our deareſt relations, if we will act according to the command of God: and even in the path of duty, ſinful omiſſions may draw upon us ſevere rebukes; and neglect of the ſeals and pledges of God's covenant is a ſin of no ſmall aggravation; but implies a contempt, and ingratitude, which God will certainly reſent. Yet when ſin is repented of, and the duty attended to, the Lord will return to us in mercy: but the reproaches, which are caſt upon religion, and its conſcientious profeſſors, will redound to the laſting diſgrace of thoſe, who vented them. None provoke God more, than ſuch, as by terrors, or temptations deter, or entice his children from his ſervice: nor are any more liable to be given up to judicial hardneſs of heart, than cruel tyrants, and perſecuting oppreſſors. It frequently happens that leſs difficulty is found, than was expected, in ſuch undertakings as are according to the will of God, and for his glory; and that the hearts of many are inclined to concur, who were not looked for: let us but ariſe, and attempt our proper work, and the Lord will be with us, and proſper us. But if Iſrael welcomed the tidings of temporal deliverance, and worſhipped the Lord; how ſhould we welcome the glad tidings of eternal redemption, embrace it in faith, and adore the Redeemer! And how ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſuch great ſalvation?

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Moſes and Aaron went in*, &c.] As by deputation from the elders of Iſrael.

The God of Iſrael.] We read, *Gen.* c. 33. v. 20. that Jacob erected an altar to El-Elohe-Iſrael, to God, the God of Iſrael: but that immediately related to himſelf, and the name, which God had given him; but this is the firſt time, that he is called the God of Iſrael, as a nation. God thus honours them in their low, and deſpiſed eſtate, by calling himſelf their God; for doubtleſs this was done by his command.

That they may hold a feaſt, &c.] A religious feaſt with, and upon the ſacrifices, which they were to offer. This requiſition was made firſt, that the tyranny of Pharaoh might appear the more evident: if he refuſed this demand, he would certainly have refuſed to let them go entirely.

V. 2. *Who is the Lord?*] Pharaoh had probably heard ſome

5 And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and you make them rest from their burdens.

6 And Pharaoh commanded the same day the task-masters of the people, and their officers, saying,

7 Ye shall no more give the people straw to make brick, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves.

8 And the tale of the bricks which they did make heretofore, you shall lay upon them; you shall not diminish *ought* thereof: for they *be* idle; therefore they cry, saying, Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.

9 Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein: and let them not regard vain words.

10 And the task-masters of the people went out, and their officers, and they spake to the people, saying, Thus saith Pharaoh, I will not give you straw.

11 Go ye, get you straw where you can find it: yet not ought of your work shall be diminished.

12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt, to gather stubble instead of straw.

13 And the task-masters hasted *them*, saying, Fulfil your works, *your* daily tasks, as when there was straw.

14 And the officers of the children of Israel, which Pharaoh's task-masters had set over them, were beaten, *and* demanded, Wherefore have ye not fulfilled your task in making brick, both yesterday and to-day, as heretofore?

15 Then the officers of the children of Israel, came and cried to Pharaoh, saying,

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some general report of Jehovah, as claiming by his prophets, and servants, to be the only living and true God, the creator and governor of the whole earth: but he had long triumphed and tyrannized over his people, and despised them as abjects and slaves: and as *they* had derived so little advantage from their God, he concluded that he had as little to fear from him. He therefore treated all, that he had heard, with the contemptuous indifference of infidelity, ranking Jehovah amongst, or rather beneath the gods of the nations, and especially the gods of Egypt.

That I, &c.] There is great emphasis in this word I; "Shall I, who am king of Egypt, and lord it over Israel, obey the God of that despicable people? No, I "scorn to regard him."

I know not the Lord.] He had no knowledge of him, no fear of, or love to him, and therefore he refuses to obey him.

Neither will I let, &c.] Pharaoh here hangs out the flag of defiance. Israel was a numerous people, they added much to the populousness, and wealth of his kingdom, and to his own greatness; and it would not consist with either his honour or interest, (to speak in the language of politicians) thus to depopulate his kingdom: he was accustomed to tyrannize over Israel, and it would look mean upon such a summons, to set them at liberty: and if he did not intend to set them at liberty, he must crush their first attempts, and not allow them to feel their own strength, or to taste the sweets of acting according to their own inclinations. Thus his pride, ambition, covetousness, and political wisdom, engaged him in the contest; and a point of honour, as it is called, that is an obstinate determination not to have it said that he was worsted, hardened him to persist in it to his destruction.

V. 4. *Wherefore do ye, Moses*, &c.] He treats what they had urged of the commandment of God with neglect, and supposes that it all originated from some ambitious interested views of theirs; and that they abused the peoples' superstition for their own ends.

Get you to your burdens.] He orders Moses and Aaron to their burdens, as well as the rest: and we must ascribe it to a divine interposition, that he did not order them to a dungeon, or to execution; considering his character, the offensive nature of their message, and the boldness with which they delivered it.

V. 5. *Are many*, &c.] Pharaoh therefore represents them, as doing a public injury to the nation, by taking them off from their work.

V. 7. *Straw to make brick*, &c.] Some suppose that this straw was cut short, and mingled with the clay in making the bricks; the nature of the clay, and the imperfection of their skill requiring it: others suppose that they burnt the bricks with it. In many places straw is now used in covering the clay before the bricks are formed, and in covering the bricks before they are burnt, to defend them from the burning sun, or heavy rains.

V. 8. *For they be idle*, &c.] Though the fruits of their industry were many, Pharaoh takes it for granted, without examining, that the people were not fully employed, or that such fancies would not enter their heads: (and too many of the rich and powerful imitate his example, and act in such matters upon report, or conjecture, without enquiry.) To take them off from their conceits, he therefore determines to fill their hands with work, that they may have somewhat else to think on.

V. 14. *The officers of the*, &c.] Thus these Israelites were urged on, in their own defence, to concur in the oppression of their brethren.

Wherefore dealeſt thou thus with thy ſervants?

16 There is no ſtraw given unto thy ſervants, and they ſay to us, Make brick: and behold, thy ſervants *are* beaten; but the fault *is* in thine own people.

17 But he ſaid, Ye *are* idle, *ye are* idle: therefore ye ſay, Let us go, *and* do ſacrifice to the LORD.

18 Go therefore now *and* work: for there ſhall no ſtraw be given you, yet ſhall ye deliver the tale of bricks.

19 And the officers of the children of Iſrael did ſee *that* they *were* in evil *caſe*, after it was ſaid, Ye ſhall not miniſh *ought* from your bricks of your daily taſk.

20 And they met Moſes and Aaron, who ſtood in the way, as they came forth from Pharaoh.

21 And they ſaid unto them, The LORD look upon you, and judge; becauſe you have made our ſavour to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his ſervants, to put a ſword in their hands to ſlay us.

22 And Moſes returned unto the LORD, and ſaid, Lord, wherefore haſt thou *ſo* evil intreated this people? why *is* it *that* thou haſt ſent me?

23 For ſince I came to Pharaoh to ſpeak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither haſt thou delivered thy people at all.

CHAP.

V. 20. *Who ſtood in the way*, &c.] Waiting to hear the anſwer, which they received, as deeply intereſted in their concerns.

V. 21. *Becauſe you have made*, &c.] Pharaoh blamed them for taking the people from their work; the people blamed them for increaſing their burdens: and not only the Egyptian denied, but even Iſrael forgot that the Lord had ſent them, though they had produced their commiſſion ſigned and ſealed; and intimated, that they had done it with a bad intention, and that God himſelf would puniſh them, for putting the ſword into Pharaoh's hand to deſtroy them.

V. 22. *Why is it that thou*, &c.] Thus Moſes himſelf caught the infection, murmured at the Lord for honouring him with this important commiſſion; forgot that God had told him, that it would be ſo, and almoſt deſpaired of ſucceſs. Lord, what is man at his beſt eſtate! And yet, if we place ourſelves in his ſituation, and know our own hearts, we may blame, but ſhall not wonder at his diſtruſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Although at ſome times the ſervants of God are called to ſuch employments, as expoſe them to the moſt imminent perils, yet they may ſet their face like a flint; for he who ſends them will bear them out againſt thoſe, who are moſt haughty, and imperious, whilſt they obſerve his directions, and are faithful to their truſt. The reaſonableneſs of the divine commands will always leave the diſobedient without excuſe; for if we refuſe obedience in thoſe things, which are more eaſy, we ſhall never yield it in thoſe inſtances, which require more ſelf-denial: if we refuſe, at his command, to devote a portion of our time, and ſubſtance to his ſervice; how ſhall we obey, if he call us to leave all, to take up our croſs, to endure perſecution, and to lay down our lives for his ſake? And yet unleſs we are prepared for this, we cannot be Chriſt's diſciples. But ſinners are afraid of loſing the pleaſure, or profit, which they derive, or expect from ſin; not knowing that the ſervice of God is perfect freedom, a continual feaſt, and an enduring inheritance. Without that knowledge of God, which is derived from faith, and experience, there is no true fear, or love of him; and therefore, they, who have not the knowledge of God, will habitually diſobey him; and oft times inſolently deſpiſe him, and preſumptuouſly ſet him at defiance, when his precepts and denunciations interfere with their ambitious, and worldly projects. Nor is this ignorance of God any excuſe; as it is occaſioned, not ſo much by the want of information, as by their *not liking* to retain God in their knowledge. (*Rom.* c. 1. v. 19—20—28.

It is common for thoſe, who are themſelves hypocritical, or irreligious, to treat all the fears, hopes, conſcientious ſcruples, and experiences of true believers, as ſuperſtition, and enthuſiaſm; and to cenſure them as vain words, and fooliſh fancies. It muſt be allowed that there is much ſuperſtition, and enthuſiaſm in the world; but on the other hand it muſt be acknowledged, that true religion muſt be matter of experience; and that it muſt firſt produce it's effects upon our *heart*, and *conſcience*; before they can appear in the life, and converſation. Our buſineſs, therefore, is not to ſanction, or to cenſure all experience together; but to diſtinguiſh betwixt the precious, and the vile, according to the ſtandard of the Holy Scriptures. But ſuch perſons are equally diſpoſed to condemn an attention to the ordinances of God as idleneſs, and to conſider all the time, or money, which is expended in religion, as waſted to no purpoſe. To this day we find many more diſpoſed to blame ſome of their neighbours for ſpending a few hours, ſpared from their worldly buſineſs, in the ſervice of God, crying out, Ye be idle, ye be idle; than to cenſure others, who allot twice the time to diſſipation, and intemperance. Thus is the Lord deſpiſed amongſt us, as if nothing could be ſo much miſemployed, as that, which is devoted to him! Nor is it yet an obſolete device of Satan, to fill mens hands with buſineſs, their heads with projects, and their hearts with cares, in order to divert them from the worſhip of God, and from attention to the *one thing* needful. They, who deſire to be employed for, and honoured of God in any public

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. Jehovah encouraging Moſes, and aſſuring him of his effectual aſſiſtance, v. 1—8. *2d. Moſes ſpeaking to the Iſraelites, diſregarded by them, complaining to the Lord, and charged to go unto Pharaoh, v.* 9—13. *3d. Some account of the tribes of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi, but eſpecially of the family of Moſes, and Aaron, v.* 14—25. *4th. The hiſtory reſumed, v.* 26—30.

THEN the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Now ſhalt thou ſee what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a ſtrong hand ſhall he let them go, and with a ſtrong hand ſhall he drive them out of his land.

2 And God ſpake unto Moſes, and ſaid unto him, I *am* the LORD:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, by *the name of* God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

4 And I have alſo eſtabliſhed my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were ſtrangers.

5 And I have alſo heard the groaning of the

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public ſphere of uſefulneſs, ſhould count their coſt: and not only lay their account with meeting oppoſition from the world, but with experiencing more painful trials from the impatience, infirmities, and even ingratitude and reproaches of the very perſons, whoſe good they are earneſtly ſeeking; and to be accuſed, not only of thoſe crimes, of which they are innocent; but, by perſons of different characters, of things directly contrary to each other. Nay even they, who *ſeem* to believe, will in time of temptation fall away; and they, who really believe, will, under the preſſure of ſevere trials, ſometimes ſeem to forget all they knew, and diſtreſs the faithful Miniſter with their diſtruſt, impatience, and peeviſh complaints. But ſuch miniſters, conſcious how they themſelves in like manner oft diſhonour, and offend God; whilſt they admire the forbearance and compaſſion of God to themſelves, will learn to imitate it, in bearing with their fretful brethren.

The ſervice of Pharaoh, and his cruel taſk-maſters, was very ſevere; but much more intolerable is the ſervice of ſin, and Satan. Nay, the law of God, though perfectly holy, juſt, and good, yet requiring perfect obedience, without any mention of repentance, forgiveneſs, or aſſiſtance, will only convince the tranſgreſſor, that he is in evil caſe: and whilſt ignorance of the Goſpel, and unbelief prevail, his ſins will ſeem to be irritated, rather than ſubdued, by its commanding, and convincing power. (*Rom.* c. 7. v. 7—13.) And oft when God is preparing the ſoul for deliverance; the condemnation of the holy law, and the dominion of ſinful paſſions, appear more and more inevitable: and the diſquieted ſinner wiſhes he had never heard the convincing word, and is ready to quarrel with the inſtrument, as if he were the cauſe of his diſtreſs; whilſt Satan would tempt him to give up all in deſpair. Yet this is all for his humiliation, and to prepare him to liſten to the Saviour, tenderly calling, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, "and I will give you reſt." Before it be long his chains ſhall be looſed, and his ſoul ſhall walk at liberty, and enjoy ſweet peace, and joy in believing. Nay even the ſervants of God themſelves, not immediately perceiving the effect of their miniſtry, whilſt they return to ſpread the caſe before God, are apt to diſcourage themſelves, and with impatience complain, that they are ſent to no purpoſe, and that he doth not by them deliver the people at all: but this is their ſin, and their folly, of which in due time they will be aſhamed. But let us not cloſe this chapter, without contraſting our mild, and benign government, and the civil and religious liberty, which we enjoy, with the cruel tyranny and oppreſſion of Pharaoh: and uniting gratitude to God, and man, for ſuch bleſſings, let us both pray for their continuance to us, and to our poſterity; and for the choiceſt bleſſings upon thoſe, who are the inſtruments of God in them: and let us remember how much we are bound to live under ſuch rulers, in all godlineſs and honeſty, and in all quietneſs and ſubmiſſion.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *Now ſhalt thou ſee what I will do*, &c.] Moſes had found, to his great diſcouragement, that *his* interference had only rendered the condition of the Iſraelites worſe than before: Pharaoh had ſet the Lord at defiance, and as it were declared war againſt him; and the Iſraelites were ſinking in abject deſpondency. Now matters were come to this criſis, the Lord declares that he will diſplay his power, and effect their deliverance himſelf, that he may have all the glory of it.

With a ſtrong hand, &c.] When Pharaoh felt the power of God's indignation, he not only conſented to Iſrael's departure; but he, and his people, urged, and haſtened it. (Chap. 12. v. 30, 31—33—39.) Yet this was conſent extorted by force, and entirely contrary to Pharaoh's inclinations.

V. 2. *I am the Lord.*] Or Jehovah.—I am, ſaith God, that unchangeable perfect Being, who am known by the name Jehovah, and always act conſiſtent with that name.

V. 3. *God Almighty*, &c.] The all-ſufficient God, who poſſeſſes all wiſdom, power, and dominion to contrive and effect the purpoſes of his love.

By my name JEHOVAH was, &c.] This ſhould certainly be read with an interrogation;—"Was I not "known?" Moſes conſtantly uſes the name Jehovah in the preceding hiſtory: the Patriarchs built their altars to, and called upon the name of Jehovah: Abraham called the place, where he was about to ſacrifice Iſaac, *Jehovah Jireh*.

the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage: and I have remembered my covenant.

6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I *am* the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage: and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments.

7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

8 And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I *am* the LORD.

9 And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkned not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

11 Go in, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the children of Israel go out of his land.

12 And Moses spake before the LORD, saying, Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkned unto me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who *am* of uncircumcised lips?

13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and gave them a charge unto the children of Israel, and unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

14 These *be* the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the first-born of Israel;

Jireh. (*Gen.* c. 22. v. 14.) And God speaking to Jacob in Bethel, saith, "I am Jehovah, the God of Abraham." (*Gen.* c. 28. v. 13.). The argument of these words seems as follows.—Moses was discouraged, because the difficulties before him seemed insurmountable: but this was unreasonable; the same glorious God, who revealed himself to Abraham, &c. as the *Almighty*, for whom nothing is too hard, revealed himself also as Jehovah; which is expressive of his self-existence, eternity, and immutability. No difficulty therefore could have arisen, but what he foresaw, when he made the promises; nor any, which his power was not at all times able to remove. As if he had said, "Remember, Moses, who it was that "made the promises to the fathers, and assure thyself he is "well able to fulfil them."—Thus Jesus, who is the same yesterday, to day, and forever, said to Martha over the grave of Lazarus, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou "wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the Glory of "God;" referring to what he said before, "I am the "resurrection, and the life, &c." (*John*, c. 11. v. 25—40.)

V. 4. *I have also established*, &c.] The Lord, having reminded Moses of his unchangeable perfection, calls to his remembrance the relations, in which he stood to Israel, and the covenant engagements, under which he had voluntarily brought himself; by which he had pledged the very honour of his name, for the accomplishment of his promises.

V. 5. *And I have*, &c.] As the just, and compassionate patron, and avenger of the oppressed, as well as in remembrance of his covenant, the Lord declares himself concerned to punish the Egyptians, and to rescue Israel.

V. 6. *I will redeem*, &c.] On all these accounts his determination was absolute, and he would exert his whole power to accomplish it: as a man stretches forth his arm, and employs his whole force to effect any thing about which he is in earnest.

V. 7. *I will take you to me*, &c.] God engages to take them as a nation under his especial care, and protection, and to maintain his truth, and worship amongst them; whilst other nations were suffered to walk in their own ways: which is a shadow of the spiritual relation, that subsists betwixt him, and true believers.

Ye shall know, &c.] This expression is commonly used to denote that knowledge of the being, perfection; power, justice, goodness, or faithfulness of God, which is the effect of experience: whether of his mercy, and love, or of his righteous vengeance. Israel would learn to know that he was the Lord, in the experience of his powerful, and faithful loving kindness; and thus discover that he was justly entitled to all that love, and service, which his law required.

V. 9. *For anguish of spirit*, &c.] Perceiving no sensible tokens of approaching deliverance, but an increase of their burdens; they, in unbelief, and despondency, disregarded the message, and refused to make any further attempts.

V. 12. *Behold*, &c.] The faith of Moses also was so far enfeebled, that he could scarce be kept to his work; for *prompt obedience* is always in exact proportion to the strength of our faith.

How shall Pharaoh, &c.] Moses has already forgot, that the Lord had engaged to deliver the people by a strong hand, and not by persuasive words.

Uncircumcised lips.] This expression is used in Scripture for every kind of unsuitableness, which there is in any thing to answer its proper purpose: as the carnal heart, and depraved nature of fallen man are entirely unsuited to the service of God, and the purposes of his glory.

V. 13.

Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these *be* the families of Reuben.

15 And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these *are* the families of Simeon.

16 And these *are* the names of the sons of Levi, according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: And the years of the life of Levi *were* an hundred and thirty and seven years.

17 The sons of Gershon; Libni, and Shimi, according to their families.

18 And the sons of Kohath; Amram, and Izhar, and Hebron, and Uzziel: And the years of the life of Kohath *were* an hundred thirty and three years.

19 And the sons of Merari; Mahali, and Mushi: these *are* the families of Levi, according to their generations.

20 And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: And the years of the life of Amram *were* an hundred and thirty and seven years.

21 And the sons of Izhar; Korah, and Nepheg, and Zichri.

22 And the sons of Uzziel; Mishael, and Elzaphan, and Zithri.

23 And Aaron took him Elisheba, daughter of Amminadab, sister of Naashon, to wife; and she bare him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

24 And the sons of Korah; Assir, and Elkanah, and Abiasaph: these *are* the families of the Korhites.

25 And Eleazar Aaron's son took him *one* of the daughters of Putiel to wife; and she bare him Phinehas: these *are* the heads of the fathers of the Levites, according to their families.

26 These *are* that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies.

27 These *are* they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these *are* that Moses and Aaron.

28 And it came to pass on the day *when* the LORD spake unto Moses in the land of Egypt,

29 That the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, I *am* the LORD: speak thou unto Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say unto thee.

30 And Moses said before the LORD, Behold, I *am* of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me?

CHAP.

V. 13. *Gave them a charge.*] God absolutely commanded them, without further objections, or delays to proceed with his work.

To bring forth, &c.] Not only to attempt it, but absolutely to effect it: this would tend to encrease their faith, and raise their expectations.

V. 14. *These be the heads*, &c.] Before the historian proceeds to relate the executing of this charge, he breaks off to give some account of the persons, to whom it was given.

The sons of Reuben.] He was the first-born, and accordingly is first mentioned, that it might be noticed, that, according to Jacob's prediction, he was passed by, and that the deliverer sprang not from him.—For the same reason Simeon seems also to be mentioned, who was the next in seniority:—But the deliverer of Israel was not sprung from him, but from Levi, the third son; who though he had been disgraced, began already to be dignified.

V. 20. *His father's sister.*] The law soon after condemned such marriages as incestuous: (*Lev.* c. 18. v. 13. *Numb.* c. 26. v. 59.) but Moses with perfect impartiality leaves it upon record, that both he, and Aaron were sprung from such a marriage.

An hundred and thirty and seven years, &c.] Moses lived only to the age of 120, which was yet considered extraordinary; for he fixes the ordinary extent of man's life in his time at 70, or 80 years. (*Psalm* 90.) Thus the age of man was gradually rendered shorter, until it was reduced to its present limits.

V. 23. *Aaron took him Elisheba.*] Which is the same as Elizabeth.

She was the sister of Naashon.] Who was of the tribe of Judah, and an ancestor of Christ.—Thus an alliance was immediately formed betwixt the family of the priests and that of the kings; which might shadow forth him, who was both priest and king in one person.

V. 26. *According to their armies.*] When their tribes were afterwards regularly encamped, they appeared as so many armies prepared for war.

V. 30. *And Moses said*, &c.] Having shewn who this Moses and Aaron were, and manifested that they were of the house of Israel, and of the tribe of Levi, he returns to his history.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are then most likely to prosper in our attempts to glorify God, and serve our generation, when we are convinced

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes and Aaron encouraged of God, and going unto Pharaoh, and the rod of Moſes becoming a ſerpent before him, and his ſervants, v. 1—10. *2d. The miracle imitated by the magicians, and Pharaoh's heart hardened, v.* 11—13. *3d. Moſes again ſent unto Pharaoh, threatening that the waters ſhould be turned into blood; the execution of the threatening, and the diſtreſs of the Egyptians, v.* 14—25.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother ſhall be thy prophet.

2 Thou ſhalt ſpeak all that I command thee: and Aaron thy brother ſhall ſpeak unto Pharaoh, that he ſend the children of Iſrael out of his land.

3 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my ſigns and my wonders in the land of Egypt.

4 But Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, *and* my people the children of Iſrael, out of the land of Egypt, by great judgments.

5 And the Egyptians ſhall know, that I *am*

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vinced by experience, that we can do nothing of ourſelves; and are habitually ſenſible that all our ſucceſs muſt be from God: when we can truly ſay, that our whole dependance is placed on him, and our only expectation from him: then we ſhall not intercept his revenue of glory, but ſhall be prepared to mark, and to record his works of power, and love. He will therefore previouſly prove, and humble thoſe, whom he loves, and employs; and bring them to *feel*, as well as acknowledge their inſufficiency: but whilſt he is thus mortifying their pride, and ambition, Satan will take advantage of their unpleaſant ſituation, to tempt them to diſcontent, impatience, and diſcouragement; that their hands may hang down, and their knees wax feeble; that they may be unfit for, and reluctant to the work aſſigned them. But although their unbelief be diſhonourable, and diſpleaſing to God; yet he will pity, and remove the diſcouragements, under which they labour. Nor is any thing more effectual for this purpoſe, than diſcovering to the believer his immutable perfection; his incomprehenſible wiſdom, and power; his uncontroulable dominion; his condeſcending compaſſion, love, and faithfulneſs; and his oath, and covenant, whereby he hath engaged to fulfil his largeſt promiſes to his church, and to every living member of it.—Calling theſe things to remembrance, and recollecting his wonders of old, the drooping heart revives, faith recovers ſtrength, and larger expectations are formed. Thus being ſtrengthened, the ſervant of God riſes ſuperior to his deſpondency, patiently continues in well-doing, and is animated to attend to preſent duty, and proceeds in the work given him to do.

Our compaſſionate Lord regards our groanings under temporal calamities. But when the guilt, and power of ſin, and temptation, become our chief complaint, and extort the exclamation, "Oh wretched man that I am! "Who ſhall deliver me?" He particularly notes it, and will certainly perform to us, "the oath, which he "ſware unto Abraham—That we being delivered from "the hand of our enemies, might ſerve him without "fear, in holineſs, and righteouſneſs before him, all the "days of our life." (*Luke* c. 1. v. 73—75.) When we find, that we cannot deliver ourſelves, he will ſhew us what he can do, and redeeming us by his ſtrong hand, and ſtretched-out arm from the power of our enemies, he will take us to be his people, and will be our God; he will guard us ſafely all the way to that good land, where tears, and groans, and ſins, and enemies are known no more for ever; and there he will give us everlaſting felicity.

But even ſuch glorious, and joyful aſſurances as theſe, afford no conſolation of themſelves to the ſoul, which is overwhelmed with preſent trouble, finds matters grow worſe and worſe, and has no ſenſible tokens of the Lord's favour.—For there is a ſtrong propenſity in our nature to expect the continuance, and encreaſe of ſuch diſpenſations, as we at preſent experience, whether joyful, or afflictive: and even univerſal obſervation, and experience of the mutability of human affairs, do not prevent thoſe in proſperity from expecting greater proſperity, and thoſe in adverſity from expecting deeper ſcenes of affliction.—This diſplays much of Satan's management, who thereby buoys up ſome men in careleſs preſumption, and depreſſes others in heartleſs deſpondency, and by both unfits them for preſent duty. Faith is the only effectual remedy of theſe evils, nor can we walk comfortably in ſuch a world as this, "except we walk by faith, not by "ſight." He, and he only, who habitually believes the teſtimony, and relies on the faithful promiſe of God, will find his heart prepared for humble watchfulneſs, and patient hope, to do the will of God, and to ſubmit to his appointments with chearfulneſs, and compoſure.—Such a perſon will carefully watch againſt thoſe ſins, into which he hath been heretofore betrayed; and will oft reflect upon his own meanneſs, and unworthineſs of the comforts which he enjoys; which will ſilence his complaints, kindle his gratitude, and quicken his diligence in the ſervice, to which he is called.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *A God to Pharaoh.*] Moſes as the ambaſſador of Jehovah, repreſenting him, and ſpeaking in his name, poſſeſſed and exerciſed an authority over Pharaoh, laid injunctions upon him, denounced threatenings againſt him, and called for judgments upon him with a power, which Pharaoh, proud, and great as he was, could not reſiſt, and was unable to deſpiſe, or to endure Moſes had therefore a decided ſuperiority over him, ſtood not in awe of him, but made him tremble before him.

All

am the LORD, when I ſtretch forth mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Iſrael from among them.

6 And Moſes and Aaron did as the LORD commanded them, ſo did they.

7 And Moſes *was* fourſcore years old, and Aaron fourſcore and three years old, when they ſpake unto Pharaoh.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, ſaying,

9 When Pharaoh ſhall ſpeak unto you, ſaying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou ſhalt ſay unto Aaron, Take thy rod and caſt *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it ſhall become a ſerpent.

10 And Moſes and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did ſo as the LORD had commanded: and Aaron caſt down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his ſervants, and *it* became a ſerpent.

11 Then Pharaoh alſo called the wiſe-men, and the ſorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they alſo did in like manner with their inchantments.

12 For they caſt down every man his rod, and they became ſerpents: but Aaron's rod ſwallowed up their rods.

13 And he hardened Pharaoh's heart, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had ſaid.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh's

All which ſeems to be implied in this ſtrong expreſſion; "Thou ſhalt be a god to Pharaoh." (See *John* c. 10. v. 35—36. *Ex.* c. 4. v. 15.)

V. 5. *Shall know that I am*, &c.] See *note*, c. 6. v. 7.) In their puniſhment they had a full demonſtration that the God of Iſrael, was the great Jehovah, the Lord of the whole earth.

V. 6. *And Moſes*, &c.] At length Moſes is delivered from his fears, makes no more objections, but being ſtrengthened in faith, goes about his arduous work with undaunted courage, and proceeds in it with indefatigable perſeverance.

V. 9. *Shew a miracle*, &c.] It is here ſuppoſed, that it is reaſonable to expect, that extraordinary divine commiſſions ſhould be atteſted by miracles: yet it will hereafter appear that in ſome caſes they are not alone ſufficient to prove a doctrine divine: (See *Deut.* c. 13. v. 1-3. 2 *Theſſ.* c. 2. v. 9.) and that they may be counterfeited by Satan, and his inſtruments. Yet except when they are brought in proof of ſuch doctrines, as contradict the firſt principles of religion in general, or of revealed truth in particular, they are to be conſidered as the ſeal of Heaven affixed to the prophet's commiſſion (See *John*, c. 6. v. 27.), and open, undeniable, and repeated miracles are to be received as a divine atteſtation in behalf of the perſon, by whom they are wrought (See *John*, c. 5. v. 36: & c. 10. v. 38.). Nor can we ſuppoſe that God will allow this his ſeal to be ſo counterfeited, as to impoſe upon the attentive, humble, and impartial enquirer; however he may allow the proud, and prejudiced to be deceived by deluſive appearances.

Say unto Aaron, take thy rod, &c.] The miracle was to be predicted, that it might be the more undeniable.

V. 12. *They became ſerpents.*] Many ſuppoſe that this change was a mere illuſion upon the ſenſes of the ſpectators, either by the artifice of the magicians, or the power of Satan; but it ſeems to me to have been a *real change*: the queſtion in that caſe is, how, or by whom it was produced? We cannot ſuppoſe, that either the magicians, or Satan to aſſiſt them, could produce this transformation, or that it could be effected by any other than the creative power of God. Let it be remembered that Pharaoh called for the magicians to confront the miracle, which Moſes wrought for his conviction; becauſe he would not be convinced of that, which was ſo contrary to his ſuppoſed intereſt, and honour, and inclinations; and becauſe he wanted ſome cavil to excuſe, and to cloak his haughty diſobedience. It can ſcarce be denied by any one, who reverences the language of Scripture, that the magicians were at ſome times aſſiſted by ſatanical influence, and effects conſequently produced by them, beyond human power and ſagacity: nor could they know, but by experiment, the limits of this communicated power; which probably they aſcribed to ſome of the gods, that they worſhipped. On the other hand the deſign of God was to harden the heart of this proud rebel: whilſt therefore the magicians were exerciſing *their art*, he might interpoſe *his power*, and the production of the ſerpents, *apparently* by the power of magic, would furniſh Pharaoh with the very objection, which he wanted: and if it were righteous in God to give up Pharaoh to final obduracy, it could not be unrighteous in him, to employ this method of effecting it. (See 1 *Kings*, c. 22. v. 19—23. 2 *Theſſ.* c. 2. v. 10—12. 1 *Sam.* c. 28. v. 11—16.) In ſhort, he, "who hates the truth, ſhall be the dupe of lies:" and it was perfectly conſiſtent with the divine perfection to furniſh an obſtinate infidel with the very objection, which he wiſhed for, and was in ſearch of.

But Aaron's rod, &c.] This would have ſatisfied an impartial mind, on which ſide the truth lay; and, had not a previous bias lain upon Pharaoh's mind, would have more than counterbalanced the change of the magicians' rods into ſerpents.

V. 13. *And he hardened*, &c.] It is not neceſſary to underſtand this of the Lord's hardening Pharaoh's heart; as it merely expreſſes its becoming hard; without determining the author of that hardneſs: but however that be, his heart became hard not by obduracy created therein; but by his being furniſhed with this pretext: he would now have to ſay, that the magicians had produced ſerpents alſo; and that Moſes and Aaron were only greater adepts in magic; that Jehovah had nothing to do in it, and that there was no occaſion to liberate the Iſraelites. The Lord knowing the ſtate of Pharaoh's mind, and the effect which this circumſtance would have upon it, in ſo appointing it, may be ſaid to have hardened his heart.

V. 15. *He*

raoh's heart *is* hardened, he refuseth to let the people go.

15 Get thee unto Pharaoh in the morning; lo, he goeth out unto the water, and thou shalt stand by the river's brink, against he come: and the rod which was turned to a serpent shalt thou take in thine hand.

16 And thou shalt say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath sent me unto thee, saying, Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness: and behold, hitherto thou wouldest not hear.

17 Thus saith the LORD, in this thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD: behold, I will smite with the rod that *is* in mine hand, upon the waters which *are* in the river, and they shall be turned to blood.

18 And the fish that *is* in the river shall die, and the river shall stink; and the Egyptians shall loath to drink of the water of the river.

19 And the LORD spake unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and stretch out thine hand upon the waters of Egypt, upon their streams, upon their rivers, and upon their ponds, and upon all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and *that* there may be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *vessels of* wood, and in *vessels of* stone.

20 And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded: and he lift up the rod and smote the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants: and all the waters that *were* in the river, were turned to blood.

21 And the fish that *was* in the river died: and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river: and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

22 And the magicians of Egypt did so with their inchantments: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, neither did he hearken unto them; as the LORD had said.

23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house, neither did he set his heart to this also.

24 And all the Egyptians digged round about the river for water to drink: for they could not drink of the water of the river.

25 And seven days were fulfilled, after that the LORD had smitten the river.

CHAP.

V. 15. *He goeth out*, &c.] Some suppose that this was to perform some devotions to the river, or it's supposed tutelar deity.

The rod which was turned, &c.] To remind Pharaoh of that preceding miracle, and to be a token of the Lord's power to inflict the judgment, which he was to denounce.

V. 21. *There was blood throughout*, &c.] The very sight of such immense quantities of entire blood must have been very horrible; the effects of such a change distressing, and calamitous beyond expression. The Egyptians gloried in, and even idolized their river Nile, by whose inundations the whole country was enriched: but now it, and all the waters, which were derived from it, were become their terror. They had cruelly cast the children of the Israelites into the river; and now the river itself is turned into blood (See *Rev.* c. 16. v. 4—7.). A great part of the provision of Egypt consisted of fish; but now it is all destroyed; their waters are all useless, or noxious; terrible consequences were to be apprehended from its continuance; and this plague horribly foreboded all the desolations which followed by the other judgments. Let it not be forgotten, that the first miracle of Christ turned water into wine; the first plague upon Egypt turned all their water into blood. For the love of Christ to his disciples changes all their common mercies into special blessings: but the anger of God towards his enemies renders their most valued, or needed advantages a curse, and misery to them.

V. 22. *And the magicians did so*, &c.] The proper trial of skill would have been to have attempted to remove the terrible judgment, and to remedy, or prevent its fatal consequences; but this they did not pretend to: they only amused Pharaoh, and increased the distress of Egypt, either in reality, or appearance, by imitating, or rather aping the surprising miracle of Moses; and pretending at least, to turn into blood some of the *little* water, which the mercy of God had spared them. But this sufficed to harden Pharaoh's heart, and prevent him from acknowledging the hand of God, even in this awful judgment; which probably he attributed to the skill in magic, which Moses and Aaron had acquired.

V. 23. *Turned and went*, &c.] Full of indignation against Moses, and bidding defiance to God, he both disregarded the present distress of his subjects, and was careless about the future consequences of his obstinate disobedience.

V. 25. *Seven days were fulfilled*, &c.] Thus long the awful calamity continued, and was then removed; for the Lord would give respite to both Egypt, and to Pharaoh, and make way for other plagues; that his own power, and justice, and the obstinacy of Pharaoh, and his servants might be the more displayed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord hath humbled, and proved his servants, and fitted them for their work, he will put honour upon them: and the least of those, who are entrusted with a message from, and employed to speak in the name of God,

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The plague of the frogs *denounced, and ſent, and imitated by the magicians, v.* 1—7. *2d. At the requeſt of Pharaoh removed, who notwithſtanding hardens his heart, v.* 8—15. *3d. The plague of the* lice, *which baffled the magicians, and yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened, v.* 16—19. *4th. The plague of the* flies, *Pharaoh relenting, the plague removed, and his heart hardened, v.* 20—32.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, Go unto Pharaoh, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

2 And if thou refuſe to let *them* go, behold, I will ſmite all thy borders with frogs.

3 And the river ſhall bring forth frogs abundantly, which ſhall go up and come into thine houſe, and into thy bed-chamber, and upon thy bed, and into the houſe of thy ſervants, and upon thy people, and into thine ovens, and into thy kneading-troughs.

4 And the frogs ſhall come up both on thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy ſervants.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, Say unto Aaron, Stretch forth thine hand with thy rod over the ſtreams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cauſe frogs to come up upon the land of Egypt.

6 And Aaron ſtretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt.

7 And

God, are in this delegated character, and whilſt faithfully executing their office ſuperior to the greateſt, and haughtieſt of thoſe, to whom they are ſent: and ought to ſpeak with firmneſs and authority, without fear of them, reſpect of their perſons, or deſire of pleaſing them, whilſt they are living in diſobedience to God. And in this ſpirit the priſoner Paul may expect to make even Felix tremble. But to deliver the meſſage of God to ſuch proud perſecuting tyrants, requires ſuch ſtrength of faith, ſuch intrepid courage, and ſuch meekneſs of wiſdom, as very few are endued with: and we have cauſe to be not only ſatisfied, but thankful, that we are not called thereto. Although Joſeph ſtood before Pharaoh to be ruler over all the land of Egypt, at the age of 30; yet Moſes, and Aaron were each above 80, when they demanded Iſrael's deliverance; for the gravity, wiſdom, and experience of old age, are peculiarly requiſite to give authority for ſuch ſervices: yet ſuch perſons as intrude not themſelves, but are really called to ſuch arduous undertakings, have only implicitly to believe, and implicitly to obey; and being approved of God, he will certainly bear them out. They, who refuſe to attend to the word of God, and to acquaint themſelves with him as a God of grace and love, for their ſalvation, will feel the effects of his wrath, and become acquainted with him as a God of righteous vengeance, to their deſtruction: and in one way, or the other, all men ſhall know that he is the Lord: and whether they ſubmit to him, or perſiſt in their rebellion, God will glorify himſelf in, and by them. How careful then ſhould we be not to provoke him to give us up to hardneſs and impenitency! If we would eſcape that awful judgment, we muſt not continue in the practice of preſumptuous ſins, nor procraſtinate in the great concerns of ſalvation: we muſt watch againſt careleſſneſs under affliction, and inſolence in proſperity: we muſt not turn away our ear from inſtruction, and reproof; nor ſtifle convictions of conſcience by diſſipation, buſineſs, company, or ruſhing into ſin; or by hating, and ſhunning the awakening light of divine truth: theſe are ſome of the ſteps by which men proceed to the brink of that awful precipice. What men diſlike, as militating againſt their pride and luſts, they will not by any evidence be convinced of; but the leaſt ſhadow of an argument, though counterbalanced by demonſtration itſelf, will produce their belief of thoſe things, which they wiſh to be true. Thus all *mental errors* in religion originate in ſome degree from the ſtate of our heart, and the contrariety of revealed truths to our prejudices, intereſts, or inclinations; "and becauſe I tell you the truth, ye believe me not." (*John*, c. 8 v. 45.) God always accompanies his word with ſufficient evidence of it's divine authority, were we ſuitably diſpoſed to attend to, and entertain it: but when men are bent upon diſobedience, and inclined to cavil, and object; he oft permits a ſnare to be laid, wherein they are entangled, nor are any more inſtrumental in the deſtruction of ſinners, than ſuch, as reſiſt the truth, in the ſame manner as the magicians withſtood Moſes; (See 2 *Tim.* c. 3. v. 8.) namely, by amuſing men with a reſemblance, and a counterfeit of it; for Satan himſelf is moſt to be dreaded, when he is transformed into an angel of light. But madneſs is in the heart of man, or he would never dare to provoke that God, who can ſo eaſily turn our choiceſt comforts into the moſt dreadful plagues; and may ſo righteouſly render thoſe things, which have been the fuel of our pride, or the inſtruments of our cruelty, the weapons of his indignation: and all the aſſiſtance of man cannot remove, and may probably add to our diſtreſs. Nor do men generally underſtand the worth of common mercies, till they are deprived of them. In the myſtery of God's providence ſubjects oft ſuffer through the crimes of their princes, yet for their own ſins, which provoke God to ſend them ſuch rulers in wrath; and they for their own profit will join them in iniquity, and are joined with them in the puniſhment. Yet doth the righteous Lord ſo delight in mercy, that he proceeds by ſlow degrees to extremities with the moſt atrocious offenders: but if neither judgments nor mercies do bring them to repentance, deſtruction will at length overtake them without remedy.

7 And the magicians did so with their inchantments, and brought up frogs upon the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, Intreat the LORD, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people: and I will let the people go, that they may do sacrifice unto the LORD.

9 And Moses said unto Pharaoh, Glory over me: when shall I intreat for thee and for thy servants, and for thy people, to destroy the frogs from thee, and thy houses, *that* they may remain in the river only?

10 And he said, To-morrow. And he said, *Be it* according to thy word: that thou mayest know, that *there is* none like unto the LORD our God.

11 And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants, and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only.

12 And Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh: and Moses cried unto the LORD, because of the frogs which he had brought against Pharaoh.

13 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses: and the frogs died out of the houses, out of the villages, and out of the fields.

14 And they gathered them together upon heaps: and the land stank.

15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

17 And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice, in man and in beast: all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 6. *Aaron stretched out*, &c.] Thus Moses gave the word of command, and Aaron bare the rod, which was the token of the divine presence and operation, and at Moses's word gave the signal of the miracle being performed.

V. 8. *Intreat the Lord*, &c.] Although the magicians succeeded in their attempt to imitate this miracle also; yet Pharaoh felt that the power of God was employed against him: and notwithstanding his haughtiness, and impiety, was constrained to tremble before him, and to pay such respect unto Moses, and Aaron, as to beg of them to intreat the Lord for him. (Ch. 7. v. 1.)

I will let the people, &c.] Under the anguish of this most humiliating, and disgusting judgment, he was inclined to dismiss them: but it was an extorted, reluctant willingness; and therefore was not durable.

V. 9. *Glory over me*, &c.] This expression seems to mean, that Moses was willing, as we say, to be his humble servant in the business, and would do any thing for him, which he could desire; and would allow him to fix his own time; so glad would he be to see him submit, and escape destruction, by letting Israel go.

When shall I intreat, &c.?] By this it would appear the more undeniable, that Jehovah both sent, and removed the judgment; and this would deprive Pharaoh of all pretences to ascribe it to other causes.

V. 10. *And he said, To-morrow.*] Why not immediately? Because Pharaoh still indulged unbelief, and harboured expectations of the frogs going away of themselves; and then he should get rid of them without being obliged to Moses, or to Jehovah: and without the necessity of liberating Israel. The plague was so terrible, that he could scarce endure it: yet he would bear up, as well as he could, one day longer in this expectation.

V. 14. *They gathered*, &c.] It thus appeared that they were real frogs, which God in judgment had first created, and then in mercy destroyed.

V. 15. *Saw that there was* respite, &c.] Pharaoh could have no pretence to question either the power of Jehovah, or the divine mission of Moses: whilst the plague pressed upon him, he was inclined to submit, for it was insupportable: but when it was removed, he mistook, as many do, a *respite* for a deliverance; and motives of ambition, pride, and interest, began again to influence his mind; and induce him to break his promise, and to persist in disobedience. Having engaged in the contest, the further he proceeded, the more he was infatuated; and that, which at first appeared a loss to, and weakening of his kingdom, now also appears an insufferable degradation of his dignity; and he considers himself engaged in honour not to be thus threatened, and forced into submission. This being evidently the state of his mind, both judgments and mercies tended to increase his obduracy.

V. 16. *Lice*, &c.] Had the Lord sent lions, and tygers in large droves, to devour the Egyptians; or armies of victorious enemies to desolate the land, Pharaoh, though crushed, would have appeared in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others, of some consequence: but it was inconceivably humiliating, and rendered him extremely contemptible, to be thus vanquished by such insignificant and despicable creatures, whom yet he could neither escape, nor oppose.

18 And the magicians did so with their inchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast.

19 Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This *is* the finger of God: and Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.

20 And the LORD said unto Moses, Rise up early in the morning, and stand before Pharaoh, (lo, he cometh forth to the water) and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me.

21 Else if thou wilt not let my people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* upon thee, and upon thy servants, and upon thy people, and into thy houses: and the houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground whereon they *are*.

22 And I will sever in that day the land of Goshen, in which my people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there; to the end thou mayest know, that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the earth.

23 And I will put a division between my people, and thy people: to-morrow shall this sign be.

24 And the LORD did so: and there came a grievous swarm *of flies* into the house of Pharaoh, and *into* his servants houses, and into all the land of Egypt: the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm *of flies*.

25 And Pharaoh called for Moses, and for Aaron, and said, Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.

26 And Moses said, It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?

27 We will go three days journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us.

28 And Pharaoh said, I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away: intreat for me.

29 And Moses said, Behold, I go out from thee, and I will intreat the LORD, that the swarms *of flies* may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, to-morrow: but let not Pharaoh deal deceitfully any more, in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD.

30 And Moses went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD.

31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; and he removed the swarms *of*

V. 18. *But they could not.*] The Lord allowed them to proceed, or perhaps without their knowledge, produced himself those effects, which they ascribed to their inchantments, till his righteous purposes were answered: and then they could do nothing; to convince them, that they had no power against Moses, but what was given them from above. (See *John*, c. 19. v. 11.)

So there were, &c.] Some from this suppose, that they attempted also to remove the plague, but could not.

V. 19. *This is the finger of God.*] In vindication of their own art of magic, and their skill in it, they are forced to confess, that they were baffled only by the interposition of God.

And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, &c.] Even this confession of the magicians produced no effect; for it is more easy to lead men into error, and sin, than to recover them out of them. Probably he still *endeavoured to believe*, that Moses was only a magician of superior attainments.

V. 22. *I will sever*, &c.] Perhaps the Israelites for their correction had in some measure had a share in the former plagues, which would help to harden Pharaoh's heart: but now they shall be totally exempted, that both they and the Egyptians may perceive the difference.

V. 24. *The land was* corrupted, *&c.*] When we consider that all flies propagate by a maggot, of one kind or other, we shall perceive the emphasis of this expression, and the loathsomeness of this plague; by which, not only would the land be filled, and desolated by the flies themselves, but deformed with stench and filthiness by their maggots.

V. 25. *In the land*, &c.] Pharaoh was aware, that if they departed into the wilderness to offer sacrifice, they would not readily be brought back again; but he intimates, that if they only mean to sacrifice to Jehovah, they may do it in the land, and he will make no further opposition.

V. 26. *The abomination of the*, &c.] That is, the object of their abominable worship, (1 *Kings*, c. 11. v. 5—7. 2 *Kings*, c. 23. v. 13.) namely, their calves, or oxen: for sacrificing of which, they also would be had in abomination of the Egyptians.

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of flies from Pharaoh, from his ſervants, and from his people: there remained not one.

32 And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time alſo, neither would he let the people go.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The prediction, and conſequent ſending of the plague of murrain upon the cattle of Egypt, with the exemption of thoſe of Iſrael, v. 1—7. 2d. The plague of boils, v. 8—12. 3d. Moſes expoſtulating with Pharaoh, and predicting the plague of hail: which took place; its devaſtations, v. 13—26. 4th. Pharaoh confeſſing his wickedneſs, deprecating further judgments, and promiſing to let Iſrael go, v. 27—28. 5th. Moſes replying, and interceding for the removal of the hail, and Pharaoh after all hardened, and rebellious, v. 29—35.

THEN the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go in unto Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus ſaith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

2 For if thou refuſe to let *them* go, and wilt hold them ſtill,

3 Behold, the hand of the LORD is upon thy cattle which *is* in the field, upon the horſes, upon the aſſes, upon the camels, upon the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How dangerous is it to provoke that God, who hath ſo many arrows in his quiver, and who can employ the moſt deſpicable of his creatures, as formidable executioners of his vengeance; who can ſo readily turn all our pleaſures into loathing, all our comelineſs and decorations into deformity, and corruption, and pour contempt on all our pride and ſelf-importance! Nor is there any reſiſtance, or eſcape from his tremendous indignation, whatever meſſengers he employs to convey it. Yet ſtill he continues merciful, and is ready to forgive every ſinner who ſubmits, and only purſues with vengeance ſuch, as perſiſt in their rebellion. Yet let us not miſtake tranſient relentings, or haſty determinations of amendment, for that unreſerved ſubmiſſion, which the word of God requires. Under the weight of incumbent affliction, and the dreadful expectation of ſtill heavier ſufferings, the proudeſt and hardeſt heart will feel ſome pangs of remorſe: the deſpiſed, and hated ſervants of the Lord will then perhaps be called for; their prayers will be deſired, and amendment promiſed: but alas! ſuch appearances are entitled to ſmall regard, as little dependance can be placed upon them. Even Satan once beſought Chriſt not to torment him: and experience ſhews that frequently ſuch intreaties, and reſolutions, ſpring from no higher principle than fear of torment. For when there is reſpite, ſuch men again harden their hearts, throw off their aſſumed and conſtrained ſhews of piety, return to their ſins, and commonly proceed to more ungodlineſs. But though we may not countenance the deluſion of men's living in ſin, in expectation of dying penitent; nor give unſcriptural encouragement to ſuch fallacious appearances: yet knowing that nothing is too hard for the Lord, we ſhould be ready to aſſiſt with our counſel, and prayers, even thoſe perſons, who have been enemies to us; rendering them every kind of ſervice, and ſhewing them every ſpecies of courteouſneſs, except that of flattering them in their falſe confidence: and this, without being wearied of well-doing, by reiterated diſappointments: yet reminding ſuch perſons of their former relapſes, and ſolemnly warning them no longer to deal deceitfully. But the love of ſin, and its ſuppoſed advantages and pleaſures, joined with the pride of the human heart, will prevail againſt all convictions, and reſolutions, if they are not mortified by the grace of God. Hence many *ſeek* to enter in, and are not able: they ſeem in earneſt, but there is ſome reſerve, ſome Herodias, ſome beloved ſecret ſin, of which they are ready to ſay, as Lot of Zoar, is it not a little one? Unwilling they are to look upon themſelves as in danger of everlaſting miſery: they hope for ſome abatement, or ſome allowance; or propoſe to make ſome compromiſe to boliſter up their hopes, yet keep their ſin: they refrain from other ſins, they do much, and give much, yea puniſh themſelves much; they will abſtain at ſome times, and as it were, let their ſin depart a little way, provided it remain within call: but finally to divorce Herodias! To ſell all, and follow Chriſt, bearing the croſs! Alas! if this be the caſe, they muſt have longer time to conſider; they muſt poſtpone, though not forego the thoughts of eternal life, and venture all conſequences: they are ſorrowful, but depart from Chriſt, determined to keep the world at preſent, and hope for ſome future ſeaſon, when ſalvation may be had, without ſuch coſtly ſacrifices. But the word of God is peremptory: the Lord is of one mind, and who can turn him! The expected abatement, the favourable ſeaſon is waited for in vain; the conviction wears off, the heart grows hard, and at length by death the poor ſinner is driven away in his wickedneſs, and left without hope, to execrate his folly. Would we eſcape this dreadful end, we muſt earneſtly ſeek for grace to enable us, "if our right hand, or eye, or foot offend us, reſolutely "to part with them:" without reſerve, and without delay, we muſt hearken to the voice of Chriſt, finally to divorce every ſin, and renounce all that leads to ſin; and ſtand prepared, as called to it by his command, and in his providence, to forſake all for his ſake, and to follow him bearing our croſs, as his true diſciples. Nor let us forget to obſerve, that they who would ſerve God, muſt ſeparate from the ſociety of ſinners, whoſe conduct is an abomination to the true chriſtian; and who in turn has him in abhorrence. For our comfort we note, that though wicked men, and deceivers oft practiſe, and proſper, yet their power is limited; and however they may impoſe on others, they cannot hurt the ſervant of God, who truſteth in him; but in due time ſhall be conſtrained to confeſs, that

the oxen, and upon the ſheep: *there ſhall be* a very grievous murrain.

4 And the LORD ſhall ſever between the cattle of Iſrael, and the cattle of Egypt: and there ſhall nothing die of all *that is* the childrens of Iſrael.

5 And the LORD appointed a ſet time, ſaying, To-morrow the LORD ſhall do this thing in the land.

6 And the LORD did that thing on the morrow, and all the cattle of Egypt died: but of the cattle of the children of Iſrael died not one.

7 And Pharaoh ſent, and behold, there was not one of the cattle of the Iſraelites dead. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not let the people go.

8 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of aſhes of the furnace, and let Moſes ſprinkle it towards the heaven in the ſight of Pharaoh.

9 And it ſhall become ſmall duſt in all the land of Egypt, and ſhall be a boil breaking forth *with* blains, upon man, and upon beaſt, throughout all the land of Egypt.

10 And they took aſhes of the furnace, and ſtood before Pharaoh, and Moſes ſprinkled it up toward heaven: and it became a boil breaking forth *with* blains, upon man, and upon beaſt.

11 And the magicians could not ſtand before Moſes, becauſe of the boils: for the boil was upon the magicians, and upon all the Egyptians.

12 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had ſpoken unto Moſes.

13 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Riſe up early in the morning, and ſtand before Pharaoh, and ſay unto him, Thus ſaith the LORD God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may ſerve me.

14 For

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that the Lord is with him. And whether God exempt his people from the common afflictions of the world, or not, he will make all at laſt to "return and diſcern be-"tween the righteous and the wicked; between him that "ſerveth God, and him, that ſerveth him not." (*Mal.* c. 3. v. 18.)

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 6. *All the cattle.*] That is, great multitudes of them were ſpeedily ſwept away, all over Egypt, and of every kind. The Egyptians idolized their cattle; the deſtruction of which evinced their ſtupidity, and diſplayed the glory of Iſrael's God.

V. 7. *Was hardened*, &c.] He had ſo long done violence to his conſcience, that it was now become callous, and as it were, ſeared with an hot iron. So that, though his curioſity led him to ſend to enquire about the cattle of Iſrael, yet their miraculous preſervation, according to the expreſs prediction, made no manner of impreſſion upon him.

V. 9. *And it ſhall become*, &c.] The waving of the rod was a token of God's operation, but could have no effect in producing the diſeaſe: but it might be a ſignificant emblem of the corrupting, and heating of the air with ſuch baleful effluvia, as produced theſe effects; and denote that the God of heaven, even the Lord God of Iſrael, was the author of this plague.

A boil breaking forth, &c.] Though the former miracles teaſed, diſtreſſed, and impoveriſhed the Egyptians, yet their health, and their perſons had hitherto been untouched: but the judgments of God came nearer and nearer; and terrible, and painful inflammations began to ſeize their bodies, as well as to prey upon the poor remains of their cattle. (*Job*, c. 2. v. 7—8.)

V. 11. *The boil was upon the magicians*, &c.] The magicians, though baffled, had hitherto, it ſeems, perſiſted in the conteſt; but, being viſited by this loathſome, and painful diſorder, they were now rendered contemptible, and finally driven from their ground.

V. 12. *And the Lord hardened*, &c.] The Lord had declared twice, that he would harden the heart of Pharaoh, (ch. 5. v. 2. ch. 7. v. 3.). But this is the firſt time, in which it is expreſsly ſaid that he did actually harden his heart: which expreſſion is afterwards ſeveral times repeated. Hence we may infer, that as God had before permitted, and appointed a variety of events, which had a tendency to increaſe Pharaoh's obduracy; ſo that now in puniſhment of his preſumptuous rebellion, he totally gave him up to his own heart's luſts, and to the power of Satan: nor can we interpret the expreſſion too ſtrongly; if we only remember this one thing, that God did not by his own power create any hardneſs, or wickedneſs in his heart; "for God is not tempted of evil, nei-"ther tempteth he any man," &c. (*James*, c. 1. v. 13—17.) Certainly it was God's ſettled purpoſe to have Pharaoh finally hardened, for the accompliſhment of which he effectually provided: and in which he doubtleſs was perfectly righteous. Indeed *we can* ſee that this proud tyrant, and cruel oppreſſor, from the firſt deſerved to be made an example, by the juſt Judge of the univerſe: and provided none are puniſhed, who do not deſerve it; and none above their deſerts, none can have any cauſe of complaint. Hardneſs of heart is a figurative expreſſion, denoting that inſenſibility of mind, upon which neither

14 For I will at this time ſend all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy ſervants, and upon thy people: that thou mayeſt know that *there is* none like me in all the earth.

15 For now I will ſtretch out my hand, that I may ſmite thee and thy people with peſtilence; and thou ſhalt be cut off from the earth.

16 And in very deed for this *cauſe* have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew *in* thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

17 As yet exalteſt thou thyſelf againſt my people, that thou wilt not let them go?

18 Behold, to-morrow about this time, I will cauſe it to rain a very grievous hail, ſuch as hath not been in Egypt, ſince the foundation thereof, even until now.

19 Send therefore now, *and* gather thy cattle, and all that thou haſt in the field: *for upon* every man and beaſt which ſhall be found in the field, and ſhall not be brought home, the hail ſhall come down upon them, and they ſhall die.

20 He that feared the word of the LORD amongſt the ſervants of Pharaoh, made his ſervants and his cattle flee into the houſes.

21 And he that regarded not the word of the LORD, left his ſervants and his cattle in the field.

22 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, ſtretch forth thine hand toward heaven, that there may be hail in all the land of Egypt; upon man, and upon beaſt, and upon every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt.

23 And Moſes ſtretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the LORD ſent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the LORD rained hail upon the land of Egypt.

24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, ſuch as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt, ſince it became a nation.

25 And the hail ſmote throughout all the the land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beaſt: and the hail ſmote every herb of the field, and brake every tree of the field.

26 Only in the land of Goſhen, where the children of Iſrael *were*, was there no hail.

27 And Pharaoh ſent, and called for Moſes and Aaron, and ſaid unto them, I have ſinned *this* time: the LORD *is* righteous, and I and my people *are* wicked.

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threatenings, nor promiſes, neither judgments, nor mercies, can make any abiding impreſſion: but the conſcience being ſtupified, and the heart filled with inſolent pride, and preſumption, perſiſt in determined impenitence, unbelief, and diſobedience. This ſtate of mind is alſo called the ſtony heart, and to it is oppoſed the heart of fleſh, the broken, and contrite, and the tender heart; of which in due time and place. Though the boil was upon the magicians, yet probably Pharaoh had eſcaped it, which would tend to increaſe his obduracy.

V. 16. *For this cauſe have I raiſed thee up*, &c.] The Lord, who worketh all things according to the counſel of his own will, and who well knew the heart of Pharaoh, in his providence advanced him to the throne, and exalted him to ſuch an height of proſperity, as he knew would enhance exceedingly his inſolence, and preſumption; and this at the time, when he intended to liberate Iſrael: on purpoſe that Pharaoh, in the pride and ſtoutneſs of his heart, might engage and perſiſt in this conteſt; from which he intended to take occaſion to diſplay his almighty power, ſovereign authority, and awful juſtice, in the deſtruction of that proud monarch; that all the nations might hear, and know that the God of Iſrael was indeed the Lord of the whole earth, for the glory of his name, and for an extenſive, and durable advantage to mankind.

V. 17. *As yet exalteſt*, &c.?] Art thou ſtill ſo infatuated, as to oppoſe thy feeble arm againſt that omnipotence, whoſe effects thou haſt already witneſſed, and experienced to thy coſt?

V. 18. *Such as hath not been in Egypt*, &c.] Even rain is very rare in Egypt, much more ſuch a tremendous tempeſt.

V. 20. *He that feared*, &c.] When Moſes had delivered the meſſage, the report ſpread ſwiftly among the people: and ſome were ſo far influenced by what they had ſeen, and heard, as to expect the ſtorm, and provide againſt it: yet we do not perceive by the ſequel, that they were many of them partakers of that true faith, *which habitually*, and *abidingly* receives, and is influenced by the teſtimony of God; and eſpecially in thoſe things, which pertain unto the ſalvation of the ſoul. This ſeems to have been only a tranſient impreſſion of terror, and conviction, which produced no laſting effects.

V. 25. *Both man, and beaſt.*] Now firſt were their lives touched by the plagues, hitherto theſe had been ſpared.

28 Intreat the LORD (for it is enough) that there be no *more* mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.

29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD: *and* the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know, how that the earth *is* the LORD's.

30 But as for thee and thy servants, I know that ye will not yet fear the LORD God.

31 And the flax, and the barley was smitten: for the barley *was* in the ear, and the flax *was* bolled.

32 But the wheat and the rye were not smitten: for they *were* not grown up.

33 And Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh, and spread abroad his hands unto the LORD: and the thunders and hail ceased, and the rain was not poured upon the earth.

34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, and the hail, and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants.

35 And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

V. 30. *I know that ye will not*, &c.] Moses knew it, both as being acquainted with God's purpose, and with the human heart; and was sensible that this was not the effect of any gracious change, but extorted merely by terror, and anguish of spirit.

V. 31. *Was bolled.*] Was grown up into stems, or stalks.

V. 32. *Were not grown up.*] And therefore were not so much exposed, and were in consequence preserved.

V. 33. *Moses went out of*, &c.] Being assured of the divine protection, he would express this his confidence before Pharaoh, and his servants, by going forth out of the city in the midst of this tremendous storm: he would also go forth to illustrate the distinction, and separation betwixt Egypt, and Israel, before he begun his intercession.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Did the Lord commonly execute his full vengeance at once, the hearts of sinners would be dismayed, and they would not dare to rebel with such stoutness, and contempt: but "because sentence against an evil work is not "executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of "men is fully set in them to do evil." (*Eccle.* c. 8. v. 11.) But "evil pursueth sinners," and with rapid, though oft unnoticed steps, approaches nearer, and nearer; nor is there any possible escape but by repentance, and turning unto God, in the way of his appointment. God hath a variety of methods, whereby he can impoverish those, who have grown rich by injustice; and deprive men of those things, which they have idolized: and if they will not regard when he bereaves them of their substance, he can fill their bodies with disease, and their hearts with terror, and at length cut them off in their wickedness.—Satan encourages his servants with hopes of great advantage, but he cannot ensure their impunity, even in this world; and they, who wait patiently, shall see the folly of seducers, and deceivers made manifest to all men, as that of these magicians also was. (2 *Tim.* c. 3. v. 9.) Though men treat the Lord with contempt, and set him at defiance, yet they cannot defeat his purposes; nay, he will constrain them to subserve his glory: and many, in his mysterious providence, have been exceedingly prospered, and even exalted upon thrones, only to discover the wickedness of their dispositions, in order that the justice, and power of God might be displayed in their destruction: yet have they none to blame but themselves for that pride, and ungodliness, which abuses both the bounty and patience of God into an occasion, and encouragement to sin: for *however* the Lord hardens the hearts of men, he always does it judicially, as a punishment of former sins; and generally of the sin of hardening their own hearts under solemn warnings, deep convictions, severe rebukes, and remarkable deliverances. Even in the midst of wicked nations, which are ripe for vengeance, some are most destitute of all fear of God, and more daring in sin, than others. But alas! that men should be more careful of their cattle, and property, than of their souls! Would we escape the threatened vengeance of God, we must notice his warnings, and flee for refuge at his appointment: for they, who disregard his word, will be convinced of its truth, when it is too late. Under the prospect of impending destruction, the anguish of suffering, and the dismay of conscience, the proudest sinner is oft appalled, and the most humiliating confessions, and most pious language are extorted: which, though not voluntary, nor abiding, nor profitable to the sinner himself; yet are honourable to God, and illustrate his justice in punishing such as having respite, return back to, and are hardened in iniquity. And though we must still be ready to pray for our enemies; yet we must not judge of men's characters by such transient pangs of conviction, but by their habitual conduct. Whilst all things concur in sealing, and hastening the obstinate sinner's condemnation, the Lord gives his people safety, amidst the storms and tempests, which rage without; but which cannot even disturb the sweet calm, that prevails within; "for the "work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of "righteousness quietness, and assurance for ever." (*Isaiah*, c. 32. v. 17.)

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. Moses sent to Pharaoh to denounce the judgment of the locusts, v. 1—6. 2d. Pharaoh persuaded of his servants to let Israel go, sending for Moses, treating with him, and driving him from him with threats, v. 7—11. 3d. The plague of the locusts, v. 12—15. 4th. Moses sent for, intreating the Lord, the locusts removed, and Pharaoh again hardened, v. 16—20. 5th. The plague of darkness, Pharaoh again treating with Moses, but again hardened, and again driving him from him with threats, v. 21—29.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants; that I might shew these my signs before him:

2 And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy sons son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done amongst them; that ye may know how that I *am* the LORD.

3 And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me? Let my people go, that they may serve me.

4 Else if thou refuse to let my people go, behold to-morrow will I bring the locusts into thy coast.

5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth: and they shall eat the residue of that which is escaped, which remaineth unto you from the hail, and shall eat every tree which groweth for you out of the field.

6 And they shall fill thy houses, and the houses of all thy servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians; which neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers fathers have seen, since the day that they were upon the earth, unto this day. And he turned himself, and went out from Pharaoh.

7 And Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: Knowest thou not yet, that Egypt is destroyed?

8 And Moses and Aaron were brought again unto Pharaoh: and he said unto them, Go, serve the LORD your God: *but* who *are* they that shall go?

9 And Moses said, We will go with our young, and with our old, with our sons, and with our daughters; with our flocks, and with our herds will we go: for we *must hold* a feast unto the LORD.

10 And he said unto them, Let the LORD be so with you, as I will let you go, and your little ones: look *to it*, for evil *is* before you.

11 Not so: go now ye *that are* men, and serve the LORD, for that you did desire. And they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.

12 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land, *even* all that the hail hath left.

13 And Moses stretched forth his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east-wind upon the land all that day, and all *that* night: *and* when it was morning, the east-wind brought the locusts.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 6. *Which neither*, &c.] The ravages, which locusts make in those countries, are frequently very dreadful. (*Joel*, c. 1. v. 4—7. c. 2. v. 1—11. compared with verse 25.) They even darken the earth by intercepting, with their inconceivable multitudes, the light of the sun; they turn fruitful countries into desolate deserts, and leave the wretched inhabitants to perish with famine: nor can they by any means be resisted, or escaped. These locusts were dreadful beyond example, and comparison, in their size, and multitudes, and in the desolations, which they occasioned: (verse 14.) and were thus foretold, that the hand of the Lord in sending them might be more evident.

V. 10. *Let the Lord be so*, &c.] This is either spoken in scorn and contempt, as if he would say, Let the Lord be with you, and take care of you, if he can, but I will not let you go: or by way of imprecation; as if he would say, I *would* that the Lord may never be any more with you, than I will let you go: for that I am resolved, I never will consent to.

And your little ones, &c.] Pharaoh intended to keep the children, as hostages to ensure the return of their parents.

Look to it; for evil, &c.] He declares, that if they continue thus troublesome, he will call them to account, and inflict punishment on them, for all the damage, which had been done: and considering his mad presumption, he would certainly have attempted it, had not the Lord dismayed, and with-held him.

14 And

14 And the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous *were they*; before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall be such.

15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened, and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees, which the hail had left: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land of Egypt.

16 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.

17 Now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

18 And he went out from Pharaoh, and intreated the LORD.

19 And the LORD turned a mighty strong west-wind, which took away the locusts, and cast them into the Red sea: there remained not one locust in all the coasts of Egypt.

20 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go.

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, even darkness *which* may be felt.

22 And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven: and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days.

23 They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

24 And Pharaoh called unto Moses, and said, Go ye, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you.

25 And Moses said, Thou must give us also sacrifices, and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the LORD our God.

26 Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the LORD our God; and we know not with what we must serve the LORD, until we come thither.

27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go.

28 And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more: for in *that* day thou seest my face, thou shalt die.

29 And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.

CHAP.

V. 16. *Pharaoh called—in haste.*] As seeing nothing but death by famine before his eyes, and those of his people.

V. 17. *Now therefore forgive*, &c.] Pharaoh confesses to Moses, craves forgiveness of him, and entreats him to pray for him: but we never read that he confessed his sins unto the Lord, humbled himself before him, or besought him to forgive him. (See 2 *Chron*, c. 33. v. 12—19.)

V. 19. *Red sea*, &c.] Or weedy sea, for so it is in the original.—The Greek translators of the Bible call it the Red sea, either from the colour of the waters; of the soil; or of the weeds; or from the neighbourhood of the Edomites, whose name signifies *red*. It is a large arm of the sea, which runs up between Arabia, and Idumea on one hand, and Egypt on the other, and separates the continents of Africa and Asia from each other: except as they communicate by the narrow isthmus of Suez, which lies betwixt the end of the Red sea, and the Mediterranean sea.—But the Red sea in many ancient writers is used for that which is now called the Indian ocean.

V. 21. *Darkness, which may be felt.*] It is generally supposed that the clammy fog, which occasioned this judgment, extinguished all their lamps, &c. and left them in total darkness; which could be felt in the pain, which it excited.—But certainly it was such a darkness as we have no conception of, and nearly allied to the "blackness of "darkness for ever." (*Jude*, v. 13. *Rev.* c. 16. v. 10, 11.)

V. 23. *They saw not*, &c.] It is a tradition of the Jews, that the Egyptians were affrighted by horrible noises, occasioned by evil spirits, and that this is the meaning of (*Psalm* 78. v. 49.) "sending evil angels among them!" Doubtless their own consciences would be filled with horror, and inflict torment upon them, when thus inclosed in this tremendous darkness.

The children of Israel, &c.] They might now have marched off unmolested; but it was the Lord's pleasure that they should go forth, not as abject fugitives, but as triumphant conquerors.

V. 29. *Thou hast spoken*, &c.] The next chapter seems an appendix to this, and the conference therein recorded appears to have taken place directly; and Moses afterwards went out, intending not to see Pharaoh's face again.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ultimate end of all the Lord's dispensations, whether in judgment, or in mercy, is the manifestation of his

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes informed that one more plague was coming upon Egypt; and the Iſraelites ordered to borrow jewels of ſilver, and gold of the Egyptians, v. 1—2. 2d. Moſes honoured of the Egyptians, denouncing the death of the firſt-born, and in anger leaving Pharaoh, v. 3—8. 3d. The Lord's words to, and works by Moſes, and Aaron, v. 9—10.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Yet will I bring one plague *more* upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he ſhall let *you* go, he ſhall ſurely thruſt you out hence all together.

2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of ſilver, and jewels of gold.

3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the ſight of the Egyptians. Moreover, the man Moſes *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the ſight of Pharaoh's ſervants, and in the ſight of the people.

4 And

own glory: and though we may not at preſent fully diſcern it; yet we ſhall hereafter behold it in its full luſtre; and the whole world ſhall either with joyful acclamations proclaim, or in ſilence admit, that he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. At preſent our duty is to believe, and we ſhall hereafter ſee the glory of God.

The examples of ſeverity, and goodneſs, which are recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, were written for our profit; and the Lord's wiſdom, and juſtice in them will more evidently appear, if our own experience evince their extenſive, and laſting uſefulneſs. Whatever we learn from the Word, and from the works of God, we ſhould point out, and interpret to our children, and ſhew them the power, wiſdom, juſtice, and love of the Lord therein diſplayed; for they were intended not only for our good, but that of our children alſo.—We ſhould alſo remember that Satan, and his inſtruments are extremely averſe to our ſerving God with our ſons, and our daughters; and that they employ various methods of keeping *them* from the Lord; we have need therefore to be more peremptory about it, and careful to initiate them, even when "little ones," in the ways and worſhip of God; "for of "ſuch is the kingdom of heaven:" and not imitate ſome *apparently* religious parents, who act as if they were of Pharaoh's opinion, and ſuppoſed that the ſervice of God was only for men, and women; for they allow their children to ſtay behind, when they go to worſhip; and permit them to ſpend their time in diſſipation, and vanity; as if they would leave them in Egypt, as hoſtages for their own return.—Nor ſhould young people forget that the Lord's counſel is, "Remember thy Creator in the days of "thy youth;" but Satan's counſel is to keep children in a ſtate of ſlavery to ſin, and to the world 'till they grow older. But we muſt not only ſerve God with our houſholds, but with all our ſubſtance, not leaving a hoof behind; not ſuffering the enemy to keep poſſeſſion of any part of it, either by avariciouſly hoarding it, or by ſpending it upon our pride, and luſts: conſidering all our poſſeſſions, as the Lord's property, committed to our ſtewardſhip, and not knowing what he may immediately demand, we ſhall be prepared to expend, or part with any proportion that may be required, with leſs heſitation, and reluctance.—Nor ſhould we regard the contempt, and reproach, no, nor even the threats of thoſe, who would deter us from ſerving God: they will oft affright us with the idea, that evil is before us; but we ſhall not find it ſo, if we truſt in, and obey the Lord: he will be for us, and perhaps they will be ere long conſtrained to bow before us, and make their ſupplications unto us: and certainly in the days of adverſity, and in the gloomy vale of death, when the wicked are ſilent in darkneſs, conſumed with terrors, and tormented by their own conſciences, we ſhall walk in the light of God's countenance, and rejoice in his ſalvation: and when they are driven into the blackneſs of eternal darkneſs, we ſhall have an inheritance amongſt the ſaints in light eternal. Let us then lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth near. Only "looking diligent-"ly leſt any man fail of the grace of God:" for the hardeſt ſinner oft trembles, the moſt ſtupid is ſometimes ſelf-condemned, nay ſome, that are finally loſt, have "been almoſt "perſuaded to be Chriſtians." But pride of heart, and the love of ſin, and procraſtination form the three-fold cord, which they cannot break: upon ſuch perſons all counſel is thrown away, though backed with the evidence of the moſt undeniable facts, and the certain proſpect of deſtruction. They would treat about reconciliation, but they will not conſent to yield unreſervedly, to part with *every* ſin, and caſt themſelves wholly upon the Lord's mercy: therefore he rejects their propoſals with diſdain; and every relenting, and reſpite leaves them ſtill harder, as the winter ſun thaws the ſnow, which, when its beams are withdrawn, congeals into ice.—We may find ſuch perſons uſing good words, and putting the Lord's ſervants in his place, as if they were *gods* to them, (*Ex.* c. 7. v. 1.) and ſeeming to expect ſalvation from them: but they pray not earneſtly, and conſtantly for themſelves; and therefore ſin retains its dominion, and Satan his poſſeſſion, and their laſt ſtate is worſe then the firſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. V. 1. *Yet will I*, &c.] It ſeems that this was a ſecret revelation to Moſes, whilſt he was in the preſence of Pharaoh, in order that he might denounce this laſt dreadful judgment, before he went out from him. Doubtleſs Moſes would be glad to hear of ſo ſpeedy a period being put to this conteſt, which deſolated Egypt, in order to deliver Iſrael.

V. 3. *Very great*, &c.] The people reverenced Moſes as a very extraordinary perſon, of wonderful courage, wiſdom, and ſanctity, and endued with powers of inflicting

4 And Moſes ſaid, Thus ſaith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midſt of Egypt.

5 And all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt ſhall die, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh, that ſitteth upon his throne, even unto the firſt-born of the maid-ſervant that *is* behind the mill; and all the firſt-born of beaſts.

6 And there ſhall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, ſuch as there was none like it, nor ſhall be like it any more.

7 But againſt any of the children of Iſrael, ſhall not a dog move his tongue, againſt man or beaſt: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Iſrael.

8 And all theſe thy ſervants ſhall come down unto me, and bow down themſelves unto me, ſaying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out: and he went out from Pharaoh in a great anger.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you: that my wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt.

10 And Moſes and Aaron did all theſe wonders before Pharaoh: and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, ſo that he would not let the children of Iſrael go out of his land.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1ſt. The month of Iſrael's deliverance appointed to be the firſt month of their year, v. 1—2. 2d. God's command to Moſes concerning the paſſover, and the feaſt of unleavened bread: and Moſes delivering it to the elders of Iſrael, v. 3—28. 3d. The firſt-born of Iſrael ſlain, Moſes, and Aaron ſent for, the Iſraelites ſent away in haſte, ſpoiling the Egyptians, and marching out, attended by a mixed multitude, v. 29—39. 4th. The date of their departure, and the fulfilment of God's promiſe to Abraham, v. 40—42. 5th. Further rules reſpecting the paſſover, v. 43—51.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and Aaron in the land of Egypt, ſaying,

2 This month *ſhall be* unto you the beginning

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ing judgments, or removing them at pleaſure: and probably many of them were ſecretly perſuaded, that he had juſtice on his ſide; and were more diſpoſed to blame Pharaoh, than him, as the author of their calamities: for though princes are oft infatuated, and hireling courtiers flatter them, and perſuade them of the contrary; yet the moſt of the people generally favour the cauſe of the oppreſſed; and conſider ſome meaſure of liberty, as the common right of mankind.

V. 4. *Will I go out*, &c.] The Lord went out as a mighty conqueror to trample down, and triumph over his enemies.

V. 7. *Move his tongue.*] None ſhall dare to do, or to ſpeak any evil of them; but all ſhall ſtand in awe of them.

V. 8. *In a great anger.*] He thus expreſſed his deteſtation of Pharaoh's obſtinacy, who probably treated this laſt meſſage with contempt: and thus Moſes ſolemnly left him to the judgment of God, as an incurable rebel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the Lord has inflicted ſo many, and ſuch ſevere judgments, that man cannot conceive any thing worſe; he has ſtill more terrible plagues in reſerve: but generally executes thoſe laſt, which he denounced firſt (c. 4. v. 23.) "Still enduring with much long ſuffering even the veſſels "of wrath, which are fitted for deſtruction, (*Rom.* c. 9. "v. 22.) that he may ſhew his wrath, and make his "power known." But what are all theſe ten plagues combined, when compared with the wrath to come, that one plague reſerved for all obſtinate rebels in another world! The Lord can make his people a burthenſome ſtone to all, who burthen themſelves with them, (*Zech.* c. 12. v. 3.) and render all ſenſible that it is at their peril, that they touch them: nay he is able to give them favour in the ſight of thoſe, who have been their enemies: and when he enables his ſervants to maintain a conſiſtency of character, he will put ſuch honour upon them, as ſhall ſilence all, that ſlander; and confound all, who deſpiſe them; and conſtrain all to approve of their conduct, reverence their perſons, and even to bow down before them: and when the people of God ſhall triumph in his redemption, and their enemies cry out under the anguiſh of his indignation, the difference will be too evident to remain longer unnoticed. They, who are employed of God in public ſervices, may, conſiſtent with the deepeſt humility, magnify their office: and without deviating from chriſtian meekneſs, may expreſs deep indignation, as well as ſorrow at the wickedneſs of mankind: after his example, who "looked around with anger, being grieved with the hard-"neſs of their hearts:" ſuch anger againſt the ſin of thoſe, whoſe good they have perſeveringly ſought in vain, and for whom their prayers have again, and again prevailed, is a terrible indication, and common forerunner of the wrath of God. However God in all things will at laſt be glorified; and as he hath foretold that his Goſpel would be ſlighted and abuſed, we muſt not think the worſe of it on that account.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 2. *This month*, &c.] That is, the month Abib (*Deut.* c. 13. v. 4. c. 16. v. 1.) called elſewhere, Niſan (*Eſther*, c. 3. v. 7.) which anſwers nearly

to

ginning of months: it *shall be* the first month of the year to you.

3 Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth *day* of this month, they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of *their* fathers, a lamb for an house.

4 And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house, take *it* according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating, shall make your count for the lamb.

5 Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take *it* out from the sheep or from the goats.

6 And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

7 And they shall take of the blood, and strike *it* on the two side posts, and on the upper door-post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it.

8 And they shall eat the flesh in that night; roast with fire, and unleavened bread, *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it.

9 Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire: his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof.

10 And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning: and that which remaineth of it until the morning, ye shall burn with fire.

11 And thus shall ye eat it; *with* your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste; it *is* the LORD's passover.

12 For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast: and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment; I *am* the LORD.

13 And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where you *are:* and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you, to destroy *you*, when I smite the land of Egypt.

14 And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and you shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations: you shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever.

15 Seven

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to the latter part of March, and the beginning of April, with us.

The first month of the, &c.] It had hitherto been the seventh; and they still continued to compute several of their civil concerns in the same manner: but in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt, when they were formed into a nation, and a church, and received as it were a new kind of existence, this was appointed to be the first month of the year to them; and their sacred institutions were in general reckoned from it. This new style began the year with the spring, when the face of the creation was renewed.

V. 3 *Speak ye unto*, &c.] Doubtless the congregation had been instructed to hold themselves in readiness to depart at an hour's warning, and were much engaged in preparation; yet they must spare time to hold a sacred festival; for we must never be too busy to attend upon God's ordinances.

According to the house, &c.] They were enjoined to eat it with the families, and relatives, as much as possible.

V. 4. *Make your count*, &c.] That every one might appear to have an equal interest in this typical sacrifice, they were to join in the purchase of the lamb, according to their numbers.

V. 6. *Ye shall keep it until*, &c.] This preparation would prevent distraction at the time; and was a figurative instruction to prepare their hearts for solemn ordinances.

The whole assembly of the, &c.] Each of the congregation seem to have killed their own lambs; but it was ordered to be done publicly in the presence of the assembly of the elders, or representatives.

In the evening.] It is generally supposed that the passover was slain between 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and sun-set.

V. 7. *The two side-posts, and on the*, &c.] But not the threshold.

V. 10. *And ye shall let nothing*, &c.] Lest they should reserve it for superstitious purposes.

V. 11. *With your loins*, &c.] As those, who were in readiness to set out upon their journey. There is no appearance of the passover being afterwards eaten in this posture: Christ and his apostles seem to have eaten it sitting. (*Matt.* c. 26. v. 20. *Mark*, c. 14. v. 18. *Luke*, c. 22. v. 14.) Probably several of these circumstances were only intended to be observed at that time, and not afterwards.

V. 12. *I will pass through*, &c.] By the awful proofs which he gave of his presence, and vengeance upon his enemies, was a triumph over the gods of Egypt; and probably was attended with a devastation of their idols and temples; as Dagon was thrown down before the ark of the Lord. (1 *Sam.* c. 5.)

V. 14. *You shall keep it*, &c.] The passover was both a remembrance of Israel's preservation, and deliverance

out

15 Seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread, even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses: for whosoever eateth leavened bread, from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel.

16 And in the first day, *there shall be* an holy convocation, and in the seventh day there shall be an holy convocation to you: no manner of work shall be done in them, save *that* which every man must eat, that only may be done of you.

17 And ye shall observe *the feast of* unleavened bread; for in this self-same day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations, by an ordinance for ever.

18 In the first *month*, on the fourteenth day of the month at even ye shall eat unlea-

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out of Egypt; and a remarkable type of Christ. Though the Israelites were not guilty of the same crimes, and with the same aggravations as the Egyptians were; yet they also were sinners. Their preservation, and deliverance were not the recompence of their own righteousness, but the result of distinguishing mercy: (*Deut.* c. 9. v. 4—6. *Ezek.* c. 20. v. 7—9.) of this they were to be reminded; and by this ordinance instructed that all blessings came to them, being sinners, through the shedding and sprinkling of blood; as prefiguring the lamb slain from the foundation of the world, (*Rev.* c. 13. v. 8.] according to God's purpose, shewn by these types, and shadows. The slaying of the lamb, the sprinkling of the blood, and the eating of the paschal lamb by the Israelites in Egypt, was a confession of sin, a profession of faith, and an act of external obedience: in which doubtless some were spiritual worshippers, who through the sign discerned the thing signified: the most, it is to be feared, rested in the outward performance; which however secured the external deliverance: but had any, in presumption, and contempt, refused obedience, they would have been exposed to the same judgments as the Egyptians. In after ages the power, and love of God in the deliverance of Israel from Egypt were commemorated by this observance: and though numbers saw no farther; yet some would see the price of that redemption, and of all other blessings; and to them it would not only be a joyful tribute of gratitude for former temporal mercies, but an act of humble faith in, and dependance on the promised Saviour even until his coming. Although some of these circumstances might have reference to the hasty departure of Israel out of Egypt; yet they all more aptly shadow forth the great Antitype. In him every true Israelite has an equal interest: he was indeed the Lamb without spot and blemish (1 *Pet.* c. 1. v. 19.). In the fulness of time, 4000 years after the first promise of him, he was slain for sinners; the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel demanding, and witnessing his death. Not only was his blood shed, but he suffered agonies unknown from that justice of God, which is as a consuming fire, and which is here *shadowed* forth by the roasting of the pāschal lamb. But the shedding of his blood, and the intenseness of his sufferings, are only the preparation of salvation: without the application of it to ourselves, we shall reap no benefit from it: receiving the atonement by faith alone gives security to our guilty souls, that we shall not be destroyed in the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. Whilst we reap the benefit of the Redeemer's blood, we must not be ashamed to profess openly our dependance on him, and obligations to him; but the vile apostate, or the abuser of Gospel Grace, who tramples it under his feet, contracts the deepest guilt. (*Heb.* c. 10. v. 28—29.) And as the Lamb of God is the sacrifice for our sins; he is also the food of our souls, on which we are "to feed in our hearts "by faith with thanksgiving:" receiving him, and the whole of his purchased blessings, with equal valuation; not separating his teaching, and government, from his sacrifice. Leaven, the known emblem of hypocrisy (*Luke*, c. 12. v. 1.), and of malice and wickedness, (1 *Cor.* c. 5. v. 7—8.) must be purged out, and the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth substituted. The true penitent alone, who *bitterly* mourns for sin, (*Zech.* c. 12. v. 10.) and mingles his rejoicing in Christ with godly sorrow, can properly eat this passover: temptations, and chastisements, though they *seem* to alloy the feast, yet render it doubly sweet to the experienced christian: who refreshed and strengthened by this spiritual food, stands prepared to do his master's will, and to walk in his ways, though rough and narrow; having his loins girded about with truth, and his feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace: and being a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, he is ready to renounce the world, and sin, and to march with alacrity towards the heavenly Canaan. Some glimpses of this light believers of old discovered; but with the New Testament in our hands we may have clearer *notions* than they had: but the question is, whether we have more *lively affections?*

V. 15. *Seven days shall ye eat*, &c.] This is a further type of the christian's holy life, which is the fruit of the Saviour's suffering death, and the effect of true faith in him: in which the old leaven of sin is with abhorrence put away, and love, and purity unfeigned prevail; not only at a few favoured seasons of special comfort in communion with God; but habitually and with continuance.

That soul shall be cut off, &c.] Either deprived of the privileges of an Israelite, or cut off by death; which may be examined more fully on another occasion. This is an expression of the Lord's indignation against such, as despised his command: and an emblem of his abhorrence of their hypocrisy, who profess faith in Christ, and yet live in the practice of known sin.

V. 16. *An holy convocation*, &c.] That is an assembly of the people for solemn worship, and for the offering of sacrifices.

No manner of work shall be done.] That the people might be the more at liberty to attend thereon.

vened bread, until the one and twentieth day of the month at even.

19 Seven days ſhall there be no leaven found in your houſes: for whoſoever eateth that which is leavened, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from the congregation of Iſrael, whether he be a ſtranger or born in the land.

20 Ye ſhall eat nothing leavened: in all your habitations ſhall ye eat unleavened bread.

21 Then Moſes called for all the elders of Iſrael, and ſaid unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the paſſover.

22 And ye ſhall take a bunch of hyſſop, and dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the baſon, and ſtrike the lintel and the two ſide-poſts with the blood that *is* in the baſon: and none of you ſhall go out at the door of his houſe until the morning.

23 For the LORD will paſs through to ſmite the Egyptians, and when he ſeeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two ſide-poſts, the LORD will paſs over the door, and will not ſuffer the deſtroyer to come in unto your houſes to ſmite *you*.

24 And ye ſhall obſerve this thing for an ordinance to thee, and to thy ſons for ever.

25 And it ſhall come to paſs, when ye be come to the land, which the LORD will give you, according as he hath promiſed, that ye ſhall keep this ſervice.

26 And it ſhall come to paſs, when your children ſhall ſay unto you, What mean you by this ſervice?

27 That ye ſhall ſay, It *is* the ſacrifice of the LORD's paſſover, who paſſed over the houſes of the children of Iſrael in Egypt, when he ſmote the Egyptians, and delivered our houſes. And the people bowed the head and worſhipped.

28 And the children of Iſrael went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moſes and Aaron, ſo did they.

29 And it came to paſs that at midnight the LORD ſmote all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, from the firſt-born of Pharaoh, that ſat on his throne, unto the firſt-born of the captive that *was* in the dungeon; and all the firſt-born of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh roſe up in the night, he and all his ſervants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt: for *there was* not a houſe where *there was* not one dead.

31 And he called for Moſes and Aaron by night, and ſaid, Riſe up, *and* get you forth from amongſt my people, both you and the children of Iſrael: and go ſerve the LORD, as ye have ſaid.

32 Alſo take your flocks, and your herds as ye have ſaid, and be gone: and bleſs me alſo.

33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might ſend them out of the land in haſte: for they ſaid, We *be* all dead *men*.

34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their ſhoulders.

V. 22. *None of you*, &c.] The blood, which they had ſprinkled, was their only ſecurity from the deſtroying Angel, under the protection of which they were ſtedfaſtly to abide.

V. 27. *It is the ſacrifice.*] The paſſover was a ſacrifice, as offered to God, and typical of Chriſt: but it differed from all their other ſacrifices, in that no part of it was conſumed upon the altar. It typified the extreme ſufferings of Chriſt, and the application of his atonement to the conſcience; as others did his ſacrifice, as preſented to, and accepted of the Father.

V. 29. *At midnight*, &c.] This circumſtance would exceedingly increaſe the terror of this tremendous execution. The Egyptians had been for three days, and nights juſt before, kept in perpetual ſolicitude and horror by the darkneſs; and now their reſt is broken by a more terrible calamity.

All the firſt-born, &c.] They were thus righteouſly puniſhed for murdering the children of the Iſraelites; as well as for keeping that nation in bondage; which God honoured by calling it, *his* ſon, and *his* firſt-born.

V. 30. *There was not a houſe*, &c.] Words can never expreſs the terror, and bitterneſs of this ſudden blow from an inviſible hand, deſtroying the pride, hopes, and comfort of every family, of every rank, throughout this populous kingdom: the whole nation at once mourning over their dead, and trembling for themſelves (v. 33.)

V. 34. *Their dough before*, &c.] Being kept in conſtant expectation of departing, they were probably making this preparation: but were driven away before their dough was baked, or even leavened. Thus the Lord enſured their preſent obſervance of the feaſt of unleavened bread; and this their haſty departure would be ever after commemorated thereby.

35 And

35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses: and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment.

36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them *such things as they required:* and they spoiled the Egyptians.

37 And the children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand on foot *that were* men, besides children.

38 And a mixed multitude went up also with them; and flocks, and herds, *even* very much cattle.

39 And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt, for it was not leavened: because they were thrust out of Egypt, and could not tarry, neither had they prepared for themselves any victual.

40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, *was* four hundred and thirty years.

41 And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.

42 It *is* a night to be much observed unto the LORD, for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this *is* that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel, in their generations.

43 And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, This *is* the ordinance of the passover: there shall no stranger eat thereof.

44 But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof.

45 A foreigner, and an hired servant shall not eat thereof.

46 In one house shall it be eaten, thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh abroad out of the house: neither shall ye break a bone thereof.

47 All the congregation of Israel shall keep it.

48 And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.

49 One

V. 35. *They borrowed*, &c.] In this extreme terror, the Egyptians would purchase the favour, and the speedy departure of Israel, at any price: and thus the Lord both took care that their hard-earned wages should at last be paid, and that the people should be well provided for their journey.

V. 36. *Spoiled the Egyptians*, &c.] They departed laden with their wealth, as if they had plundered them in war.

V. 37. *Six hundred thousand*, &c.] Considering the proportion that women, and children bear in general to grown men, the whole company could not be much less than two millions: an immense increase from seventy persons, in but a little more than 200 years!

V. 38. *A mixed multitude*, &c.] Some probably would leave Egypt because now desolated; some because they were distressed or discontented; some out of curiosity to see what would become of Israel, and how they would serve the Lord; and perhaps a few, out of cordial love to them, and their religion. But these were few indeed; for the bulk of this mixed multitude became a snare to them, (*Num.* c. 11. v. 4.) and probably after a time returned into Egypt. These typify such, as in all ages outwardly adhere to, but are not really of the Church of God.

Very much cattle.] This seems to have been the only property, which they possessed in Egypt, and which the Lord had lately caused exceedingly to increase.

V. 40. *Four hundred and thirty years.*] From the first calling of Abraham, exactly to a day, as it seems.

V. 41. *The hosts of the Lord*, &c.] His armies, enlisted under his banner, and marching at his command.

V. 45. *A foreigner shall not*, &c.] That is until he be circumcised. This teaches us, that without the circumcision of the heart, that is, "being born of the "Spirit," we can receive no benefit from the sacrifice of Christ: and although, not being able to see this circumcision of the heart, except in it's outward effects, we cannot make it the rule of admission to the sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper: yet men should "*examine themselves*" respecting it, "and so eat of that bread, and "drink of that cup." (1 *Cor.* c. 11. v. 28.)

V. 46. *Neither shall ye break a bone*, &c.] See *John*, c. 19. v. 36.

V. 48. *All his males*, &c.] A man was not to eat of the passover till all the males, under his authority were circumcised as well as himself: for we must use our influence to promote attendance, upon God's ordinances in our families.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord makes all things new to those, whom he delivers from the bondage of Satan, and takes to himself to be his peculiar people; and the æra of their enlargement

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49 One law ſhall be to him that is home-born, and unto the ſtranger that ſojourneth among you.

50 Thus did all the children of Iſrael; as the LORD commanded Moſes and Aaron, ſo did they.

51 And it came to paſs the ſelf-ſame day, *that* the LORD did bring the children of Iſrael out of the land of Egypt, by their armies.

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is the commencement to them of a new life, of new hopes, pleaſures, and employments: and on the other hand we ſhall do well, if we begin every year, and every day with the ſervice of God: happy they, who begin their lives with it, by remembering their Creator in the days of their youth. Whatever religious ordinance we are engaged in, we ſhould in due time, and manner engage our families alſo in it: nor is any thing more honourable to God, or more profitable to men, than harmonious family religion: it is the beſt bond of domeſtic peace, the beſt ſolace of domeſtic afflictions, and the beſt ſecurity for the continuance and increaſe of domeſtic felicity: whilſt it affords an important advantage for conſtant growth in grace, and the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. But in all our attendance on religious ordinances, ſecret, ſocial, or public, we muſt take heed, and beware of this leaven of the Phariſees, which is hypocriſy; and which is generally connected with the leaven of malice and wickedneſs, and often with that of covetouſneſs; which corrupt our ſervices, and render them an abomination unto a holy, heart-ſearching God. (*Iſai.* c. 1. v. 10—17. c. 66. v. 3—4. *Matt.* c. 23. v. 14—25.) And whatever we offer unto the Lord, or employ in his ſervice, muſt be the beſt of the kind. (*Malachi*, c. 1. v. 14.) It is our bounden duty to attend upon all the appointments of God, and to endeavour ourſelves to underſtand, that we may explain to our children the intention of every part: who ought therefore to be encouraged in their enquiries, and informed by clear, and ſatisfactory anſwers; that, in the moſt eaſy, and agreeable manner, they may become acquainted with the word, and works of God, and join with us in celebrating the praiſes of his truth, and mercy, and the wonders of his powerful arm. But though we muſt attend upon every ordinance of God; yet upon every one in it's *ſtated* order, and ſeaſon: and though we may not proudly neglect, or deſpiſe any of his appointments, leſt we be cut off from the privileges of the Iſrael of God: yet we may properly take time for ſerious enquiry, and conſcientious preparation, that we may at length with more ſolemnity, and to better purpoſe attend thereto.—When the Lord's time comes to perform his promiſes, mountains ſhall melt, and flow down at his preſence, and nothing ſhall create any more difficulty, than is proper, in order to illuſtrate his powerful operation. As the greateſt, and proudeſt ſinner is not exalted out of the reach of his omnipotent vengeance; ſo the leaſt are not beneath his notice: and if a *temporal* calamity filled Egypt with ſuch terror, and lamentation; what will be the conſternation of the wicked at the approaching judgment day! For fear of impending death, the Egyptians were willing to part not only with their bond-ſlaves, but with their gold, and ſilver: "What then ſhall a man be profited, "if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own "ſoul? Or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his "ſoul?" (*Matt.* c. 16. v. 26.) But alas! riches will not profit in the day of wrath; it coſts more to redeem ſouls from deſtruction: yet if we would eſcape, we muſt moderate our worldly attachments, and give up all our ſinful projects, and hold ourſelves in continual readineſs to leave all, and follow Chriſt: and if we ſhould be called to part with, not only our wealth, but every temporal comfort; the perfect freedom of his ſervice will give a reliſh to our mean, and unſavoury proviſions. But his blood is the only ranſom for our ſouls: without the ſhedding of it, there could have been no remiſſion; without the ſprinkling of it, there can be no ſalvation. Chriſt our paſſover is ſacrificed for us: but have we by faith in his name, ſheltered our ſouls from the deſerved vengeance of God, under the protection of his atoning blood? Do we keep cloſe to him in the exerciſe of habitual dependance on his merits, and acceſs to the throne of Grace, through his interceſſion? Do we ſo profeſs our faith in, and our obligations to the Redeemer, that all, who paſs by, may know, as by the blood-beſprinkled door, to whom we belong? Are we careful not to abuſe, or diſgrace this our profeſſion, by any inconſiſtent conduct, leſt we ſhould trample the blood of the covenant under our feet? Is Chriſt indeed, in his purchaſed bleſſings, the food, and feaſt of our ſouls? Do we feed upon *him* in our hearts by faith with thankſgiving, deriving all our life, ſtrength, hope, and conſolation from his fulneſs of truth and grace? Do we receive him in his whole character, and for *all* the purpoſes of ſalvation, from wrath, from ſin, from this evil world, and from the powers of darkneſs? Do we in conſequence ſtand prepared for his ſervice, and prompt to walk in his ways, to ſeparate ourſelves from his enemies, and aſſert that liberty, wherewith he makes his people free? Theſe are queſtions of vaſt importance to our ſouls, the Lord direct our conſciences to give an honeſt anſwer. Without the daily exerciſe of godly ſorrow, and true repentance, we can never eat of this paſſover; we muſt alſo bear our croſs, and have our feaſt alloyed by the bitter herbs of tribulation, and temptation; yet ſhall we find the life of faith, and grace a feaſt indeed, a ſource of joy, ſuch as the world can neither give, nor take away. Finally the Lord's Supper is our unbloody paſſover, our feaſt upon the ſacrifice, our ſacrifice itſelf of praiſe, and thankſgiving. Having previouſly examined ourſelves, whether we be in the faith, and ſeriouſly as ſinners applied to the Lord Jeſus for his ſalvation, and devoted ourſelves to his ſervice; let us frequently and conſtantly, in this appointed way, remember our Redeemer's love, and ſufferings; let us make this confeſſion of our ſins, this profeſſion of our faith, this declaration of our gratitude, and this ſurrender of ourſelves to his ſervice, as bought with a price to glorify him, both in body and ſpirit, which are his. Thus uniting ourſelves to and having fellowſhip with him, and his people here, we ſhall receive from his fulneſs, rejoice in his ways on earth, and at length ſit down with him in his heavenly kingdom.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. The Lord's command to Israel to sanctify their first-born to him, with some further instructions concerning the feast of unleavened bread, and orders to explain both to their children, v. 1—16. *2d. The care of the Lord in the way, by which he led the Israelites, and in his guidance of them by the pillar of cloud, and of fire; with their taking of Joseph's bones along with them, v.* 17—22.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Sanctify unto me all the first-born, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and of beast: it *is* mine.

3 And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this *place:* there shall no leavened bread be eaten.

4 This day came ye out, in the month Abib.

5 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month.

6 Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day *shall be* a feast to the LORD.

7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days: and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters.

8 And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, *This is done* because of that *which* the LORD did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt.

9 And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes; that the LORD's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt.

10 Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

11 And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee,

12 That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix: and every firstling that cometh of a beast, which thou hast, the males *shall be* the LORD's.

13 And

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 2. *Sanctify*, &c.] In remembrance of the destruction of the first-born of Egypt, both of man and beast, and of the preservation of those of Israel, and of their deliverance out of bondage by means of that judgment, the first-born males of the Israelites were solemnly presented, and dedicated to the Lord, and a price appointed to be paid for their redemption. Hereby was also represented to them, that the preservation of their lives, when others were, and they justly might have been destroyed, was through the ransom of the atonement, which in due time was to be made for sin: and that they were to consider that their lives, thus ransomed from death, were now to be consecrated to the service of God. The whole assembly of the Lord's people are "the church of "the first-born." (*Heb.* c. 12. v. 23.) Their lives are continued, their souls are saved from destruction, they are made heirs of God, through the ransom of the blood of Christ: thus rescued by his sacrifice, from being sacrifices to the justice of God, which they had offended; they are to present their bodies a living sacrifice, to be devoted to his service. (*Rom.* c. 12. v. 1—2.)

V. 7. *Neither shall there be leaven seen*, &c.] The Jews were very careful in searching every corner of their houses that no leaven might remain in them; and what they found, they burnt, or buried, or otherwise destroyed, before the feast of the passover. Thus careful should we be to discover, and mortify our sins, to avoid, and watch against temptations, and to prepare our hearts for attendance on God's ordinances.

V. 9. *A sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between*, &c.] The constant, and frequent observance of these institutions, with plain and easy explications of their meaning, would render their deliverance from Egypt familiar to them, and be a continual memorial, as well as an open profession, of their obligations to love, and serve the Lord: as people, who wish to remember, and fear to forget any thing, use a variety of signs to remind themselves of it, or to give others an occasion to remind them: inscribing any thing upon the hand, placing it before their eyes, or as a frontlet upon their forehead between their eyes, seem to have been used in those times for such purposes. In like manner Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, if thus explained, and attended to, would render the nature of Christianity, and the obligations of Christians, fa-

13 And every firſtling of an aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou ſhalt break his neck: and all the firſt-born of man amongſt thy children ſhalt thou redeem.

14 And it ſhall be when thy ſon aſketh thee in time to come, ſaying, What *is* this? that thou ſhalt ſay unto him, By ſtrength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the houſe of bondage.

15 And it came to paſs when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD ſlew all the firſt-born in the land of Egypt, both the firſt-born of man, and the firſt-born of beaſt: therefore I ſacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firſt-born of my children I redeem.

16 And it ſhall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by ſtrength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

17 And it came to paſs when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not *through* the way of the land of the Philiſtines, although that *was* near: for God ſaid, Leſt peradventure the people repent when they ſee war, and they return to Egypt.

18 But God led the people about, *through* the way of the wilderneſs of the Red ſea: and the children of Iſrael went up harneſſed out of the land of Egypt.

19 And Moſes took the bones of Joſeph with him: for he had ſtraitly ſworn the children of Iſrael, ſaying, God will ſurely viſit you; and ye ſhall carry up my bones away hence with you.

20 And they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderneſs.

21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light: to go by day and night.

22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

CHAP.

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miliar to our minds, and remind us, and give us occaſion to remind one another, of our profeſſion, and of our duty.

V. 13. *Redeem with a lamb.*] The firſtlings of ſuch beaſts, as were not uſed in ſacrifice, were either to be exchanged for ſuch as were, or to be deſtroyed. Our ſouls being forfeited to God's juſtice, unleſs ranſomed by the ſubſtituted ſacrifice of Chriſt, will certainly periſh.

V. 17. *Although that was near.*] It was only a few day's march to Canaan. But the Philiſtines were a hardy, warlike people; and the Iſraelites were unarmed, diſpirited by long bondage, and not acquainted with war: they were therefore not prepared to encounter them, and would have been greatly diſcouraged by being required to do ſo. This was one reaſon, and probably the avowed reaſon, why the Lord led them another way; but he had others, which will be ſpeedily unfolded.

V. 18. *But God led the people about*, &c.] At his expreſs command they took their rout, much more to the ſouth, than the direct road, and ſo marched towards the banks of the Red ſea, inſtead of making for the iſthmus of Suez, which communicates betwixt Africa, and Aſia.

Harneſſed.] The margin of the Bible renders this word, "by five in a rank;" but the room ſuch a multitude muſt have taken from the van to the rear, is immenſe, had they marched in this manner: it ſeems rather to mean that they marched in five diſtinct ſquadrons. The Pſalmiſt informs us, that "there was not one feeble perſon amongſt "their tribes." (*Pſalm* 105. v. 37.) This was a very extraordinary circumſtance, which the hiſtory of the world cannot parallel: yet was very ſuitable to *their* ſituation, who had ſufficient incumbrances in their march, without having a number of invalids to take care of: it alſo compleated their triumph over Pharaoh, and the Egyptians; when they were not conſtrained to leave one of their company behind them.

V. 19. *Moſes took the bones*, &c.] Theſe bones had been long a pledge of their deliverance; and were a proper memento to Moſes, what the greateſt of men muſt ſhortly come to: and in their hurry they were not forgotten.

V. 21. *Pillar of a cloud—pillar of fire.*] Thus this ſymbol of the divine preſence would be more obſervable by them, and more uſeful to them: by night illuminating, and by day being a ſhade to them; and both by day, and night, a guide and a pledge of the divine protection.—This pillar typifies the guidance, protection, comfort, and ſecurity, which the Lord affords his true people, from the time, when they firſt renounce the ſervice of ſin, and Satan, until they ſafe arrive in heaven. The Church being then in its infancy, was ſpoken to by theſe ſenſible tokens in its own language: but we now walk by faith, not by ſight, and may be aſſured of the Lord's preſence, though we have not ſuch external ſymbols of it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

So unteachable are we in divine things, that we need to be taught the ſame leſſons over, and over; and in a variety of different ways, before we make any tolerable proficiency in them: and repetitions are therefore neither impertinent, nor uſeleſs. The tendency of the teaching of

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. The Lord directing the march of Israel for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, v. 1—4. 2d. Pharaoh pursuing, and overtaking the Israelites, v. 5—9. 3d. Their terror, and murmurs; and the encouragement given them by Moses, v. 10—14. 4th. God giving orders to Moses about dividing the Red sea, v. 15—18. 5th. The cloud removing, and stationed betwixt Israel, and the Egyptians; the Red sea divided; the Israelites marching through it; the Egyptians following, terrified, and overwhelmed; and Israel preserved, and suitably affected, v. 19—31.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea.

3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, They *are* intangled in the land, the wilderness hath shut them in.

4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them, and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD. And they did so.

5 And it was told the king of Egypt, that the people fled: and the heart of Pharaoh and

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of God in his word, is to make his truths, and precepts very plain, and familiar to our minds, that we may have them continually in view, be frequently conversing about them, and regulating our conduct by them: the same therefore should be the aim of the minister in teaching his people; and of the parent in teaching his children.

By creation we are the Lord's property, and he has a right to dispose of us as he pleases: but redemption gives him a new, and more endearing title to our bodies, souls, and services. Our exemption from the desolations of the wicked, and our deliverance from the malice of our enemies, are from the Lord's mercy through the ransom of the Redeemer's blood, and by the power of his mighty arm: thus purchased, and thus delivered, we are sanctified to his service, who has rescued us from destruction: nor shall we ourselves ever be so much at liberty, or our children and substance so comfortably ours, as when we are all most unreservedly devoted to God. "The strong "man," armed with our lusts, and passions, our inveterate habits, and intimate evil connections, vehemently opposes our conversion, and "will hardly let us go:" but "when a stronger than he comes upon him, he takes "from him his armour, wherein he trusted, and divides "the spoil." Then being delivered from thraldom, the leaven of iniquity, once pleasant to us, is thrown aside, and we learn to feast upon that unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, of piety and purity, which once we relished not. The Lord will then proportion our difficulties to the strength, which he gives, and so order every thing in his providence, as may most effectually keep us from returning back to sin, and the world. Through all the intricacies and dangers of the way, he will guide and guard us by his word, and spirit: he will enlighten every one of our dark nights of affliction, and shelter us from the burning sun of temptation, until he bring us to his heavenly rest with everlasting songs of joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 2. *Turn and encamp*, &c.] The Israelites had not marched before the direct road to Canaan, but more to the south, towards the Red sea, until they came to the edge of the wilderness, (c. 13. v. 20.) whither the Egyptians expected they were retiring, to offer their sacrifices to the Lord. But now they received orders to turn still further out of the road into some impervious straits, or other difficult places, where they would seem to be so entangled, that they could not possibly escape.

V. 3. *For Pharaoh will say*, &c.] It was avowedly the Lord's intention to harden the heart of Pharaoh, and he well knew how to effect it, without being in any sense the author of his sin. He had only to remove all restraints from his heart and conscience; to leave him entirely to his own headstrong impetuous lusts, and to the instigations of Satan: and to order the dispensations of his providence, as most effectually to inspire him with hopes of yet prevailing in the contest. The proud heart of Pharaoh had been sorely galled, but was not in the least humbled: he had been repeatedly baffled, and frighted, and forced to yield, yet his indignant spirit was not subdued, but revolted against the violence, which had been put upon him, was fired with resentment, and thirsted for revenge: his covetousness, and ambition had been severely disappointed; his kingdom had been desolated and almost depopulated, and his first-born son slain: he had suffered an ignominious defeat: and nothing but despair of success, and the urgent terror of death, could have extorted his consent to Israel's enlargement.—Whilst under the immediate pressure of the last dreadful visitation, all, but the preservation of his life, was forgotten. But when his terror, and anguish were somewhat subsided, his convictions abated: and the thoughts of the mortifications, ignominy, and loss, which he had sustained, with all their probable, or possible effects, would rush into his mind. Now every thing would be welcome, which could point out the way, or inspire the hope of reducing Israel, or of wreaking his vengeance upon them. Had they marched directly towards Canaan, they would probably have been out of his dominions, before he had recovered from his fright: and he might have given them up in despair: but as they marched another way, and were, as he supposed, entangled in the wilderness, and

and of his ſervants was turned againſt the people, and they ſaid, Why have we done this, that we have let Iſrael go from ſerving us?

6 And he made ready his chariot, and took his people with him.

7 And he took ſix hundred choſen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains over every one of them.

8 And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he purſued after the children of Iſrael: and the children of Iſrael went out with an high hand.

9 But the Egyptians purſued after them (all the horſes *and* chariots of Pharaoh, and his horſemen and army) and he overtook them encamping by the ſea, beſide Pi-hahiroth before Baal-zephon.

10 And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Iſrael lift up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them, and they were ſore afraid: and the children of Iſrael cried out unto the LORD.

11 And they ſaid unto Moſes, Becauſe *there were* no graves in Egypt, haſt thou taken us away to die in the wilderneſs? Wherefore haſt thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?

12 *Is* not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, ſaying, Let us alone, that we may ſerve the Egyptians? For *it had been* better for us to ſerve the Egyptians, than that we ſhould die in the wilderneſs.

13 And Moſes ſaid unto the people, Fear ye not, ſtand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the LORD, which he will ſhew to you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have ſeen to-day, ye ſhall ſee them again no more forever.

14 The LORD ſhall fight for you, and ye ſhall hold your peace.

15 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Wherefore crieſt thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they go forward.

16 But lift thou up thy rod, and ſtretch out thine hand over the ſea, and divide it: and the children of Iſrael ſhall go on dry-ground through the midſt of the ſea.

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and ſhut up by ſurrounding rocks, mountains, and ſeas; he would conclude that they were not under infallible guidance, and thence infer, that they were not under Almighty protection, but might yet be ſubdued to his will. What he ardently wiſhed, feeble evidence would induce him to believe, and every paſſion of his heart favoured the concluſion, which he drew from theſe circumſtances.—This the Lord foreſaw, and that he might be honoured upon the Egyptians, and make his power, and juſtice known amongſt them, he gave theſe orders unto the Iſraelites.

V. 5. *That the people fled*, &c.] Though the Egyptians had conſented to, and urged their departure, and certainly expected them to return no more, yet that had not been mentioned: when therefore they ſtopped not to offer ſacrifices, but marched forward, eſpecially in that intricate road, they termed it a flight.

They ſaid, &c.] Though ſome of Pharaoh's ſervants had counſelled him to diſmiſs Iſrael; yet now conſidering themſelves ſharers in his loſs, and diſgrace, and being again encouraged to expect better ſucceſs, they blame themſelves for having let them go, and give Pharaoh more agreeable, though pernicious advice.

V. 8. *With an high hand.*] For the time they were in high ſpirits, and ſeemed very courageouſly to ſet the Egyptians at defiance.

V. 9, *Beſide Pi-hahiroth*, &c.] It is generally ſuppoſed that on the right, and left of this encampment were impaſſible mountains, or fortifications: whilſt the Red ſea was in the front of them, and Pharaoh with his army preſſed upon their rear: the Red ſea is ſuppoſed to have been in this place between fifteen, and twenty miles acroſs.

V. 10. *Cried out unto the Lord.*] Some of them cried out unto the Lord, whilſt others vented their trouble in complaints againſt Moſes.

V. 11. *Becauſe there were*, &c. Theſe murmurers were ſenſible that ſuch an unarmed multitude could not withſtand Pharaoh's diſciplined army: they had no thoughts therefore of fighting, no proſpect of eſcaping by flight, no hope in ſubmitting to ſuch an enraged tyrant; and no confidence in, or expectation from the Lord:—death ſeemed therefore inevitable.

Wherefore haſt thou, &c.] As if Moſes had of himſelf brought them out of Egypt. Pharaoh in mad preſumption, and they, in unbelieving deſpondency, had alike forgotten the wonderful works of God, which they had witneſſed.

V. 13. *Stand ſtill*, &c.] Moſes, in the exerciſe of faith, poſſeſſed admirable preſence of mind: and encouraged them to keep their ground, and not to put themſelves into any diſorder, but to expect the Lord's interpoſition, and to hold themſelves in readineſs to obey his orders.

V. 15. *Wherefore crieſt thou*, &c.?] Moſes was earneſt in his prayers in this trying conjuncture; and we are not to ſuppoſe, that the Lord was diſpleaſed with him: but he thus aſſures him, that his requeſt is granted, that he is about to effect their deliverance; and that he has nothing to do, but to excite, and encourage the people to march forward; and he will clear the way for them, in an unexpected, and unheard of manner.

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17 And I, behold I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they ſhall follow them: and I will get me honour upon Pharaoh, and upon all his hoſt, upon his chariots, and upon his horſemen.

18 And the Egyptians ſhall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gotten me honour upon Pharaoh, upon his chariots, and upon his horſemen.

19 And the angel of God which went before the camp of Iſrael, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and ſtood behind them.

20 And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Iſrael; and it was a cloud and darkneſs *to them*, but it gave light by night *to theſe*: ſo that the one came not near the other all the night.

21 And Moſes ſtretched out his hand over the ſea, and the LORD cauſed the ſea to go *back* by a ſtrong eaſt-wind all that night, and made the ſea dry-land, and the waters were divided.

22 And the children of Iſrael went into the midſt of the ſea upon the dry-ground: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

23 And the Egyptians purſued, and went in after them, to the midſt of the ſea, *even* all Pharaoh's horſes, his chariots, and his horſemen.

24 And it came to paſs that in the morning-watch the LORD looked unto the hoſt of the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire and of the cloud, and troubled the hoſt of the Egyptians,

25 And took off their chariot wheels, that they drave them heavily: ſo that the Egyptians ſaid, Let us flee from the face of Iſrael; for the LORD fighteth for them againſt the Egyptians.

26 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Stretch out thine hand over the ſea, that the waters may come again upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horſemen.

27 And Moſes ſtretched forth his hand over the ſea, and the ſea returned to his ſtrength when the morning appeared, and the Egyptians fled againſt it: and the LORD overthrew the Egyptians in the midſt of the ſea.

28 And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horſemen, *and* all the hoſt of Pharaoh that came into the ſea after them: there remained not ſo much as one of them.

29 But the children of Iſrael walked upon dry-land in the midſt of the ſea: and the waters *were* a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.

30 Thus the LORD ſaved Iſrael that day out of the hand of the Egyptians: and Iſrael ſaw the Egyptians dead upon the ſea-ſhore.

V. 17. *I, behold I, will harden*, &c.] This ſpeaks the certainty of the event, as the Lord himſelf undertook for it: the Egyptians aſſociating themſelves with Pharaoh in his rebellion, are thus with him doomed to the ſame deſerved puniſhment.

V. 18. *The Egyptians.*] That is, the miſerable remains of this once flouriſhing people.

V. 19. *The angel of God.*] Either a created angel, by whoſe miniſtry this pillar of cloud, and of fire was produced, and moved: or, as ſome conclude (from the language of verſe 24th, "the Lord looked through, &c.") Chriſt the angel of Jehovah's preſence.

V. 20. *It was a cloud, and darkneſs*, &c.] Even in the night it aſſumed that gloomy appearance to diſmay the Egyptians: yet at the ſame time it was a light to direct the ſteps of the Iſraelites. Every diſpenſation of providence, and every part of Scripture has a dark ſide for the enemies, and a bright ſide for the people of the Lord.

The one came not near the other, &c.] The Iſraelites marched forward to the brink of the Red ſea, and the Egyptians purſued them: theſe laſt deemed themſelves ſecure of their prey, yet were ſo bewildered in the darkneſs, as not to be able to ſeize upon it.

V. 21. *To go back*, &c.] At the ſtretching forth of Moſes' hand, and the waving of his conſecrated rod, the Lord cauſed a ſtrong eaſt wind to blow; which was only the ſignal, wherewith he anſwered that of Moſes; and then by his power divided the waters, till they wonderfully formed two mighty walls, and a ſpacious road betwixt, through which the Iſraelites ſecurely marched.

V. 22. *Went into*, &c.] Encouraged outwardly by the word of Moſes, but inwardly by the power of God.

V. 23. *The Egyptians purſued*, &c.] Being given up to deſperate hardneſs of heart, they without fear followed the example of Iſrael.

V. 24. *Looked unto the*, &c.] He terrified them by ſomething which they ſaw, and heard; or by a powerful operation upon their minds.

V. 25. *Took off their*, &c.] The Lord ſo ordered it, that they could not get forward: we need not enquire in what manner.

V. 30. *Dead upon the ſea ſhore*, &c.] The Egyptians were eminent for the art of embalming the dead; and all their grandees had formerly been thus diſtinguiſhed: but the Lord now pours contempt upon them, and denies them even burial.

31 And Israel saw that great work which the LORD did upon the Egyptians: and the people feared the LORD, and believed the LORD, and his servant Moses.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1st. The song of Moses, and of the Israelites, on account of their late deliverance, v. 1—21. 2d. Their march in the wilderness, their want of water, the bitter waters of Marah, their murmurs, Moses' prayer, the Lord's answer, the waters made sweet, his charge and promise to them; their arrival and encampment at Elim, v. 22—27.

THEN sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

2 The

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord, in all his commands, and dispensations will make trial of men's spirits; and every thing will eventually co-operate to harden the hearts of obstinate rebels to their destruction; and to exercise and increase the faith of his people: that by making known the glories of his name, he may be honoured by the one, and upon the other. Would we therefore escape the awful sentence of being judicially hardened, we should take care not to harden our own hearts in sin, when called upon to repent, and submit ourselves to God; for none are thus punished, who have not *righteously* deserved it.—Herein consists the excellency, and benefit of *faith*, that it gives the Lord credit for his wisdom, faithfulness and love, even where they are not discernible; and expects the accomplishment of his promises in the unreserved obedience to his commandments, however contrary to the suggestions of human policy: and is satisfied that the event will clear up every difficulty.

Unless the heart be truly humbled, and sin of every kind hated out of love to God, and holiness, no religious impressions will be abiding. Under remorse of conscience, the smart of sufferings, and the terrors of impending destruction, and whilst temptations are out of sight, sinful propensities appear to be slain: but they will soon revive, when there is respite, when convictions wear off, when terrors subside, and temptations return: and will only rage with redoubled force, for having received a temporary check: forgetfulness of the past will soon intervene, and the heart grow harder than ever in bold presumption; till given up of God, and infatuated by Satan, such persons will even be ashamed and repent of their constrained repentance, and will impetuously rush upon their own destruction. Such is the progress of those who rebel against the light, and encourage one another in wickedness, until they are involved in one common ruin. Let us fear lest we also should be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

How dark do all the counsels, and truths of God appear to those, who are thus fighting against him! Even his very Gospel becomes to them a savour of death unto death. (2 *Cor.* c. 2. v. 15, 16.) Who then can stand before him, who hath all creatures at his command! And how dreadful will that day be, when the wicked shall be overwhelmed in the depths of hell, yea all the nations that forget God! But not only are men prone presumptuously to forget the works of God, and his threatened destruction of the wicked: but also in despondency to forget his wonders of love, and promises of deliverance to his people: and in large companies even of his professed worshippers, there will be many, destitute of faith and grace: these in times of trial, when others are crying to the Lord for help, will be venting their impatience, and rebellion against God, by quarrelling with his servants: and will oft discourage others, and lead them to mingle unbelieving murmurs, and peevish complaints, with their prayers and supplications; and for a time to forget all their former experience and observation of the Lord's power, and love. And indeed it is very common, when men meet with unexpected difficulties in their first entrance upon a religious life, or upon any particular service, for them to be tempted to wish they had never gone about it; or to utter expressions equally unreasonable and sinful.—But the Lord pities, and pardons those, who are upright in heart; and makes use of the faith, and courage of some, to animate, and quicken others: and if we belong to him, and march forward in the path of duty, depending on him, and calling upon him; he will surely open a way for us, through difficulties and obstacles, as insurmountable as mountains, and seas, if they obstruct our passage.—For when we see no possible method of escape, or of success, and have none other to look to, but the Lord; then we are prepared to receive all from him in a proper manner, to be suitably affected with it, and to give him all the glory. But there is more difficulty to prevail with man to use the means of salvation, than with God to bless those means, which he appoints; and to find a *willing* people to welcome a *willing* Saviour. (*Psalm* 110. v. 3.) This also he effects in the day of his power; and under his guidance, and protection, enlightened by his Word, and Spirit, his true Israel wait for his salvation; from time to time on earth, they are delivered from their enemies, for the encouragement of their faith, and hope, and for their incitement to obedience, and that they may be ashamed of their impatience, and distrust: and at last they shall witness the final destruction of all opposers with songs of grateful praise.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1. *Then sang Moses*, &c.] Doubtless Moses composed this song by divine inspiration, and instructed the people thus to express their gratitude, and joy; and to celebrate the Lord's praises on account of their late deliverance, for his glory, and for their own encouragement. The capacity for poetry, and music, and for being delighted with them, however abused through the sinfulness of the human heart, are no more the effect of that sinfulness, than the other capacities of the soul,

or

2 The LORD *is* my ſtrength and ſong, and he is become my ſalvation: he *is* my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

3 The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.

4 Pharaoh's chariots and his hoſts hath he caſt into the ſea: his choſen captains alſo are drowned in the Red ſea.

5 The depths have covered them: they ſank into the bottom as a ſtone.

6 Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath daſhed in pieces the enemy.

7 And in the greatneſs of thine excellency thou haſt overthrown them that roſe up againſt thee: thou ſenteſt forth thy wrath, *which* conſumed them as ſtubble.

8 And with the blaſt of thy noſtrils the waters were gathered together: the floods ſtood upright as an heap, *and* the depths were congealed in the heart of the ſea.

9 The enemy ſaid, I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil: my luſt ſhall

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or the members of the body, which are alſo in like manner oft proſtituted to the ſervice of ſin. Having been implanted of God himſelf in human nature, they ought to be employed in his ſervice, and conſecrated to his glory. Accordingly hymns, or ſongs of praiſe, were compoſed under the inſpiration of the Holy Ghoſt, and form a conſiderable portion of the ſacred Scripture: ſome of them were ſuited to particular occaſions, and were at the time ſung by the congregation of the Lord, as an act of public worſhip: and afterwards in commemoration of thoſe events, and in accommodation to other circumſtances, with which they might accord. Others ſeem to be of more general deſignation, and naturally ſuit the experiences, and expreſs the affections of true believers in all ages. The poetry of theſe ſacred hymns has been carefully inveſtigated, and much admired by many perſons, of eminent attainments in ancient learning; and allowed to be in many reſpects ſuperior to all other remains of antiquity: eſpecially by Dr. Lowth, the late Biſhop of London, in his "*Prælectiones*," &c. This ſong of Moſes is the moſt ancient compoſition of the kind extant in the world; and it was ſung by Moſes, and the congregation of the Iſraelitiſh men, whilſt Miriam led the women to accompany them, not only with ſinging, but alſo with timbrels, and dances. Mr. Henry obſerves, that this proves pſalm-ſinging to be more ancient than the ceremonial law, and therefore no part of it. It proves the ſame alſo concerning the uſe of inſtrumental muſic in the worſhip of God, and even of religious dances. Whether, *rebus ſic ſtantibus*, either the one, or the other tend to the glory of God, and edification, and therefore whether either of them ought to be retained in, or both excluded from the worſhip of the New Teſtament Church, is another queſtion: but it ſeems evident that they form no part of the ceremonial law, and are neither commanded, nor prohibited in the Scripture; though we have examples for them in the Old Teſtament, and none for them in the New. Upon ſuch points godly perſons will differ in their judgments; but it is well when, "endeavouring to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of "peace," they differ with meekneſs, and in love.

Triumphed glorioufly, &c.] There had been a long conteſt betwixt the king of Egypt, and the God of Iſrael, but now it was undeniably terminated, and the God of Iſrael had got a complete victory over Egypt, and her king, and her gods alſo.

V. 2. *The Lord is my ſtrength*, &c.] Iſrael depended entirely upon Jehovah for victory over, and protection againſt their potent foes: he was now become their ſalvation, and they celebrated his praiſes in their ſong. All this typifies the dependance, ſalvation, triumph, and praiſe of the true Church of God, and of every true believer, over their ſpiritual enemies. (*Rev.* c. 15. v. 3.)

He is my God, &c.] The object of my love, worſhip, obedience, and dependance, from whom I expect happineſs, and to whom I devote myſelf.

I will prepare him an habitation.] This looks forward to the tabernacle, and temple, which were types of the human nature of Chriſt, the true temple, (*John*, c. 2. v. 19—21.) "in whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the "godhead bodily," (*Col.* c. 2. v. 9.) and wherein he diſplays his glory, "as reconciling the world unto himſelf." (2 *Cor.* c. 5. v. 19.) Through him alſo the believer's heart is a temple, in which he delights to dwell, (*Iſaiah*, c. 66. v. 1—2.) "An habitation of God through the "Spirit." (*Eph.* c. 2. v. 22.)

My father's God, &c.] Manifeſtly ſhewing himſelf to be the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, by fulfilling the promiſes, which he had made to them.

V. 3. *The Lord is a man of war.*] That is, a renowned warrior, and conqueror, whoſe atchievements ſhould be celebrated in ſacred ſongs of praiſe; as thoſe of the heathen conquerors were, in their *profane poems*; emphatically ſo called, whilſt they aſcribe the honours due to God, to ſome vile ambitious cruel man.

V. 6. *Become glorious in power.*] That is, manifeſtly ſhewn to be ſo.

V. 7. *Excellency.*] Not only excelling in power, but excellent in juſtice, wiſdom, truth, and goodneſs.

V. 8. *The blaſt of*, &c.] The wind is by a ſtrong metaphor thus called, which was the token, and in ſome ſenſe the inſtrument of dividing the Red ſea; as well for the purpoſe of executing vengeance upon Pharaoh, and the Egyptians, as of effecting the deliverance of Iſrael.

The depths.] The waters deep before, but now much deeper on each ſide the road, on which Iſrael marched.

Were congealed.] Stood as if petrified into ſolid rocks.

V. 9. *The enemy ſaid*, &c.] This verſe moſt poetically

ſhall be ſatisfied upon them, I will draw my ſword, my hand ſhall deſtroy them.

10 Thou didſt blow with thy wind, the ſea covered them: they ſank as lead in the mighty waters.

11 Who *is* like unto thee, O LORD, amongſt the gods? who *is* like thee, glorious in holineſs, fearful *in* praiſes, doing wonders?

12 Thou ſtretchedſt out thy right hand, the earth ſwallowed them.

13 Thou in thy mercy haſt led forth the people *which* thou haſt redeemed: thou haſt guided *them* in thy ſtrength unto thy holy habitation.

14 The people ſhall hear *and* be afraid: ſorrow ſhall take hold on the inhabitants of Paleſtina.

15 Then the dukes of Edom ſhall be amazed, the mighty men of Moab trembling ſhall take hold upon them: all the inhabitants of Canaan ſhall melt away.

16 Fear and dread ſhall fall upon them; by the greatneſs of thine arm they ſhall be *as* ſtill as a ſtone: till thy people paſs over, O LORD, till the people paſs over, *which* thou haſt purchaſed.

17 Thou ſhalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, *in* the place, O LORD, *which* thou haſt made for thee to dwell in: *in* the ſanctuary, O LORD, *which* thy hands have eſtabliſhed.

18 The LORD ſhall reign for ever and ever.

19 For the horſe of Pharaoh went in with his chariots, and with his horſemen into the ſea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the ſea upon them: but the children of Iſrael went on dry-land in the midſt of the ſea.

20 And Miriam the propheteſs, the ſiſter of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels and with dances.

21 And

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cally deſcribes the rage, pride, and preſumption of Pharaoh, and of the Egyptians; and confirms what was ſpoken upon that ſubject in the foregoing chapter. Whilſt the next verſe, with inimitable ſimplicity, and ſublimity, deſcribes the infinite eaſe, with which they were checked, and overwhelmed in the ſea.

V. 11. *Amongſt the gods*, &c.] The objects of the idolatrous worſhip of the Egyptians, and heathens: in and through which Satan proudly affected to be worſhipped, as the god of this world, and ambitiouſly rivalled Jehovah.

Glorious in holineſs.] The righteouſneſs, faithfulneſs, purity, and love, *that is*, the holineſs of the divine character, form his eſſential glory and excellency; and reflect glory upon all the contrivances of his wiſdom, and the operations of his almighty power: which, if not deviſed, and performed in holineſs, would be tremendous, but would not be glorious.

Fearful in praiſes.] Such majeſty, and righteouſneſs are diſplayed in the Lord's works of love, and mercy, as cannot be ſuitably admired and praiſed, without filling the mind with ſolemn awe, and reverential fear.

V. 12. *The earth ſwallowed*, &c.] The dead bodies of many of them ſoon ſunk to the bottom, and were buried in the ſand.

V. 13. *In thy mercy*, &c.] It is here acknowledged that the deliverance of Iſrael was as much a diſplay of mercy, as the deſtruction of the Egyptians was an act of juſtice. And this redemption from bondage by a miracle was an earneſt of their being put in poſſeſſion of Canaan, which is ſpoken of, as if it were already accompliſhed.

Thy holy habitation.] The land of Canaan is thus called, as afterwards (v. 17.) "the mountain of thine "inheritance, and the ſanctuary;" becauſe God had choſen it for the place of his future ſpecial reſidence, where he would manifeſt his preſence and love, eſtabliſh his holy ordinances, and publiſh his holy word. All this is typical of the believer's merciful redemption from the guilt and bondage of iniquity; and of his being powerfully guided to God's holy habitation in heaven.

V. 14. *Sorrow ſhall*, &c.] The Philiſtines had been the objects of their terror; but they now ſuppoſe them filled with diſmay, and anguiſh at the tidings of this wonderful deliverance. And we may be ſure that it would produce very great effects upon all the ſurrounding nations, for a time at leaſt. The inhabitants of Jericho, forty years after, had not got over the fright which it occaſioned. (*Joſhua*, c. 2. v. 9—10.)

V. 16. *Still as a ſtone.*] Not daring to make any reſiſtance.

Which thou haſt purchaſed.] At the price of the deſtruction of ſo flouriſhing a country as Egypt. (*Iſaiah*, c. 43. v. 3.) But they were a type of "the Church of "God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood." (*Acts*, c. 20. v. 28.)

V. 18. *The Lord ſhall reign for ever*, &c.] In perfect wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, he ſhall reign as the only lawgiver, and judge over his willing people, who with joyful hearts ſhall render him loyal obedience: and he ſhall finally and eternally cruſh all his enemies with irreſiſtible force.

V. 20. *Miriam the propheteſs, the ſiſter of Aaron.*] She is mentioned by Micah as joined with Moſes, and Aaron, in leading forth the people, (*Micah*, c. 6. v. 4.) and is here called a propheteſs; but we have nothing recorded of her

21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur: and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.

23 And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.

24 And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

25 And he cried unto the LORD, and the LORD shewed him a tree, *which* when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

26 And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes; I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I *am* the LORD that healeth thee.

27 And they came to Elim, where *were* twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm-trees: and they encamped there by the waters.

CHAP.

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her in this character, but her leading the women in this song of praise, joined, according to the usages of the times, with timbrels, and dances. She was now about 90 years of age, and is called the sister of Aaron, as she probably resided with him.

V. 23. *They could not drink*, &c.] It seems that these waters were not only extremely nauseous, but unwholesome. So great a multitude marching for three days, without any water, except they carried some small quantity with them, would occasion great distress, and perhaps disease: and having found water, but not being able to drink it, would be a great disappointment.

V. 24. *Murmured against Moses*, &c.] When delivered from the Egyptians, "they feared the Lord, and "believed the Lord, and his servant Moses," as commissioned by him, and acting according to his command. "But they soon forgat his works," (*Psalm* 106. v. 12, 13.) and began to vent their discontent, and distrust in peevish murmurs against Moses, as if he had acted of himself.

V. 25. *A tree which*, &c.] Not by any natural efficacy, as we suppose; but as a token of the Lord's operation: (See 2 *Kings*, c. 2. v. 19—22. c. 4. v. 38—41.) and as a type of the blessings of the Gospel, which Christ purchased for us, when he hung upon the tree; which *infused*, so to speak, into our inward, and outward trials, sweeten all by peace in the conscience, comfort in the heart, and the hope of everlasting glory.

There he made for them a statute, &c.] That is, he put them upon their good behaviour, and whilst he assured them that he would provide for them, and continue their health, and comforts, if they were obedient; he intimated that if they were rebellious, the very diseases, and judgments, which they had seen inflicted upon the Egyptians, would come upon them also. Perhaps their want of water, and some of them having drunk of the unwholesome waters of Marah, had occasioned sickness amongst them, and filled them with apprehensions, which were thus obviated, and over-ruled for good purposes.

V. 27. *Twelve wells of water, and threescore*, &c.] A well of water to each tribe, and the palm-trees for a cooling shade. It is remarkable that the number answers to the twelve patriarchs, and their seventy elders; and to the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Those events in providence, and those experiences in the life of faith, which have occasioned our most distressing apprehensions, are often so turned about, as to fill our hearts with gratitude, and our mouths with praise: nor would the Lord lead those, whom he loves, into such straits, did he not intend to render them subservient to his own glory, and to their comfort, and advantage. When in patience, and quietness, we have waited for deliverance out of trouble, and have had our expectations answered, we should proclaim to all around us the wonderful works of God; and every one, in the improvement of his talent, and the exercise of his peculiar endowments, should concur in so pleasant, and reasonable a service. They, who oppress the people of God, are his declared enemies, and he will certainly triumph over them completely; and all shall acknowledge that he is not only "glorious in power," but "glorious in holiness," in their destruction, and in that of all impenitent sinners. But they, who humbly submit to him, and trust in his mercy, will find that he will become their salvation, and "compass them about "with songs of deliverance." What his grace begins, his power, and faithfulness will complete; and having redeemed them from the bondage of sin, and Satan, every past favour becomes an earnest of further benefits, until he bring them to his holy habitation in heaven.

The judgments inflicted on some of his enemies, are evidences that judgment will be executed on the rest; and the Lord oft first intimidates those, whom he intends to punish. Ere long every enemy shall be destroyed, which hath done evil in his sanctuary; and the whole church shall sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, as triumphing over the fall of every antichrist; and the Lord shall reign for ever, and ever, to the eternal satisfaction of his redeemed people, and the eternal confusion of his enemies.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. Israel's march into the wilderness of Sin; their being in want of bread, and murmuring: Manna promised, and the people rebuked, v. 1—10. *2d. Manna and quails sent, description of the manna, rules for gathering it, the disobedience of Israel in hoarding it; and in going out to seek for it on the sabbath day, with the consequences, v.* 11—31. *3d. An omer commanded to be preserved, v.* 32—36.

AND they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which *is* between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month, after their departing out of the land of Egypt.

2 And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.

3 And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, *and* when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.

5 And it shall come to pass, that on the sixth day, they shall prepare *that* which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.

6 And Moses and Aaron said unto all the children of Israel, At even then ye shall know that the LORD hath brought you out from the land of Egypt.

7 And in the morning then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your murmurings against the LORD: And what *are* we, that ye murmur against us?

8 And Moses said, *This shall be* when the LORD

In this world we must pass through many changes: and those praises, which only spring from gratified self-love, will soon be turned into rebellious murmurs. Even hypocrites may have a *temporary* faith, and very high affections, and be vastly earnest in religious exercises; but in time of temptation they fall away. And even true believers, in seasons of sharp trial, will be tempted to fret, distrust, and murmur. But in every dispensation we should cast our care upon the Lord, and pour out our prayers before him; and we shall find that a submissive will, a peaceful conscience, and the comforts of the Holy Spirit, will render the bittereſt trial tolerable, yea pleasant. But let us not forget that we are preserved from destruction, and delivered from our enemies, to be the Lord's servants; that his proving of us, is in order to our more unreserved obedience: that our exemption from the afflictions, which others endure, is intended to encourage us in the path of duty: and that *the evidence* of our being interested in his redeeming love, arises from the habitual disposition, of which we are conscious, to keep his commandments. Our health, both of body and soul, depend on the Lord; may he then sanctify our bodily sicknesses, restore our souls to the health of holiness, enable us "to "draw waters with joy from the wells of salvation," and "to sit down under his shadow with great delight, and "find his fruit sweet to our taste." (*Sol. Song*, c. 2. v. 3.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 3. *By the hand of the Lord*, &c.] By some sudden judgment, as the first-born of Egypt had been slain; as if they envied them their speedy death, whilst they considered themselves reserved to a more lingering, and painful execution.

When we sat by, &c.] They had forgot all their fatigue, and oppression; and only remember, and magnify the plenty, which they had enjoyed: as if their enslaved condition in Egypt had been a most desirable privilege.

Ye have brought us, &c.] Not daring directly to arraign the divine justice, and not at all disposed to acknowledge the Lord's goodness; they purposely overlook him in the business, and ascribe the whole as a matter of blame to the instruments.

To kill, &c.] As if they meant to charge it upon Moses and Aaron, that they intended only their destruction; and *that* of the whole congregation: for not *seeing themselves* how they could be victualled, in unbelief they questioned the Lord's power to do it.

V. 4. *I will rain bread from heaven.*] From out of the air, (Note *Gen.* c. 1. v. 1.) where it was miraculously produced, and whence it descended in the form of rain, or dew.

That I may prove them, &c.] May make a fair trial of them, whether any reasonable indulgence, or any miraculous interposition will induce them to obedience.

V. 5. *On the sixth day*, &c.] On the day before the sabbath, which is spoken of in this chapter, as an appointment, with which they were previously acquainted, probably a much larger quantity fell than on other days.

V. 7. *And in the morning*, &c.] They saw in the evening when the quails came, and in the morning, when the manna descended, an additional, miraculous, and merciful proof, that the Lord had brought them out of Egypt:

LORD shall give you in the evening flesh to eat, and in the morning bread to the full; for that the LORD heareth your murmurings which ye murmur against him: And what *are* we? your murmurings *are* not against us, but against the LORD.

9 And Moses spake unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.

10 And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

12 I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel; speak unto them, saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread: and ye shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.

13 And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.

14 And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness *there lay* a small round thing, *as* small as the hoar frost on the ground.

15 And when the children of Israel saw *it*, they said one to another, It *is* manna: for they wist not what it *was*. And Moses said unto them, This *is* the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.

16 This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, Gather of it every man according to his eating: an omer for every man, *according to* the number of your persons, take ye every man for *them* which *are* in his tents.

17 And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less.

18 And when they did mete *it* with an omer, he that gathered much, had nothing over, and he that gathered little, had no lack: they gathered every man according to his eating.

19 And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning.

20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses, but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.

21 And

Egypt: that whilst they beheld the glory of his power, and love, in thus supplying their wants, they might be shamed out of their murmurings and distrust.

Your murmurings against the Lord, &c.] They reflected upon Moses, as if he were unkind, unjust, or unwise, in bringing them out of Egypt; but were not aware that they were charging God, not Moses with these things; for HE had brought them forth, and Moses was but his instrument.

V. 10. *The glory of the Lord*, &c.] Some extraordinary splendour, which denoted his special presence; and from which he probably spake in an audible voice.

V. 12. *Ye shall know that I am the Lord* your *God*.] That is, they should be convinced not only that he was able, but considered himself engaged to protect, and provide for them, unless they forfeited their privilege by rebellion, and apostacy.

V. 13. *Quails*.] Some kind of feathered fowl, (*Psalm* 78. v. 27.) though it is not certainly known what kind. Such numbers were miraculously brought thither, and lighted amongst them, that they caught with ease as many, as sufficed for their use. Compare this miracle of mercy to Israel, with the miracle of the locusts, which were sent to devour the sustenance of Egypt.

V. 15. *It is manna*.] The meaning seems to be, that they asked, What is this? which became the name of it.

V. 16. *Omer*.] About five English pints: thus much of this extraordinary food, they were able to gather for every individual of this vast company, every day, for forty years together.

V. 18. *He that gathered much*, &c.] This is by some interpreted thus: when the master of every family came to mete out to every one his portion, he found that they had one with another gathered as much as was necessary, and no more. Yet as some endeavoured to hoard the manna; this interpretation seems scarce admissible, for there would have been none for them to have hoarded: nor can we, for the same reason, admit a miracle to be wrought in augmenting, or diminishing the quantity, which they severally had gathered. But, as the Apostle applies this passage to Christians imparting their abundance to supply the necessity of such, as were in want, (2 *Cor.* c. 8. v. 12—15.) we may be allowed to interpret the words in this manner; they, who had gathered much, that is more than they wanted, were generally led to impart their superfluity, to supply the deficiency of those, who had too little; in confidence of a fresh supply the next day.

V. 19. *And Moses*, &c.] This may be rendered, "For "Moses

21 And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating: and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

22 And it came to pass *that* on the sixth day they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for one *man*: and all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses.

23 And he said unto them, This *is that* which the LORD hath said, To-morrow *is* the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake *that* which ye will bake *to-day*, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over, lay up for you to be kept until the morning.

24 And they laid it up till the morning, as Moses bade: and it did not stink, neither was there any worm therein.

25 And Moses said, Eat that to-day; for to-day *is* a sabbath unto the LORD: to-day ye shall not find it in the field.

26 Six days ye shall gather it; but on the seventh day *which is* the sabbath, in it there shall be none.

27 And it came to pass *that* there went out *some* of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.

28 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?

29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days: abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.

30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it *was* like coriander-seed, white; and the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

32 And Moses said, This *is* the thing which the LORD commandeth, Fill an omer of it to be kept for your generations; that they may see the bread wherewith I have fed you in the wilderness, when I brought you forth from the land of Egypt.

33 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a pot, and put an omer full of manna therein, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations.

34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept.

35 And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited:

"Moses had said," &c. and be considered as the reason why none lacked, and none had any thing over: the generality of them were obedient to his orders; and instead of hoarding, gave away their superfluity.

V. 21. *When the sun waxed hot*, &c.] This was a very extraordinary circumstance, that a substance, which was so easily dissolved, and exhaled, should be so nutrimental, as to support them in health, and vigour, for so long a time. They were thus taught to be industrious, and to rise early to their work; and we are taught to seek the Lord *early*, without delay, and with diligence.

V. 22. *Bake ye that*, &c.] They were not allowed to kindle any fire on the sabbath days, (ch. 35. v. 3.) therefore they were required to prepare the manna for use on the preceding day, in what manner they chose; that the religious rest of that *holy* day might not be interrupted; and after using what they wanted the day before, to reserve that, which remained, in what form they pleased, for the sabbath.

V. 24. *It did not stink*, &c.] There was a combination, as it were, of miracles wrought every week in honour of the sabbath, before the promulgation of the Mosaic law. Double the quantity fell the day before; (v. 29.) none fell on the sabbath day; nor did that stink, which they kept for that day: this confirms the supposition that the institution of the sabbath was from the beginning.

V. 29. *Hath given you*, &c.] Not *is about to* appoint, but *hath given* you; as a special benefit hath instituted this day of holy rest for you.

V. 34. *So Aaron laid it up*, &c.] This was done some months after; when the ark, the testimony of God's presence with them, care of them, and relation to them, was formed, and put into the holy of holies. Thus by miracle, the manna, which, when kept in distrust, stank in one night, was preserved pure from generation to generation.

V. 35. *Did eat manna*, &c.] The manna was a type of Christ, the true bread, that came down from heaven; provided of God, and given to perishing sinners, notwithstanding their unworthiness, and their disposition to despise, or undervalue so precious a gift. The careless multitude understand not what this heavenly manna is, or what use they are to make of it, till instructed that it is the bread, which the Lord hath given them. The hypocrite retains the doctrine as a notion, which corrupts and produces pride, and vain confidence. The true Christian, having an appetite for this heavenly provision, seeks it diligently, and early, day by day; and labours for it, though

habited: they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.

36 Now an omer *is* the tenth *part* of an ephah.

though the gift of God; (*John* c. 6. v. 27.) and feeds upon it in his heart by faith with thankſgiving: by which his ſoul acquires health and vigour, and he becomes ſtrong to labour, and to fight with his enemies. There is a ſufficiency in this proviſion for the whole congregation of Iſrael, but nothing over for any one. We muſt have it freſh, and feed upon it daily to the end of our journey to the Canaan above, and though it appear to ſome light bread, it will hold out to the end: that is, we muſt by faith receive from Chriſt, as the purchaſe of his ſacrifice, daily pardon, and peace, grace, and ſtrength every day till we come to heaven. And though we now ſeem to gather a double portion on the ſabbath days; yet when we keep our heavenly ſabbath, we ſhall not need to gather any more, nor will the ſtock we have acquired any more corrupt, but in that holy of holies will preſerve for ever, as proviſion for our ſouls, to the glory of our God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As changes are prepared for us in this world, we ſhould be prepared for them, and be ready to endure hardſhip, and to exerciſe faith, patience, and ſelf-denial, whenever called to it. But before we too ſeverely cenſure others, we ſhould put our ſoul in their ſoul's ſtead: we may eaſily condemn theſe Iſraelites; but perhaps do not readily ſuſpect, that in much leſs trials, we ſhould diſtruſt, deſpond, and murmur, if we were proved, and left to ourſelves: nor are we apt to regard their conduct as an intended picture of human nature, and their hiſtory, as the hiſtory of the human heart, under the varying diſpenſations of providence. Whatever ſituation we are placed in, we are prone to undervalue our mercies, and to aggravate our troubles; and to compare the unfavourable ſide of our preſent circumſtances with the favourable ſide of ſome former, or ſome imaginary ſituation: by which means we are ingenious in rendering ourſelves diſcontented, and unthankful; and are ever wiſhing for ſome change, yet ever ſeeming to change for the worſe. And when we are aſhamed to reflect directly upon God; we are apt to vent our impatience in complaining againſt the inſtruments, or mere occaſions of our uneaſineſs; not aware that our murmurings are againſt the Lord himſelf. It behoves us therefore to watch and pray againſt this rebellious, unthankful ſpirit, the offspring of pride, and unbelief; and confiding in the Lord's wiſdom, and conſcious of our own unworthineſs, to ſtudy contentment: and if plain, and ſharp reproofs tend to humble, and quiet us, they are not miſplaced. But the Lord is ſlow to anger, and mercifully conſidereth our frame, and knows how hard we find it to bear urgent want without impatience; and to believe his word in direct oppoſition to every appearance of probability. He will therefore frequently ſhew us his glory, and prove our obedience by ſupplying our wants, and exceeding our expectations; that we may not plead, that we want encouragement to truſt, and ſerve him in future. He could at all times, and therefore in ſome caſes does ſupply his people with ſuperfluities: but in general he ſees it beſt for them to have only things neceſſary, and that from day to day; and conſtrains moſt of them to expect their ſupport from *him* on the morrow, that they may ſee the glory of his power, and taſte the *ſweetneſs* of his truth, and love, in their daily bread. Nor, if our faith be ſtrong, ſhould we ſleep any worſe, though, like Iſrael, we went to reſt without one morſel in the houſe for the next day; or any other confidence of obtaining it; except confidence in him, who, as "a father, knoweth what "things we have need of." Yet muſt we labour even for the meat that periſheth, in ſubordination to our labouring for that, which endureth unto everlaſting life; though both be the *gift* of God: and it is the Lord's will that the poor be liberal of their little, as well as the rich out of their abundance. (*Eph.* c. 4. v. 28.) Whether we have much or little, that which is hoarded in covetouſneſs and diſtruſt, corrupts, breeds worms, and ſtinks; and that alone is uſeful, which ſupplies our wants, and thoſe of others. Whatever diligence we uſe in worldly buſineſs on other days, we are to conſider the ſabbath, as the Lord's gift to us; and ſhould *previouſly* contrive every thing, even in reſpect of our food, in that manner, as may beſt render it a day of holy reſt from worldly, and of holy reſt in ſpiritual employments: and he will contrive that we ſhall eventually be no loſers by ſo doing. But there is in us a ſpirit of perverſeneſs, and we ſeem to take pleaſure *naturally* in doing the very reverſe to the Lord's commands: this muſt be mortified, and ſubdued. Whatever the providence of God, in any honeſt way allots us, we are to conſider as the bread, which the Lord giveth us to eat, and to be thankful for it, and contented with it. But if we cannot *merit* our bodily food, what claim can we have to that bread, which came down from heaven, without which we muſt have inevitably periſhed? (*John.* c. 6. v. 27—58.) Let us then thankfully welcome, early and diligently go forth to gather, and joyfully feed upon this heavenly proviſion: let us ſeek earneſtly for the grace of God's ſpirit to turn all our knowledge of the doctrine of Chriſt crucified, into the ſpiritual nouriſhment of our ſouls by faith, and love; that we may not reſt in barren notions, or feed on worldly vanities, or ſatisfy ourſelves with former ſuppoſed experiences: but living upon this bread from day to day in the attendance on all the means of grace, we ſhall ſhow that our ſouls are thereby nouriſhed in all holineſs, and fitted for all obedience; and thus alſo edifying others by the way, we ſhall, in due time, arrive at the heavenly Canaan, there to feaſt for ever on the rich proviſions of our Father's houſe above.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1ſt. The children of Iſrael in want of water, chiding with Moſes, and tempting the Lord; Moſes expoſtulating with them, and complaining to the Lord, and at his command ſmiting the rock, which afforded them water; and the place named Maſſah, and Meribah, v. 1—7. *2d. Amalek aſſaulting Iſrael, fought with, and overcome by Joſhua, whilſt Moſes held up his hands, with the rod of God: Amalek in conſequence doomed to deſtruction; and Moſes building an altar, called* JEHOVAH-NISSI, *v.* 8—16.

AND all the congregation of the children of Iſrael journeyed from the wilderneſs of Sin, after their journies, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and *there was* no water for the people to drink.

2 Wherefore the people did chide with Moſes, and ſaid, Give us water that we may drink. And Moſes ſaid unto them, Why chide you with me? Wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

3 And the people thirſted there for water; and the people murmured againſt Moſes, and ſaid, Wherefore *is* this *that* thou haſt brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children, and our cattle with thirſt?

4 And Moſes cried unto the LORD, ſaying, What ſhall I do unto this people? They be almoſt ready to ſtone me.

5 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Iſrael: and thy rod wherewith thou ſmoteſt the river, take in thine hand, and go.

6 Behold, I will ſtand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou ſhalt ſmite the rock, and there ſhall come water out of

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. V. 2. *Tempt the Lord*, &c.] That is, they put him to the trial, by queſtioning whether he were amongſt them, or not: (v. 7.) ſtill they were diſpoſed, after all, that they had ſeen, and heard, even whilſt marching under the guidance of the cloud; and whilſt living upon the manna, to forget God, and to act as if they thought that Moſes, and Aaron had of themſelves brought them out of Egypt! Thus they put his omniſcience, and omnipotence to the trial; and behaved, as if they would tempt the Lord to ſhew them in vengeance, that he was amongſt them; or to leave them to the conſequences of their perverſeneſs, and unbelief; or would preſumptuouſly preſcribe to him what he ought to do; or limit him, and put it to the proof, whether he were able to perform their requirements or not, (*Pſalm* 78. v. 18—20.) being determined to reject his authority, if he did not.

V. 6. *I will ſtand before thee*, &c.] In the cloud, which would mark out the particular rock, that was to be ſmitten.

That the people may drink, &c.] An immenſe quantity would be required for ſuch a vaſt multitude, and for their flocks, and herds *in one day*: but we have reaſon to conclude that this water followed them in the wilderneſs from place to place for ſome time at leaſt (*Pſalm* 78. v. 15, 16—20. *Pſalm* 105. v. 41.) It appears to have been a river, which flowed from this rock, that not only afforded them ſome ſcanty and temporary relief; but was an abundant, and durable ſupply for the whole company. The apoſtle ſays, that "this rock was Chriſt;" (1 *Cor.* c. 10. v. 4.) that is a type of him; and it is obſervable, that God is never in Scripture called a Rock, till after this event, which thenceforth becomes common. A rock is firm and unſhaken, as a foundation, on which to build; but from a rock of flint we might ſooner expect, as it were, fire than water: Chriſt is a tried foundation, and is of immoveable power, and ſtability; but we ſinners had more reaſon to have expected vengeance from his juſtice, than grace from his fulneſs. This rock muſt be ſmitten by the rod of Moſes, by whom the law was given; even that rod, by which the plagues were inflicted upon Egypt: Chriſt was made under the law, and was ſmitten by its righteous curſe, and bare that puniſhment in the believer's ſtead, under which the unbeliever muſt himſelf ſuffer for ever. The rock was ſmitten by Moſes, at the Lord's command, once, in the preſence of the elders of Iſrael, who were then full of rebellion; whilſt the ſymbol of God's preſence, and glory reſted upon it. Chriſt was wounded for our tranſgreſſions of the law, in the preſence of the rebellious Jewiſh elders; once for all; by man's inſtrumentality, but by his determinate purpoſe, who ſaid, "Awake, O ſword, againſt the ſhepherd, againſt "the man, who is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts, "ſmite the ſhepherd." (*Zech.* c. 13. v. 7.) Whilſt evident tokens of divine majeſty attended his crucifixion and death; (*Matt.* c. 27. v. 45—54.) After the rock was ſmitten, the waters flowed forth abundantly, without which ſupply Iſrael muſt have periſhed: after Chriſt's crucifixion, and in conſequence of his reſurrection, aſcenſion, and interceſſion, the Holy Ghoſt, in all his humbling, ſanctifying, and comforting influences; as well as in his manifold gifts, and operations, was abundantly communicated, (*John*, c. 7. v. 37—39.) without which we muſt all have periſhed in our ſins. Numerous as the Iſraelites were, there was water enough for them all, and a conſtant, abundant ſupply: numerous as believers are, the ſupply of the ſpirit of Chriſt ſuffices for them all, and there is ſo large and inexhauſtible a fulneſs in him, that millions of millions might drink and be ſatisfied, if there were ſo many, who were athirſt for theſe living waters. The water

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of it, that the people may drink. And Moſes did ſo in the ſight of the elders of Iſrael.

7 And he called the name of the place Maſſah and Meribah, becauſe of the chiding of the children of Iſrael, and becauſe they tempted the LORD, ſaying, is the LORD among us, or not?

8 Then came Amalek, and fought with Iſrael in Rephidim.

9 And Moſes ſaid unto Joſhua, Chuſe us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to-morrow I will ſtand on the top of the hill, with the rod of God in mine hand.

10 So Joſhua did as Moſes had ſaid to him, and fought with Amalek: and Moſes, Aaron, and Hur, went up to the top of the hill.

11 And it came to paſs when Moſes held up his hand, that Iſrael prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed.

12 But Moſes' hands *were* heavy, and they took a ſtone and put *it* under him, and he ſat thereon: and Aaron and Hur ſtayed up his hands, the one on the one ſide, and the other on the other ſide; and his hands were ſteady until the going down of the ſun.

13 And Joſhua diſcomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the ſword.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Write this *for* a memorial in a book, and rehearſe *it* in the ears of Joſhua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.

15 And Moſes built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-NISSI.

16 For he ſaid, Becauſe the LORD hath ſworn *that* the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation.

CHAP.

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water flowed from the rock in ſtreams to refreſh the wilderneſs, and attended them on their way to Canaan; and this water flows from Chriſt through the ordinances in the barren wilderneſs of this world, to refreſh our ſouls, to purify and fructify them, until we come to glory. (*Iſai.* c 41. v. 17—18. c. 43. v. 19, 20. c. 48. v. 21.) However many, who drunk of the water, which flowed from the rock, periſhed in the wilderneſs: but "whoſoever drinketh of the water which Chriſt ſhall give him, "it ſhall be in him a well of water ſpringing up into "everlaſting life," (*John*, c. 4. v. 10—13, 14.)

V. 7. *Maſſah, Meribah.*] That is, temptation and chiding; they tempted the Lord, and chided with Moſes.

V. 8. *Amalek.*] We find Amalek amongſt the deſcendants of Eſau, (*Gen.* c. 36. v. 16.) whence it is generally ſuppoſed, that the Amalekites were a tribe of the Edomites; who were the more inexcuſable in this unprovoked attack upon their brethren, who attempted not to moleſt them.

V. 10. *To the top of the hill.*] Whence they could witneſs the battle, and Moſes with his rod, by which ſuch wonders had been wrought, would be viſible to the ſoldiers for their encouragement.

V. 11. *Moſes held up his hand*, &c.] This typifies Chriſt's interceſſion for his people, when conflicting with their enemies, who prevail in conſequence of it; and ſhould take encouragement from it. It repreſented alſo the efficacy of fervent prayer: nor ſhould we forget that it was *Moſes* who ſtretched out his hands holding the rod, as the token of their victory, with whom they had juſt before chided, as if he had intended to murder them.

V. 14. *Write this for a memorial*, &c.] This is the firſt time writing is mentioned in Scripture; probably Moſes had before been inſtructed to write ſome of his hiſtory; though ſome think this was ſpoken by anticipation; that the law written by the finger of God was the firſt writing; and that Moſes was thenceforth inſtructed in writing his books.

Rehearſe it in the ears of Joſhua.] As he was to command in the wars of Iſrael, it was proper that he ſhould be informed of this ſentence, that he might embrace every opportunity of executing it; and enjoin the ſame conduct to his ſucceſſors.

The remembrance, &c.] This was completed by David, after whoſe times we never read of the name of Amalek.

V. 15. *JEHOVAH-NISSI.*] That is, the Lord my Banner. He aſcribes the victory to their having fought under the Lord's banner; gives him the glory of it: and conſiders it as an earneſt of many more. This is the firſt altar, which we read of, after Jacob's going down into Egypt; during which period ſacrifices had been greatly interrupted.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we are walking according to the commandment of the Lord, we may ſecurely depend upon him to ſupply our real wants, in his own time, and manner; but even then we muſt expect trials, and learn to exerciſe patience, as well as faith. Inordinate and impatient thirſting, even for needful things, puts the mind into a ferment, renders us forgetful of our former experience of the Lord's power, and goodneſs, and diſpoſes us to quarrel with, and upbraid our beſt friends, and even preſumptuouſly to tempt, diſtruſt, and preſcribe to God himſelf. They, who are employed in endeavours to do important good to others muſt expect much unreaſonable, and ungrateful behaviour; and to be not only reproached, but expoſed to danger for their beſt ſervices: they have need therefore to be armed with much patience, prudence, and meekneſs; and to have much communion with God; that they may ſpread every caſe before him, and ſeek comfort, protection, and direction from him. The Lord will

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Jethro visiting Moses, bringing with him his wife, and sons; his reception, and the account given him of the Lord's goodness to Israel, with his joy, gratitude, and sacrifices, v. 1—12. 2d. The good advice, which Jethro gave to Moses, and Moses' concurrence with it, v. 13—26. 3d. Jethro's departure, v. 27.

WHEN Jethro the priest of Midian, Moses' father in law, heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people, *and* that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt:

2 Then Jethro, Moses' father in law, took Zipporah Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

3 And her two sons, of which the name of the one *was* Gershom (for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land)

4 And the name of the other *was* Eliezer, (for the God of my father, *said he, was* mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh)

5 And Jethro Moses' father in law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God.

6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father in law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

7 And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him, and they asked each other of *their* welfare: and they came into the tent.

8 And Moses told his father in law all that the LORD had done unto Pharaoh, and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, *and* all the travel that had come upon them by the way, and *how* the LORD delivered them.

9 And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel: whom he had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians.

10 And Jethro said, Blessed *be* the LORD, who hath delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of Pharaoh, who hath delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians.

11 Now I know that the LORD *is* greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly *he was* above them.

12 And

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will honour those, who behave thus in trying circumstances in the presence of their despisers, and perhaps make them instruments of their preservation. And he himself teaches us by his example, not "to be overcome "of evil, but to overcome evil with good:" when the rod of Moses, which might justly have been the token of deserved vengeance after the manner of Egypt, was stretched forth to smite the rock, that he might give drink to his people, his chosen, though they were so rebellious. How can his servants want, when such a gracious God has power to command food from the clouds, and water from a rock in such abundance? Thus whilst the curse of God might righteously have been executed upon our guilty souls: behold the Son of God becomes a curse for us! From this smitten rock flow the streams of salvation, which follow us through the wilderness. Thence the believing soul receives in measure answerable, not only to his necessities, but to his largest expectations: whilst all, who are athirst, yea all that *will* are invited to come, and take of them freely. Let us then ask, and receive, and drink, and rejoice, and live for ever. But we must observe that our enemies will especially assault us, when drinking most abundantly of these living streams: however they will prepare us for the conflict; and fighting under the Lord our banner, we shall finally prevail, and give him the glory. We may also observe that some men are useful in one way, and some in another; but none so serviceable as they, who serve the public by fervent persevering prayers. Little do statesmen in the cabinet, or commanders in the field, understand, how much the success of their deliberations is influenced by the prayers of the true Christian in his closet, in his family, and in the house of God. But alas! how soon we flag in these spiritual exercises, even sooner than the soldier wearies in the field of battle, and have need to be supported, and animated by each other; but especially we need continual assistance from the Lord, that we may pray always and not faint. And they have indeed cause to tremble, who have not only the sword of an enemy, but the prayers of God's people, and the memorials of God's word against them; for the complete salvation of the righteous is inseparable from the entire destruction of the wicked.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 6. *He said unto Moses*, &c.] By a messenger, as it appears, whom he sent to inform Moses of his arrival, who accordingly went forth to meet him.

V. 11. *I know*, &c.] Jethro declares that he was greatly confirmed in his faith, and encouraged in his worship of the true God, by this decided victory, which he had obtained over the proud, and presumptuous opposition of

12 And Jethro, Moſes' father in law, took a burnt-offering, and ſacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Iſrael to eat bread with Moſes' father in law before God.

13 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that Moſes ſat to judge the people: and the people ſtood by Moſes, from the morning unto the evening.

14 And when Moſes' father in law ſaw all that he did to the people, he ſaid, What *is* this thing that thou doeſt to the people? Why ſitteſt thou thyſelf alone, and all the people ſtand by thee from morning unto even?

15 And Moſes ſaid unto his father in law, Becauſe the people come unto me to enquire of God.

16 When they have a matter, they come unto me, and I judge between one and another, and I do make *them* know the ſtatutes of God and his laws.

17 And Moſes' father in law ſaid unto him, The thing that thou doeſt *is* not good.

18 Thou wilt ſurely wear away, both thou, and this people that *is* with thee: for this thing *is* too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyſelf alone.

19 Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counſel, and God ſhall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou mayeſt bring the cauſes unto God:

20 And thou ſhall teach them ordinances and laws, and ſhalt ſhew them the way wherein they muſt walk, and the work that they muſt do.

21 Moreover, thou ſhalt provide out of all the people, able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs; and place *ſuch* over them, *to be* rulers of thouſands, *and* rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

22 And let them judge the people at all ſeaſons: and it ſhall be, *that* every great matter they ſhall bring unto thee, but every ſmall matter they ſhall judge: So ſhall it be eaſier for thyſelf, and they ſhall bear *the burden* with thee.

23 If thou ſhalt do this thing, and God command thee *ſo*, then thou ſhalt be able to endure, and all this people ſhall alſo go to their place in peace.

24 So Moſes hearkened to the voice of his father in law, and did all that he had ſaid.

25 And Moſes choſe able men out of all Iſrael, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thouſands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

26 And they judged the people at all ſeaſons: the hard cauſes they brought unto Moſes, but every ſmall matter they judged themſelves.

27 And Moſes let his father in law depart; and he went his way into his own land.

CHAP.

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of Pharaoh, and the Egyptians; and by the redemption of Iſrael. Jethro was one of Abraham's deſcendants by Keturah, being a Midianite.

V. 12. *And Jethro*, &c.] The Aaronic prieſthood was not yet eſtabliſhed: Jethro therefore, as an ancient prieſt of the Lord, officiated in theſe ſacrifices, wherein, though not of Iſrael, he had fellowſhip with Iſrael; which had a favourable look towards the caſe of the Gentiles. Having offered a burnt-offering, they ſacrificed other ſacrifices, and feaſted together with thankfulneſs, and ſober chearfulneſs, as before God: which was a repreſentation of the life of faith in Chriſt, and the communion of the ſaints.

V. 13. *To judge the people*, &c.] To try their cauſes, decide their differences; and in ſome caſes to enquire of God for them, what they ought to do. (verſe 15.) As the people were ignorant, and we may well conclude very contentious, as well as numerous: and as Moſes was very acceſſible, and meek; and as their ſuits were without coſt, or trouble; they would doubtleſs furniſh him with abundance of employment.

V. 19. *Be thou for the people to God-ward.*] In ſuch cauſes, as were more difficult, and required direction from God, or more immediately referred to his worſhip and ſervice, let there be an appeal to thee.

V. 23. *God command thee ſo*, &c.] He would have him refer this matter to God, and only follow his counſel, in caſe HE approved of it. Accordingly we find that the Lord did appoint it, (*Numbers*, c. 11. v. 16, &c.) and the people alſo approved it; (*Deut.* c. 9. v. 14.) and ſo it was followed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The report of the Lord's power, and goodneſs, ſhewn in behalf of Iſrael, having reached diſtant places, confirmed the faith, and excited the joy, and gratitude of ſuch, as were not perſonally intereſted in thoſe peculiar benefits: and the records of the ſame events having been handed down to theſe diſtant ages, ſhould produce the ſame effects upon our minds; that we too may be eſta-

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1ſt, Iſrael's arrival, and encampment at Mount Sinai, v. 1—2. *2d. Moſes hearing and delivering the Lord's meſſage to the people; their engagement to obedience, and his report of it unto the Lord, v.* 3—8. *3d. Preparations made, regulations preſcribed, and the time ſet for the giving of the law, with the tremendous introduction thereto, v.* 9—25.

IN the third month, when the children of Iſrael were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the ſame day came they *into* the wilderneſs of Sinai.

2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the deſert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderneſs, and there Iſrael camped before the mount.

3 And Moſes went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, ſaying, Thus ſhalt thou ſay to the houſe of Jacob, and tell the children of Iſrael;

4 Ye have ſeen what I did unto the Egyptians,

bliſhed in the faith, and ſtirred up to truſt and praiſe the Lord for his mercies to Iſrael.

Huſbands and wives may, on ſome occaſions, be obliged to ſeparate for a time: but the ſooner they come together again, and the more they live together, the better: extraordinary ſervices and dangers may be improper for the female ſex to ſhare in; but ordinary cares, and every comfort, and honour of the huſband, the wife ought to participate. Nor ſhould children needleſsly be deprived of the great benefit, which they may derive from the care, inſtruction, and example of pious and wiſe parents: and the people will be much edified, when they witneſs how well they rule their own houſholds, who are entruſted with the adminiſtration of public affairs, and take care of the Church of God. When we record our trials, we ſhould be careful to record our mercies alſo: "Perſe-"cuted, but not forſaken; caſt down, but not deſtroy-"ed:" exiles, but protected by the God of our fathers. It is very comely, when perſons, employed in the moſt important public ſervices, pay a proper attention to the duties, and regards of private life: and when they, who are highly honoured of God, are very humble and affable, and ſhew all reſpect to ſuperior relations; and gratitude to their old benefactors. Our meeting from time to time with our friends on earth will be very comfortable, and uſeful, if we converſe together concerning the loving kindneſs, and wonderful works of God; if we unite in praiſe, and thankſgiving: and if, by ſobriety, love, gratitude, and the fear of God, we turn every feſtive interview into a religious ordinance; a ſacrifice acceptable, well pleaſing to the Lord. What then will be our final meeting in heaven, where the love, joy, and praiſe will be complete, uninterrupted, and eternal! But our welcome of, and attention to our neareſt friends, muſt not render us negligent of our proper buſineſs: any more than the ingratitude, which we experience, ſhould render us weary of doing good. The moſt exalted ſtations have the heavieſt work connected with them, if they are properly filled: for ſuch is human nature, that it is not only an arduous undertaking to reſtrain men from ungodlineſs, but very difficult to keep them from devouring one another: and they, who would adminiſter juſtice, keep the peace, and repreſs violence, and fraud, will have enough to engroſs their thoughts, to burden their ſpirits, and to occupy their time. But though "whatever our hand findeth to do, we "ſhould do it with all our might;" yet a prudent regard to health is not only allowable, but our duty; and it is not good in us to neglect it, however well employed: and wiſdom is profitable to direct men in high ſtations, what they muſt do themſelves, and what they may do by others. The Lord hath alſo divided his gifts ſeverally to different men; and an impartial obſerver, though of inferior endowments, may ſometimes ſuggeſt a counſel, which the wiſeſt of men may very profitably attend to: yea his wiſdom will diſpoſe him to attend to it; "for give inſtruc-"tion to a wiſe man, and he will yet be wiſer;" "but "fools deſpiſe wiſdom, and inſtruction." Yet we muſt not follow the wiſeſt counſel, until we have, by attention to the word of God, and by prayer, conſulted the Lord alſo; who, however, often counſels us by the advice of our pious friends, that we may love, and be united to them; as well as dependant on, and thankful to him.—Magiſtracy (as well as the miniſtry of the Goſpel) is an ordinance of God: they therefore, who are employed in the moſt ſubordinate offices of government, ſhould be ſelected perſons, "able men," of clear heads, and ſound judgments; ſuch as "fear God," and from a principle of genuine piety, become "men of truth," of integrity, and fidelity; and have learned to "hate covetouſneſs," that they "may ſhake their hands from holding of bribes," and adminiſter juſtice impartially. What then ought lawgivers, ſupreme magiſtrates, and the miniſters of religion to be! Happy indeed are the people, that are bleſſed with ſuch rulers, and teachers; "yea bleſſed are the people "who have the Lord for their God."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. V. 1. *On the ſame day*, &c.] The Iſraelites left Egypt on the 15th day of the firſt month, and are ſuppoſed to have arrived at Sinai on the firſt day of the third month, that is on the 47th day from their departure. Three days afterwards the law was delivered; that is on the 50th day; on which the feaſt of pentecoſt was held, as is ſuppoſed, in commemoration thereof.

V. 3. *Moſes went up*, &c.] To mount Sinai, doubtleſs by the Lord's command, and in order to receive his meſſage to the people, who were now to be incorporated, and formed into a church and nation, under the government of God, and in covenant with him. Having hitherto been firſt a ſingle family, and then a number of ſlaves.

V. 4. *On Eagles wings*, &c.] As the Eagle carries her young upon her wings, (*Deut.* c. 32. v. 11.) out of the

tians, and *how* I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine.

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken, we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come

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the reach of those who would attempt their destruction. Thus the Lord rescued them from Egypt, that they might be his people, dwelling under his protection, and devoted to his worship, and service.

V. 5. *Keep my covenant*, &c.] This was their national covenant, or the covenant of peculiarity, the charter, upon which they were incorporated, as a people under the government of Jehovah. It was an engagement of God unto them, to give them possession of Canaan, and to protect them therein; to render the land fruitful, and the nation victorious, and prosperous, and to perpetuate his oracles and ordinances amongst them; as long, as they did not, as a people, reject his authority, apostatize to idolatry, and tolerate open wickedness. These things would be a forfeiture of the covenant; as their national rejection of Christ was afterwards. At the same time true believers amongst them were *personally* dealt with according to the covenant of mercy, and grace, even as true Christians now are: and unbelievers were under the covenant of works, and liable to condemnation by it, even as at present. Yet their national covenant was not strictly either the one, or the other, but had something in it of the nature of each; and had not reference to their final salvation personally, nor was broken by the personal disobedience, or even idolatry of any number of individuals; provided it was not authorized, or tolerated by public authority. It was however a type of the covenant, which is made with true believers in Christ Jesus: as were all the transactions with Israel: but like other types, it had not the very image, but a shadow of good things to come. As a nation they broke this covenant; therefore the Lord declares that he will make a new covenant with Israel, putting his law (not only in their hands) but in their inward parts; and writing it (not upon tables of stone) but in their hearts; and forgiving their iniquity, and remembering their sins no more. (*Jer.* c. 30. v. 32—34. *Heb.* c. 8. v. 7—12. c. 10. v. 16—17.) In all which places the covenant which is spoken of, as ready to vanish away, is evidently not the covenant of works, but the national covenant with Israel, which they had vacated by their sins. Without we carefully attend to this distinction, and keep in view continually this national covenant with Israel, we shall be liable to fall into perpetual mistakes in reading the Old Testament. Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose the nation of the Jews to have been under the covenant of works, which knows nothing of repentance, faith in a mediator, forgiveness of sins, or grace: yet we oft meet with language in many authors, which seems to convey such an idea. Though it is more common to hear the whole nation of Israel spoken of, as if they all bare the character, and possessed the privileges of true believers, actually interested in the covenant of grace; and conclusions are drawn from such premises, as if they were undeniable. Like professing Christians, they were all under a dispensation of mercy, and had outward privileges, and advantages many ways for salvation: but like professing Christians, they many of them rested in them, and looked no further. (*Rom.* c. 2. v. 17—29. c. 3. v. 1—9.) "All were not Israel, that was of "Israel." The outward covenant was made with the nation as such, entitling them to outward advantages, upon the condition of outward national obedience. The covenant of grace was ratified personally with the true believer, and sealed and secured spiritual blessings, by producing a holy disposition of heart, and spiritual obedience to the law of God, which was written therein.

A peculiar treasure.] Which is safely reposited, because highly valued. All the earth being the Lord's, he might have any where found a nation as proper to be chosen as the people of Israel: which implied, that, as his choice of them was gratuitous, so, if they rejected his covenant, he would reject them as a people, and communicate their privileges to others: as he hath done, since the introduction of the Christian dispensation.

V. 6. *A kingdom of priests*, &c.] A kingdom, of which he would act as lawgiver, judge, and protector, from his mercy seat. A kingdom of priests separated from other people, consecrated to him, permitted to approach him, to offer sacrifices, and supplications, and possessing a sacred character amongst the nations of the earth. A holy people, as being a kingdom of priests. All this *they* were in profession, and outward privilege: All this the *true Christian* is in his spiritual privileges, and real character in the sight of God, and in the sight of the world. (1 *Pet.* c. 2. v. 9. *Rev.* c. 1. v. 6.)

V. 7. *Laid before their faces*, &c.] He plainly laid before them the terms of this national covenant, and demanded their determination concerning it. These elders seem to have been the principal persons, who represented the people.

V. 8. *All that the Lord hath spoken*; &c.] They thus consented to that covenant, though probably with too great confidence. Which being settled, the preparations were made for the promulgation of the law, according to which that covenant was to be framed.

V. 9. *Lo! I come in a thick cloud*, &c.] The solemn manner, and terrible majesty with which the law was delivered from Mount Sinai out of the thick cloud, was chiefly

come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to-day, and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes.

11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people, upon mount Sinai.

12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye* go *not* up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount, shall be surely put to death.

13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes.

15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your* wives.

16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp, trembled.

17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

20 And the Lord came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount, and Moses went up.

21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD, to gaze, and many of them perish.

22 And

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chiefly intended to render the people ever after willing to hear the Lord's message from the mouth of Moses, and believe his testimony; rather than to behold such a sight any more. The thick cloud also represented the comparative darkness of that dispensation: when Christ was transfigured, the voice came out of a bright cloud, "this "is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear "ye him."

V. 10. *Sanctify them*, &c.] The washing with water, and other observances of external purification, and the prohibition in the fifteenth verse, (1 *Cor.* c. 7. v. 5.) represented that inward preparation of heart, that separation from sin, and indifference about even lawful cares, and affections, which become us, when solemnly joining ourselves unto God in a perpetual covenant not to be forgotten.

V. 11. *Will come down*, &c.] That is, the Lord would give evident and awful tokens of his presence, and glory.

V. 12. *Thou shalt set bounds*, &c.] These regulations, and all the terrific solemnities of this transaction, were calculated to impress the minds of the people with a deep sense of the divine majesty, and purity; and to convince them of their own guilt, and unholiness; to shew them that they could not stand in judgment before God by their own obedience to the law, which was delivered; that considered in itself it was more suited to exclude them from the presence of God, than to bring them near to him: and thus to prepare them to understand, and receive the Gospel, which was preached to them in the ceremonial law.

V. 13. *When the trumpet soundeth long*, &c.] By the ministration of Angels, (*Gal.* c. 3. v. 19. *Heb.* c. 2. v. 2.) at this signal they were to approach to the prescribed bounds. Some suppose this trumpet was a representation of the Gospel, to which the law has a subserviency. The law of itself would drive us from God; but being humbled by the knowledge of sin, which is thereby; we are by the sound of the Gospel encouraged to approach unto him.

V. 19. *Moses spake*, &c.] Then it is probably he said, "I exceedingly fear, and quake." Yet he, and Aaron were commanded, and encouraged to go up into the mount. (v. 20—24.) Not only as types of Christ, in his mediatorial character: but as justified believers, who need not fear the justice of God, or the curses of the law, being redeemed from them by him, who was made a curse for them.

V. 21. *To gaze*, &c.] It might have been supposed that the terror of this prospect would have checked their presumptuous curiosity: but the hard heart of an unawakened sinner can trifle with the most terrible denunciations,

22 And let the priests also which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through, to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.

25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

CHAP.

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tions, and judgments of an angry God; and convert them all into a mere diversion, and amusement; or make them the subject of curious speculations, which leave the heart and conscience untouched.

V. 22. *The priests also*, &c.] Some persons who had been appointed, or accustomed to offer sacrifices, in their different tribes, before the Aaronic priesthood.

V. 24. *Lest he break forth*, &c.] Every circumstance, and expression were intended to evince, that the law now about to be given, though holy just and good, could speak nothing but terror and destruction to the transgressor; and fill the heart with horror, dismay, and desperation. But in subserviency to the Covenant of Grace, its uses are manifold. There the sinner discovers what he ought to be, and what he is, and consequently what he wants. There he learns the nature, necessity, and glory of redemption, and sanctification; and having been warned to flee for refuge to the atonement of Christ, and having learned to depend on, cleave to, and love the Saviour; the law in his hand is the rule of his obedience of faith: the law in his heart is the source of that obedience, and the evidence of his forgiveness: as the test of self-examination he is thereby continually made sensible of his sinfulness, and entire dependance on the Saviour, and urged to press forwards to nearer, and nearer conformity to this perfect standard. These are some of the uses of the law to sinners, in bringing them unto Christ, that they may be justified by faith; and in directing the believer in attaining assurance, and glorifying God. It served also to them, and still does to us; to restrain the excesses of wicked men by its terrors, and to keep the world in some degree of order, so long as men are not driven to desperation by a knowledge of its full strictness and severity. It discovers also the moral character of the Deity, and manifests his justice in the judgments, which he executes; and will make the wickedness of men, and the righteousness of God more conspicuous, in the great day of judgment, and of perdition of ungodly men. But we are very hardly driven from the unreasonable notion, that a sinner is to seek justification before God by his imperfect, scanty, and external obedience to this law: to counteract this propensity was this scene exhibited; and to teach the Israelites, that even in respect of their national covenant, though their obedience were required, yet the blessings were not merited thereby, but *freely* given by a gracious God, in a way becoming his own holiness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though our blessedness as God's people originate from his unmerited kindness to us; yet we must evidence that it belongs to us, by our upright and voluntary obedience to his commandments: without which we have no proof that we are his peculiar treasure, above the rest of our fallen race. We can never enough admire the Lord's condescension, and compassion to us in our low estate, and undone condition, in all he has done for us and conferred upon us: and we may not only rejoice that the Lord reigneth; but that, though he delivers his holy law from mount Sinai, we may approach him upon his holy hill of Zion, upon a mercy seat, as God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Blessed be God, we are under a dispensation of mercy, and have, like Israel, the outward seals, and advantages of the covenant; but let us not rest in them. As upon the throne of grace, he mildly receives the submission of repenting sinners, and reigns over his redeemed people; let us draw near unto him, and thankfully receive the salvation, which he bestows, and yield ourselves up to him, as his willing subjects. Such are a holy priesthood, and offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable unto him, through Jesus Christ, have him for their portion, and are consecrated to his service: and should never forget their sacred character, nor disgrace it by any inconsistent conduct. But alas! we are more apt to profess, and to resolve, than to practise. Let us not then say, that we will do so, and so; but beg of God to enable us so to do. The ministers of God are required fairly, and plainly to lay the whole of their message before the people; and in prayer they report before him the reception, with which it meets; but they are not answerable for consequences. The more seriously we prepare for the ordinances of God, and the more our minds are abstracted from all earthly objects, the greater benefit shall we receive. But in approaching to God we must never lose sight of his holiness, and greatness, or of our own meanness, and pollution. Even upon mount Zion our God is a consuming fire, and must be worshipped with reverence and godly fear, (*Heb.* c. 12. v. 28, 29.) without presumptuous familiarity, or vain curiosity.—How then shall we approach him upon this terrible mount Sinai! Could we rush uncalled into the midst of the fire, tempest, and earthquakes? no more can we stand in judgment before him according to the tenor of his righteous law. And if such tremendous tokens of the divine justice accompanied its promulgation: what will that day be, when the earth shall be encircled in flames; and all, who ever dwelt thereon, shall be gathered before the tribunal of the judge, to hear their final, and decisive sentence according to it? Happy they, who have felt their need of a Mediator, have hearkened to the voice of the Saviour, have from him obtained forgiveness of all their

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The ten commandments spoken by God himself to the whole congregation of Israel, v. 1—17. 2d. The consternation of the people, and their conference with Moses, v. 18—20. 3d. Moses receiving from God an additional prohibition of idolatry, and rules about erecting an altar, v. 21—26.

AND God spake all these words, saying,
2 I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou

sins, acceptance with, and access to God: who have received the law, disarmed of it's curses, and stripped of it's terrors, from his gracious hands, and have been taught by his grace to love, and obey it in sincerity and truth. These like Moses, and Aaron, though at first they tremble at God's word, and are always humbled before him, yet will through Christ grow, as it were, familiar with mount Sinai: and fearless of condemnation will meditate on the terror of the sentence of the law, and thence draw arguments to increase their gratitude, and quicken their willing services: and at last will triumph, when the wicked shall be calling in vain to the rocks, to cover them from the wrath of their offended judge.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1. *And God spake*, &c.] With a voice so loud, as to be distinctly heard by this immense multitude. (*Deut.* c. 5. v. 22.) A voice was heard, but no similitude was seen, from whence that voice proceeded.

All these words, &c.] That is, the Ten Commandments, and no more, which may be considered as the grand outlines of the moral law of God. Of that law some traces are discoverable by reason; the whole is consonant to reason: every part of it has its foundation in the nature of God, and of man; and in the relations, which we bear to him, and to each other; and in those obligations, which thence arise. It is evident that there is a distinction betwixt moral precepts, and instituted appointments: some things, which God hath commanded, are in themselves so indifferent, that he might, without impropriety, have prohibited them: as the use of bread and wine, in one religious ordinance; and the use of water in another. But there are laws of another nature; and it is absurd to suppose that God could, consistent with infinite wisdom, and goodness, have reversed the commandments, which he hath given his creatures, to love him and one another, to speak truth, and do justice: indeed ritual precepts are equally obligatory; except when they come in competition with moral duties; and then the Lord "will have "mercy, and not sacrifice." But the ritual injunction is of temporary obligation, had no existence before its express appointment, may be vacated by the same authority; or having answered the purpose, its obligation may cease of course: whilst the moral precept is of immutable, and eternal validity. The different circumstances indeed, in which rational creatures may be placed, may occasion circumstantial alterations: thus the entrance of sin and misery hath rendered patience, and forgiveness of injuries, a part of the law of love to God, and to our neighbours, which otherwise had found no place for exercise. These, and many other things, required of us in our present situation, will cease entirely in heaven. Yet the grand principles, which *necessarily* require them of man, circumstanced as he now is, would have been the same, had he never sinned, and will remain the same to all eternity.

As the foundations of the moral law are immutable; so its obligations are universal: and the law, though given on this particular occasion to Israel, demands obedience from all mankind; and the whole world will be judged according to it, and to the opportunity, which they have had of becoming acquainted with it; whether by reason and tradition alone, or by the light of the written word; except as the believer has obtained deliverance from its merited condemnation.

The law is also *spiritual*, and takes cognizance of the secret thoughts, desires, intentions, and dispositions of the heart; and above all things requires a proper regulation of the judgment, will, and affections. Its grand demand is LOVE, without which the best external obedience is condemned as mere hypocrisy. This is a peculiarity of the law of God, whose incommunicable prerogative it is to search the heart. But, in common with other laws, it requires perfect, unfailing, uninterrupted, and perpetual obedience; for no law in the world tolerates disobedience to itself. From the entrance to the close of life, the law of God requires exact conformity to every precept; and he that "keepeth the whole law, and of-"fendeth in one point, is guilty of all." Every omission, or commission, excess, or defect, or variation, internal, or external, in word, or deed, is ἀνομία, sin, and the wages of sin is death: from which sentence, there is no deliverance but by the mercy of our prince. "Thus by the "works of the law shall no flesh be justified in the sight "of God; for by the law is the knowledge of sin:" but not the knowledge of salvation. (*Rom.* c. 3. v. 20—23.)

The ten commandments may be considered as the *text* of this moral law, which is still more abridged in the two great commands, "of loving God with all our heart, and "our neighbour as ourselves:" and we are authorized by the example of Christ to interpret every one of them in the strictest, most spiritual, and extensive sense, of which it is capable; and to consider all the preceptive part of Scripture, as a divinely inspired comment upon them. And even repentance of sin, faith in a Mediator, and love, gratitude, and obedience to that Mediator, and other evangelical graces, and duties, are all exercises of supreme love to God; and are necessarily required by the law from man, circumstanced as he now is, under the condemnation of a sinner, and under a dispensation of mercy, in the particular mode, revealed in the Gospel. In this view, we may decide, or rather drop the controversy about the rule of duty, whether it be the ten commandments, or the whole Scriptures, as the one is the text, and the

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing*, that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath,

the other the exposition, and the whole "exceeding "broad." Christ fulfilled the requirements of this law most perfectly: yet *in his peculiar circumstances*, it actually required all that love for the Father, and for his brethren, and all those expressions of it, which, *as man*, he manifested in his life and death. Nor did ever apostle, or prophet reach, in one single instance, that degree of love, and purity, which it demands.

The knowledge of the extent, excellency, nature, and uses of the law of God, in connection with, and subserviency to the Gospel of Christ, is of such vast importance, towards solving difficulties, answering objections, determining controversies, and preventing mistakes; that I hope for the reader's forgiveness, if I expatiate, in the exposition of this chapter, considerably beyond my general limits. The dreams of a purgatory, either before, or after the day of judgment; the flattering illusions of the merit of human obedience: the palliating excuses, that are made for sin: the objections that are made to the sovereignty of divine Grace in the Gospel, and to God's method of justifying sinners: and all the Antinomian abuse of those precious truths of revelation, seem to have their only foundation in ignorance of the law of God. Ignorance of its extensive requirements supports careless presumption, and Pharisaical self-confidence: ignorance of its *excellency* excites murmurs, and outcries against the severity of its awful sanction; and gives rise to strange notions of being saved from the law itself as an enemy, which Christ hath destroyed; instead of being saved from the condemnation and power of sin, and taught to delight in the law of God after the inward man. The same ignorance hath led some to frame in imagination a new law, which hath been substituted in the place of the old law, since by sin man became unable to obey it: hath occasioned innumerable objections to the doctrine, and mistakes about the nature of regeneration: and indeed hath prevented many real Christians from glorifying God in that manner, which they otherwise might have done. Were the law of God well understood, the person, and offices of the Saviour, must appear most suitable, and precious; the nature, and necessity of regeneration evident, and rational; and the genuine beauty of Christianity, as reinstating a lost sinner in his Maker's favour, and recovering him to his image, in a way honourable to all the perfections of the Deity, would shine forth with unclouded lustre. It is true that no exposition can alone effect these purposes: but as crude notions, and unguarded expressions, tend to increase the evils complained of; so a scriptural statement of the matter may, by God's blessing, have some salutary effect in checking their progress.

It may be proper further to premise, that though the law, strictly speaking, contains in it no mention of mercy, nor has any reference to redemption; but is simply man's rule of duty as a rational creature; and God's rule of dispensing rewards to the obedient, and inflicting punishments on transgressors: yet, as given to Israel for the foundation of their national covenant, it mentions their redemption out of Egypt, and the mercy, which God had in store for them. For we may consider the giving of the law from mount Sinai, either as a publication to mankind of the law of their reason, and nature, as originally written in their hearts, but now erased, or obscured by sin; which was intended in gracious subserviency to the Gospel, for the conviction, and instruction of the Church in all ages; or as given to Israel for the rule, and foundation of their national covenant. For want of adverting to this obvious distinction, it hath been incautiously asserted that the law itself was only given to the redeemed: which sentiment not only supposes the rest of God's universal kingdom without a law, but vacates redemption itself: for where there is no law, there is no transgression, no condemnation, no occasion for redemption. Thus men are driven to extremes; and whilst some argue that the believer has in no sense any thing to do with the law, because redeemed from its curse: others contend that none else have any thing to do with it; because unable, or indisposed to obey it. "Do we then make void the law through faith?" God forbid: yea "we establish the law." (*Rom.* c. 3. v. 31.) All rational creatures are bound by its authority: all transgressors are under condemnation by it: but Christ having fulfilled its righteousness, and borne its curse, all who hear the Gospel, are under a dispensation of mercy, and have forgiveness *proposed* to them: all true believers are actually pardoned and justified; and all required, and inwardly disposed to a sincere, unreserved, habitual obedience to the law; though not able to obey it perfectly.

V. 2. *I am the* LORD.] The great Lawgiver proclaims his essential glory, and immutable excellency, as the foundation of his authority, and the reason of our obedience.—Being the fountain of being, and consequently of all power, knowledge, wisdom, justice, truth, and love: being the standard of excellence, and beauty, from which all created amiableness is an emanation, and of which it is a feeble reflection: to him alone the throne belongs, and he alone is entitled, and qualified to be the Lawgiver and Judge of all the universe: and is alone worthy of that love, and service, which his law demands.

Thy God.] This expresses our obligations, and those of Israel to him, as the name of the Lord expressed his essential perfection. By him were all created; by him are all upheld, protected, and maintained; and past and present benefits lay them under further obligations to obedience. Furthermore, the Israelites were the children of the covenant made with Abraham, had the external seal of circumcision in their flesh, had his glorious presence amongst them, and had just consented to enter into covenant with him as their God. And professing Christians, dedicated to God in the external initiatory ordinance of baptism, favoured with the light of revelation, and calling themselves his worshippers, stand in a similar relation to him.

Which have brought thee out, &c.] Their recent deliverance from Egypt was such a glorious display of the divine power, and such a special act of kindness, as laid them under

beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth.

5 Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf to them, nor ſerve them: for I the LORD thy God

under additional obligations to obedience, and afterwards rendered their diſobedience more inexcuſable. (*Iſaiah*, c. 5. v. 1—8.) This was a type of redemption from ſin, and Satan, and the true people of God will conſider themſelves as peculiarly bound to obedience, and inexcuſable when they fail of it.

V. 3. *Thou ſhalt have no other gods*, &c.] The commandments are delivered in the ſingular number to every individual: Chriſt teaches us to pray in the plural number, "Our Father," &c. We are each concerned to obey for ourſelves only: but we are to pray for others, even for all men. Several of the commandments are delivered in the form of prohibitions; yet they all imply a poſitive duty, which muſt be conſidered in explaining them. This firſt commandment implies the duty of an inward diſpoſition, and an outward behaviour, ſuited to the relations, in which we ſtand to Jehovah as our God. He alone is the adequate object of our affections: he alone can ſatisfy the capacities, with which he hath created us: all we are and have being derived from him, he poſſeſſes an unalienable right of directing the uſe, which we are to make of our bodies, ſouls, and poſſeſſions. To our love, gratitude, reverence, worſhip, ſubmiſſion, implicit credence, and obedience, he has ſo clear a title, that we cannot with-hold them from him, or render them to any other, without the moſt palpable injuſtice. Conſidering WHO HE IS, and WHAT HE HATH DONE FOR US, except we love him ſupremely, and to the utmoſt meaſure of our natural capacities, with all the powers of our ſouls, we cannot be deemed to love him in a ſuitable manner at all. Did we indeed love him with all our heart, mind, ſoul, and ſtrength, all contrary affections would be excluded, all other affections ſubordinated. Approving, and admiring his excellency, deſiring, and delighting in his favour, depending on his power, truth, and love, and being zealous for his glory, with all the energy of our whole ſouls; it is evident that our exerciſe of theſe affections towards all other objects, would be entirely for his ſake, according to his will, and allowance, and in abſolute ſubordination thereto. Filled with gratitude for the paſt, and ſatisfaction with the preſent, and fearing nothing but offending him, no creature could then rival God in the judgment, and choice of our hearts, or prevail with us to diſobey his commands, or to neglect his delightful worſhip. Whilſt we rendered him his tribute of glory, he would be our portion, and felicity. This is the reaſonable ſtate of things. Thus it hath ever been with holy angels: thus it will ever be with the redeemed in heaven: and all that is ſhort of this, or contrary to it on earth, is ſin, the effect of the fall, and evinces man a ruined creature.

With theſe things before our eyes, we ſhall be enabled with the more preciſion to ſtate the nature, and extent of the prohibition before us. The diſlike, which the *unholy* heart of man has to the *holy* character, worſhip, and ſervice of God, connected with it's blindneſs, and pride, has in all ages betrayed man into the ſnare of Satan, and

cauſed him to fall into idolatry. For man's reaſon and conſcience being diſſatisfied without ſome object of worſhip, and ſome ſort of religion; and his heart diſreliſhing the true God, and his ſpiritual worſhip, he hath been eaſily induced to ſubſtitute deities and religious rites more ſuited to his own character, and inclinations. Thus, to the diſgrace of the human underſtanding, groſs idolatry hath almoſt every where prevailed; and that ambitious proud Spirit, who is the enemy of God and man, hath been gratified in the ſucceſs of his preſumptuous attempts to become, under theſe diſguiſes, the GOD OF THIS WORLD.

This worſhip of creatures is the grand offence here prohibited: whether they be creatures of God, or mere creatures of the human imagination. By rendering them religious worſhip, almighty power, omnipreſence, and other divine perfections, are aſcribed to them: the glory, which belongs to God, is given them: and that help, and thoſe bleſſings are expected from them, which he alone can afford. Theſe idolatries of the heathens were continually imitated by the Jewiſh nation. And that divine worſhip, which the church of Rome enjoins to be paid to ſaints and angels, is as evident a violation of this commandment, as ever the Pagans were guilty of, and in ſome reſpects more aggravated. Far would I be from inſinuating that every one of that vaſt multitude, which forms the Roman church, is involved in this enormous guilt. The idolatries, and ſuperſtitions, which have been ſanctioned by the hierarchy of Rome, it is proper to proteſt againſt; and I would lament that they are ſo *generally* ſtill complied with, throughout its dependancies: but the perſons of Papiſts I would leave to the judgment of God.

Without here entering into the queſtion concerning the real exiſtence of witchcraft, &c. it may be remarked, that all pretenſions to that, or magic, or fortune-telling, or charms, &c. are violations of this commandment: as expecting that information or aſſiſtance from other beings, which God alone can afford.

The commandment, however is *ſpiritual*, and reaches much further than this. To love, deſire, delight in, or expect good from any ſinful indulgence, though in the ſmalleſt degree, is thereby prohibited: as alſo to ſuffer the moſt valuable, and excellent creature to ſupplant, or rival God in our affections; which implies in proportion contempt of him. All atheiſm, infidelity, and irreligion violate this commandment: for by theſe things men ſet up themſelves as Gods, aſpire at independance, pretend to be ſufficient for their own happineſs, reject ſubordination, and refuſe to render homage, worſhip, love, or praiſe, to any ſuperior or benefactor: however moral therefore ſuch perſons may be in their conduct towards men, they are the rivals, and enemies of God, and with-hold, and even intercept his tribute. The proud man alſo is his own idol, and deifies, admires, loves, truſts in, and as it were burns incenſe, and offers ſacrifices at his own ſhrine; and expects others to do the ſame. The ambitious man makes a deity of the applauſe of men, of honourable appella-

tions,

God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me:

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou

tions, and of domination over his fellow creatures. The revengeful man usurps the throne of God, and attempts to wrest the sword of justice from his hand, that he may wield it himself. The covetous man deifies his wealth; which he supremely loves, desires, delights in, depends on, and expects felicity from; and to it sacrifices every nobler consideration. The sensualist worships a group of filthier deities, than ever disgraced a Pagan temple. The romantic lover's life and felicity are wrapt up in the smiles of the object of his idolatrous affection: his heaven is placed in her favour, and her frown determines him the most miserable of creatures.—Nay the doating husband, or the indulgent parent, by inordinate affection deifies the wife, or child; which they ought to love tenderly, but in subordination to the love, and in submission to the will of God.

But the most copious comment cannot equal the breadth of this command. Whatever is inconsistent with, or comes short of that perfect love, gratitude, reverence, worship, &c. which have before been described, is transgression of it, and as such exposes us to condemnation.—In short, it requires us to love God, and all his creatures according to their real worthiness, not more, nor less; except as a creature is incapable of worthily loving infinite excellency: and to put each in it's proper place in our judgment, and heart; the Lord upon the throne, and ourselves and all other creatures in regular subordination; and to shew this in a correspondent conduct.—But the violation of the commandment disturbs this order, dethrones God in the heart, and allows some created object to usurp his place.—Well may it stand foremost in the Decalogue: for obedience in this respect would infallibly ensure it in all other. Other transgressions may injure the subject, and affront the sovereign; but this is high treason, which is the chief crime in all governments: no wonder therefore that it is called an abomination. Nor is it less injurious to man, who thereby forsakes the fountain of living waters, to hew out broken cisterns, which can hold no water: it's reasonableness, and excellency therefore are equal to it's strictness and spirituality; and without conformity to it, in it's fullest extent, the glory of God, and the felicity of rational creatures cannot be secured.

Before me.] Under the immediate inspection of God, and with the manifestations of his glory before their eyes. This was especially the case of Israel, both in the wilderness, and in the promised land.

V. 4. *Thou shalt not make unto thee*, &c.] This second commandment has especial reference to the worship, which we are required to render to the Lord our God; that it be worthy of him, and honourable to him.—The perfections of God are inconceivable, his nature is incomprehensible: nor can he be represented by any similitude.—The most exquisite sculpture, or painting, and the most costly materials can only represent the external resemblance of a man: but form no similitude of the powers, and capacities of his rational soul. How dishonourable then must it be to the infinite God, to represent him by material images, and pictures! Such devices, so general in the world, are the result of the blindness of man's understanding, and of his low apprehensions of God; which at the same time they tend exceedingly to increase.—But the direct worshipping of the image, or picture itself is not all that is forbidden: only the most stupid of the heathens could be guilty of such an absurdity: but also the representation of the invisible object of worship to the mind, through the medium of a visible object presented to the senses:—nor have the Papists used any arguments in defence of their palpable violation of this commandment, which would not be equally plausible in vindication of the worship of the golden calves, or of the image of Diana, which fell down from Jupiter.—Pictures, and statues are not in themselves forbidden: nay, by God's appointment they were used in the construction of the tabernacle: but not to represent the object of their adoration.—It is absolutely prohibited to make any image, or picture of the Deity, in any form, or for any purpose whatsoever: or to worship either any creature, or any image, or picture thereof. By parity of reason all kinds of superstition are prohibited: that is the inventing, and the using of human inventions in the religious worship of God, as if they were essential to that worship, or rendered it acceptable to him.—The use of things indifferent in the worship of God, without any command from him, has generally tended to fill men's minds with gross apprehensions of him, and to lead them to be delighted with external splendour in divine worship: it has also tended to draw off men's dependance from the merits of Christ, and their attention from God's own ordinances, and commandments, substituting something else in the place of them, as of equal efficacy: and has commonly issued in imposing such inventions upon the consciences of others; and in persecuting all, who did not conform thereto.—But as many circumstances of worship must be regulated by human discretion; and as it has not been found easy to fix exact limits to the exercise of that discretion, it seems sufficient for the private Christian to consider seriously how far he complies with any thing, which has a tendency to the aforementioned evils in his own experience; and neither to attempt imposing his sentiments, or practices upon others; nor yet despise, deride, censure, or judge those, who differ from him—All hypocrisy and formality are violations of this commandment, which arise from unworthy apprehensions of God: and all unscriptural delineations of the divine character.—Men, leaning to their own understanding, and forsaking the light of revelation; according to their own inclinations, and in their imaginations frame an idea of the Deity. This creature of the fancy, which possesses not truth, justice, and holiness; but is of too humane a disposition to execute vengeance, or inflict punishment, they dignify with the title of the Su-

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember

preme Being. This is the object of their love, and worship; whilst, like the Jews of old, who fancied they worshipped the true God, they are found haters of the Son of God, and of the Father, that sent him. (*John*, c. 15. v. 23, 24.) And it will one day appear that these images, formed, and set up in the heart, are as dishonourable to God, as those images, which formerly were set up in temples: and are not at all his likeness, but his rivals.—In short this commandment reasonably requires us to collect our knowledge of the object of our worship, in respect both of his attributes, and his mode of subsistance, from revelation, by faith: to form, and retain apprehensions of him conformable thereto: to present him to our minds by *faith*, not by fancy: to worship him as a Spirit, not with gross corporeal representations of him in the mind, any more than with images of him before our eyes; in spirit, and in truth; inwardly, and sincerely, with honourable thoughts of his majesty, purity, and excellency, and a realizing sense of his knowledge of our hearts: in the ordinances, which he hath appointed; in *all* of them, and in no other: for where he hath appointed to meet us, thither we ought to come, and may come *in faith*, and expectation of a blessing, and satisfied that God will account himself honoured thereby; but not elsewhere: and finally this worship must be frequent, stated, habitual, and delightful to our souls.

Any likeness of any thing, that is in heaven, &c.] All creatures being infinitely distant from the great Creator, are all alike improper to be used as a visible representation of his invisible glory, and therefore alike prohibited. There are some devices, frequently used in pictures, as emblematic, or representative of the Trinity, which seem not to accord with the strictness of this prohibition.

V. 5. *A jealous God.*] In respect of idolatry, God is as tenacious of his honour, that it be not given to another, especially by any of his professing people: as the husband is jealous of the wife, whom he suspects of adultery. Every appearance of it, or approach to it excites his indignation, and kindles his resentment. Therefore every practice, that looks like, or tends to idolatry, should be scrupulously avoided.

Visiting the iniquity, &c.] It has already been observed that children actually do suffer, in the course of God's providence, for the sins of their parents, by necessary consequence: and that God declares that thus it shall be, in order to work upon our natural affections for our children, to restrain us from wickedness. Now as idolatry was a breach of the national covenant made with Israel, and a forfeiture of it's blessings, their posterity would be sure to suffer for their sins: though the Lord's kindness and readiness to forgive is expressed in the intimation, that this should be only to the third and fourth generation: that is, in case the children did not persist in imitating the example of their parents.

Them that hate me, &c.] The preference given by men to false gods, and to the works of their own hands, above the true God, is construed into an hatred of him: as the wife would be considered as even hating her husband, who should prefer every worthless stranger to him.—Thus the carnal mind is enmity against God; because it chuses worldly objects in preference to his favour.

V. 6. *Shewing mercy*, &c.] The law as given to sinners in subserviency to the covenant of Grace; as well as to Israel with reference to their national covenant, makes mention of the mercy of God, though not properly belonging to it's own nature; with an especial reference to the character of God, which is therein displayed; and to manifest how deserving he is of that love, and service, which he claims from them as his unalienable right.—This mercy was to be extended to thousands of generations, (*Deut.* c. 7. v. 9.) that is from generation to generation to the end of time.—Witness God's dealing with the posterity of Abraham, who believed his word, loved him, and kept his commandments with the upright obedience of faith.

V. 7. *Thou shalt not take*, &c.] If we take the Lord for our God, amongst other acts of worship, we shall be led to make vows unto him, and to swear by his name; and we shall have frequent occasion to mention him in our daily conversation. These things this third commandment directs: and the sum of it is this, that we take not the name of the Lord our God in vain: that is, needlessly, irreverently, profanely, or hypocritically.——This commandment therefore prohibits all rash, and unlawful vows; or vows which relate to things impracticable, or uncertain: whether the vow be made immediately unto God; or whether it be in the form of a promissory oath unto man: and the violation of all such vows, as we have solemly formed, if the subject be lawful, though it be very prejudicial to us: (*Psalm* 15, v. 4.) All perjury is therein prohibited; which is an appeal to the omniscience of God for the truth of what we say, when we know it, or suspect it to be false, or do not know it to be true.—This is one of the most insolent provocations of God, which can be even conceived, though common amongst us, to a degree unknown in former ages: which is greatly the effect of other instances of disregard to this commandment: namely the unnecessary multiplication of oaths in all our judicial transactions, even upon the most trivial occasions: (As for instance, the God of heaven is called to witness ten thousand times in the year, that the dead body of a man or woman, is wrapt up for burial in sheep's wool only:) and the shocking disregard even to the appearance of reverence in the general administration of oaths. To exclude perjury, oaths should never be enjoined but on important occasions: and never administered but with all the solemnity of an act of religious worship: and all that is inconsistent with this, by whomsoever appointed, or executed, is, "taking God's name in vain." All swearing in common conversation, or appealing to God, with such expressions, as "God knows," &c. when the matter is not true, or not important: all profane cursing or swearing: all use of the words God, Lord, or others, which import the object of religious worship, without necessity, seriousness, and reverence; whether we are discoursing

8 Remember the ſabbath-day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days ſhalt thou labour, and do all thy work.

10 But

courſing *improperly* upon religious ſubjects, or whether they be uſed as mere expletives to complete a ſentence, or adorn a period; as notes of admiration, approbation, or indignation, are evidently violations of this commandment. All thoſe other expreſſions, which are of the nature of an oath, or imprecation, though the name of God be not uſed, fall under it's condemnation: yea whatever is more than yea, yea, nay, nay, in ordinary converſation.—All profane jeſting with the Word of God, and with ſacred things: all irreverence of God, or any thing which relates to him, expreſſed in word or deed: all hypocriſy, and formality in worſhip, when we profeſs to glorify God, but are aiming at ſome ſelfiſh end, are likewiſe violations of it. And it implies a command to us, to remember habitually the infinite majeſty, purity and excellency of the God of heaven; and to behave towards him in word and deed, with that awe, and reverence, with which ſuch mean and worthleſs creatures ſhould be impreſſed, in his preſence, and under his inſpection.

Will not hold him guiltleſs, &c.] Man may not diſcover, or he may neglect to puniſh violations of this commandment; and the ſinner's conſcience may ſcarce trouble him about them: but let him know that God will moſt certainly detect, and moſt ſeverely puniſh the affronts thus put upon him. For the heinouſneſs of the offence is proportionable to the reaſonableneſs of the precept, and the eaſineſs of obedience: and many tranſgreſſions of this commandment have no plea even of temptation; for there is no profit, honour, or pleaſure attainable thereby: except it be an honour to dare to affront the Almighty, or a pleaſure to diſobey our Creator.

V. 8. *Remember the ſabbath-day*, &c.] The form of this fourth commandment intimates, that it was not now firſt given, but was previouſly known by the people, though they were, and we are very prone to forget it, and need frequently to be reminded to keep holy the ſabbath-day.—That the obſervation of the ſabbath is of moral obligation, appears from it's being inſerted in the very heart of the moral law: and it doubtleſs has it's foundation in the nature of God, and man, and in the relations that we ſtand in to him, and to each other, and in the obligations, which thence ariſe. Circumſtanced as we are in this world, the glory of God, and the beſt good of man, perſonal, and ſocial, temporal and ſpiritual, indiſpenſably require the ſeparation of a portion of our time from worldly concerns, and the conſecration of it to his immediate ſervice, and worſhip:—indeed the exact proportion, and the particular time are matters of ritual inſtitution. But one day in ſeven ſeems to have been appointed by the divine wiſdom from the beginning, and is by experience evinced to be ſalutary, and beneficial. And if one day in ſeven be the appointed proportion, the day of the ſeven, which ſhall be obſerved is no ways eſſential to the moral obligation of the command, but is capable of being changed by the authority of the lawgiver: and it will occur hereafter to ſhew that it hath actually been changed. The ſabbath among the Jews was no doubt alſo ceremonial in many things, and as ſuch forms a part of their ritual law: nay it is alſo inſerted in the judicial law, and the tranſgreſſion of it was puniſhable by the magiſtrate.—But we here are to conſider it as of moral obligation, and ſo binding upon the conſciences of all men, eſpecially where revelation makes known that obligation: a part of that law of God, which is holy, juſt, and good; to the ſinner the miniſtration of condemnation, and of death written and engraven upon ſtones: (2 *Cor.* c. 3. v. 7—9.) to the believer a rule of life and obedience.

One day in ſeven is to be remembered, that it may be kept holy: ſix days are allotted to the diligent performance of our ſecular buſineſs; yet not ſo as to neglect the ſervice of God, and the care of our ſouls even on thoſe days; for all worldly buſineſs muſt be ſo ſubordinated, and regulated, that it may be a part of our duty to God. On theſe days we muſt "do all our work," and leave none to be done on the ſabbath-day.—Chriſt hath expreſsly excepted works of neceſſity, of charity, and of piety; "for the ſabbath was made for man, and not man "for the ſabbath:" but certainly all works of covetouſneſs, of diſtruſt, of luxury, of vanity, and of ſelf-indulgence in any form are prohibited; and it is implied that we ſhould ſedulouſly contrive all our affairs, that there may be as little as poſſible of a worldly nature to ingroſs our time, our thoughts, our converſation on the Lord's day; or to interrupt it's ſacred exerciſes.—Trading, paying wages, ſettling accounts, writing letters, ſecular ſtudies, &c. interrupt the ſacred reſt: pleaſures, diſſipation, trifling viſits, journies, excurſions, or converſation, which have no further object than amuſement and relaxation, conſiſt not with keeping a day *holy* to the Lord: ſloth, and indolence may be a carnal, but not a holy reſt. To comply with the intent of the inſtitution, the Lord's ſabbath ſhould be a reſt from worldly labour, and a reſt in the ſervice of God. A day of ſerious ſelf-examination, of careful peruſal of the Scriptures, of communion with God in our cloſet, of ſocial worſhip with our families, of careful inſtruction of our children, and ſervants, of conſtant attendance upon the public ordinances of God, and of meditation, and pious converſation, early entered upon, and interrupted only by works of real neceſſity, or of Chriſtian charity. Theſe things are obligatory upon the conſcience, when we are maſters of our own time: but we cannot ſuppoſe that the Chriſtian ſlaves of Heathen maſters, could thus hallow the Lord's day: yet they were to abide in, and to accommodate themſelves to their ſtation. This may frequently be in ſome degree the caſe of ſervants with us, who cannot properly avoid the *neceſſity* of doing many things on the Lord's day, which are not *neceſſary* in themſelves: though they ſhould prefer liberty of this kind to ſecular advantages, and contrive to have as little to do as poſſible. Were our love of God, and valuation of our own ſouls and of ſpiritual things, vigorous as they ought to be, ſuch a day would be our delight, we ſhould reckon of it's approach, honour it, and be thankful for it, as our higheſt privilege; (*Iſaiah*, c. 58. v. 13.) for heaven will be an eternal

10 But the ſeventh day *is* the ſabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, thy man-ſervant, nor thy maid-ſervant, nor thy cattle, nor thy ſtranger that *is* within thy gates.

11 For

nal ſabbath. And all the objections, and excuſes, which men make to ſuch ſanctification of the Lord's day, ariſe from their diſreliſh of ſpiritual bleſſings, and their inordinate attachment to the things of time and ſenſe.—Whilſt the advantage which would accrue, from ſuch an obſervation of this holy day, to the morals, health, liberty, and happineſs of the lower orders of mankind; and the effect, which it would have in humanizing and civilizing them: as well as the opportunity thereby afforded (by the ſuſpenſion of all ſecular employments) to all orders of men of hearing the Word of God, and joining in his worſhip, of taking care of their own ſouls, and thoſe of their families; abundantly illuſtrate the reaſonableneſs, and excellency of the commandment, and the heinouſneſs of that almoſt univerſal violation of it, which marks the character of an irreligious age, and converts God's ordinance into an occaſion of ſtill increaſing licentiouſneſs.

V. 10. *Thou, nor thy ſon*, &c.] We are required not only not to command our children, and ſervants to perform needleſs worldly labour on the Lord's day; but not even to allow them to do it: we muſt uſe our authority to reſtrain them from breaking the ſabbath; and not only give them time, but require them to employ it in the duties of the day.—And indeed attention to the ſpiritual benefit of their families is one great branch of hallowing the ſabbath, with thoſe eſpecially, whoſe time is much engroſſed on other days by ſecular concerns.

Nor thy cattle, &c.] This is added that humanity to the brute creation might accompany piety to God, and kindneſs to man.

Many things, generally practiſed amongſt us, *ſeem* not to comport with this clauſe: but where to draw the line in a country, whoſe cuſtoms, and habits of living are ſo vaſtly diſſimilar to thoſe of the Iſraelites, is a matter of extreme difficulty. The ſpirit and intention of the precept is chiefly to be conſidered; which are anſwered in the ſanctification of the ſabbath for the glory of God, the promotion of truth, and righteouſneſs, and the real good of mankind; and this conſiſts much, in as general an attendance as may be of all ranks, and orders of men on public worſhip. Whatever promotes theſe ends may be allowable: whatever interferes therewith muſt be wrong: and ſtated needleſs travelling on the ſabbath ſhamefully interferes therewith, as well as renders of none effect this humane clauſe. And the true Chriſtian would wiſh to adhere to the letter of the prohibition, when it interfered not with the intention of it, though at the expence of parting with ſome ſelf-indulgence; but he would alſo be more diſpoſed to deny himſelf, than to preſcribe to, or cenſure others.

The ſtranger, &c.] The ſtranger, who was not of their religion, was not only to be perſuaded, and encouraged to hallow the ſabbath; but prohibited from externally violating it's ſacred reſt, whilſt he reſided amongſt them; for this was the law of their land, as well as of their religion. And though their government differed from that of other nations: yet there ſeems no impropriety in nations profeſſing Chriſtianity making it a part of their law likewiſe.—But alas! it is grievous to ſay, that ſuch laws oft loſe their energy, for want of being ſanctioned by the example of the legiſlators themſelves, and by that of thoſe, whoſe office it is to put them into execution.

For in ſix days, &c.] This was the original reaſon of the inſtitution of the ſabbath in honour of God our Creator: other reaſons are adduced elſewhere, which were peculiar to the Jews: and Chriſtians have ſtill higher, and more cogent reaſons peculiar to themſelves, to be mentioned in due time.—Thus far is the firſt table of the law, which immediately relates to our duty to God: and theſe four precepts compriſe the whole of godlineſs ſtrictly ſpeaking; nor can any thing be conceived, external, or internal, of thought, word, or deed, relating to the ſtate of our heart, and the regulation of our whole conduct, which falls not under one or other of theſe precepts.—They are evidently very extenſive, and ſpiritual, and equally reaſonable and excellent. Yet are they the very reverſe of the natural temper of our hearts; and of the general conduct of mankind; who are not diſpoſed thus to reverence, believe, love, truſt in, worſhip, obey, and ſubmit to the Lord; to delight in his ordinances, to reverence his name, and word, and to hallow and take pleaſure in his ſabbaths. "Therefore as many as are of the works of the law are "under a curſe:" Therefore we all need mercy, forgiveneſs, and redemption: and therefore we muſt be born again, or we can never enter into the kingdom of heaven; where this law is perfectly obſerved in it's grand import by every individual.—But we proceed to the ſecond table.

V. 12. *Honour thy father, and thy mother*, &c.] According to the foregoing rules of interpretation, we are to conſider this commandment as the abſtract of relative duties. The relation of parents, and children ſeems to be ſelected, as moſt reſembling the relation, in which we ſtand to our Creator.—If the father, and mother are to be honoured; it is implied that they do the duty of parents to their children: that they take care of them; that they provide for, and inſtruct them in both temporal, and ſpiritual things; that they ſet them a good example, and pray for them; that they exerciſe authority over them, and kindneſs towards them: that they adviſe, reſtrain, and correct them: and in ſhort that they act *honourably* towards, and before them, with ſuch wiſdom, gravity, and conſiſtency, as naturally to excite reverential affection towards their perſons, and characters, in the breaſts of their children. Not that a different conduct in the parents diſcharges the children from the obligation of honouring them: for it is a general rule, which admits of very few exceptions; that in relative life we are to do, and perſevere in our duty as preſcribed by the Word of God; though the oppoſite relations totally fail of doing their duty to us. But the parents' duty is implied in this command to their children.—Theſe, deriving their very being under God from their parents, and having been from their entrance

11 For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou

entrance into the world taken care of, when they could not take care of themselves, and that with so much tenderness, and at the expence of so much labour, pain, and sorrow; and being of God put under the authority and tuition of such kind friends; are reasonably required to perform unreserved obedience in all things *lawful*, whilst under the age of maturity; and ever after in all things *reasonable*, though they should not be *agreeable*. They are required to love their persons, and to respect their characters, counsels, and instructions: to consult their interest, ease, credit, and comfort: by every possible means to requite their kindness: to maintain them if in their power, and if needful; nay even to labour for their subsistence, when incapable through old age; as the parent laboured for the child, when incapable through youth: to conceal their infirmities, to bear with their tempers, to accommodate themselves to their humours, and in every thing to endeavour alleviating their sorrows, and rejoicing their hearts. In some cases, the observance of such rules may be productive of hardship to a few individuals: but the general effect would be so very good, that these partial inconveniences would be unspeakably overbalanced, and the command shewn to be holy, just and good.—By parity of reason, they who have acted the parent's part, are entitled in proportion to a parent's honour, and respect from the adopted child. Every superior relation has a duty incumbent upon it, somewhat similar to that of the parent's, and is entitled to a deference and respect not unlike the filial. Old age requires a grave and respectable demeanour before, and towards young people, and is entitled to honour from them.—Magistrates have their several duties, and subjects also: ministers, and people, masters, and servants, husbands and wives: the rich, and the poor have their reciprocal duties to each other: the superior relation is called upon to act *honourably*, and is entitled to honour from the inferior, according to particular precepts, which may all be referred to this fifth commandment, but must be considered elsewhere.

Thy father and thy mother.] Not one parent only, but both; not one in opposition to, or at the expence of the other; but both alike, as alike nearly related. It is therefore the duty of parents to set their children an example of impartiality; that by not preferring one child to another, they may teach them all, not to prefer one parent to another: and they ought also to avoid whatever may excite competition, or lessen the children's respect to either of them; and to be harmonious in their education of them.

That thy days may be long, &c.] This has a particular reference to, and we may be sure had a remarkable accomplishment under, the national covenant made with Israel. Yet the apostle Paul quotes this promise in inculcating the same duty upon Christians. (*Eph.* c. 6. v. 1.) And indeed careful observers of mankind have noted a peculiar blessing in temporal things on obedient, and the reverse on disobedient children.

V. 13. *Thou shalt not kill.*] This, and the three next commandments comprise "the love of our neighbour "as ourselves," with reference to his person, his connections, his property, and his reputation. This relates to his person, and requires that we regard his life and safety as we do our own. It is certain that the prohibition admits of some restrictions: magistrates, as God's representatives, are in some cases commanded, and in others allowed, to take away the life of man: and many other persons as witnesses, or executioners, &c. may be accessary thereto without sin. We may innocently take away a man's life in defence of our own: in some cases *perhaps* in defence of our property. Some wars are lawful, and the blood shed therein not murder in those, who shed it; though the guilt of murder must rest somewhere, and whoever be the unjust author, or cause of war must be answerable to God for all the blood shed therein. The consent of the will is also requisite to constitute the crime here forbidden: and sometimes taking away life is a man's misfortune, not his sin: but yet much which is denominated manslaughter by the laws of man, will be proved murder before a higher tribunal. The word of God no where speaks in extenuation of blood shed in furious passion, excited by sudden provocation, or in intoxication: much more atrocious is the murder committed in duels, which is one of the most horrible effects of a haughty revengeful spirit. The duellist, in contempt of God's authority, and of his patience, and readiness to forgive, will accept of no satisfaction for the most trivial offence, but the life of the offender; in seeking which he madly risques his own. All fighting, whether for wagers, for renown, or out of anger, and malice, are violations of this command, and the blood shed therein is murder.—Whatever doth take away by force, or stratagem, or may take away the life of man is thereby prohibited: all the blood shed in persecutions, and oppressions, whether under the colour, or in defiance of law and justice, will be required: yea they, who should punish, but let the murderer escape, must answer for it, whether they be individuals, or collective bodies. All assaulting, maiming, or wounding others, or assisting therein, is a violation of this precept. To tempt men to such crimes as either destroy their constitutions, or expose their lives to danger, from the sword of justice, or the resentment of an injured party: nay, to persuade people with the prospect of a large recompence to such enterprises, and labours, as are known in general to destroy their lives, are violations of this commandment. They who misbehave so grosly in relative life, as to break the hearts, and shorten the lives of parents, wives, &c. will not be held guiltless: nor they, who in revenge, or out of covetousness *wish* for the death of others. The spiritual extent of this commandment reaches also to the prohibition of all envy, malice, hatred, or anger without,

14 Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.
15 Thou ſhalt not ſteal.

16 Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.

17 Thou

or above cauſe: all that reproachful, inſulting language, which provokes to anger, and murder: all that pride, ambition, and covetouſneſs, which prompt thereto. He that hateth his brother is a murderer: and he will be adjudged to hate his brother, who ſeeing his life, or health endangered by the want of food, medicine, raiment, &c. and having the ability of relieving him, ſo loves himſelf, as to refuſe his aſſiſtance; (*1 John*, c. 3. v. 15—17.) But if whatever tends to the deſtruction of the temporal life be ſo heinous, what ſhall we ſay to the murder of the ſoul? This is done by ſeducing and enticing our neighbour to ſin, by ſetting evil examples, diſſeminating poiſonous principles, terrifying men from God's ſervice, by reproaches, or threatenings; or by with-holding thoſe inſtructions, warnings, and counſels, which we all owe to our neighbour in ſome caſes; but eſpecially parents to their children, and miniſters to their people. It is tremendous to reflect upon the multitudes, whoſe blood will in this ſenſe be required of their murderers. But is the deſtruction of our own life excepted from this rule? By no means. We are no more the authors, or lords of our own life, than of the life of others: nor may we any more leave our aſſigned poſt of ſervice, or ruſh uncalled into the preſence of our judge; than we may execute vengeance for ourſelves, and ſend a fellow creature to that awful tribunal. Self-murder is a complication of ingratitude for, and contempt of God's gift, even our life; and of defiance, impatience, pride, and rebellion: and perhaps, is the moſt malignant of all murders, and can ſcarce ever be repented of. Nor is it any thing like ſo commonly the effect of inſanity, as verdicts (where perjury is oft thoughtleſsly committed out of falſe tenderneſs) would perſuade us: except as all in ſome ſenſe may be ſaid to be inſane, who are hurried on by the inſtigation of Satan, that murderer from the beginning. He knows that our preſent life is an invaluable talent, which admits of precious improvement, and is eſpecially the ſeaſon allotted to ſeek the ſalvation of our ſouls: he is therefore aiming to ſhorten our period, both by tempting men to direct ſuicide, and by leading them to thoſe exceſſes, which ruin the conſtitution; or to thoſe extravagances, which render life miſerable; that he may the more advantageouſly deſtroy both their bodies, and ſouls at once. All theſe things therefore are to be avoided, and diſcontent, and deſpondency repreſſed; and gratitude, patience, and hope cultivated, that we may defeat his malignant purpoſe. In fine, this commandment requires a ſpirit of enlarged benevolence to the bodies, and ſouls of all men; a diſpoſition to bear and ſuffer long, and to be kind; to forgive, and do good againſt evil, and to endeavour to preſerve the life, to prolong the comforts, and to ſave the ſouls of every human being.

V. 14. *Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.*] This commandment is the regulation of our "love to our neigh-"bour as ourſelves," as it reſpects the purity, and comfort of domeſtic life. And it requires the proper government of thoſe inclinations, which God hath implanted in our nature for the propagation of the human ſpecies: that we neither debaſe, and defile our own bodies, and ſouls thereby, nor injure others in their chaſtity, or in their connexions. "But that we ſhould poſſeſs our veſ-"ſel in ſanctification, and honour, not in the luſt of "concupiſcence." Marriage is God's inſtitution, "is "*honourable* among all men, and the bed undefiled." But then the original inſtitution of marriage, together with the intention, and ends thereof, muſt be kept in view; if we would with preciſion aſcertain the extent of this prohibition. The original inſtitution was that of one man, and one woman, made one fleſh, inſeparably united for helps meet for each other, to promote, and ſhare in each other's comforts, and ſatisfactions; to contribute by ſuitable ſociety, and tender friendſhip to their mutual felicity; and with united attention to educate their common offſpring. The entrance of ſin, and its fatal effects ſoon marred this felicity, made way for the diſſolution of this union, gave occaſion to a variety of evil paſſions, and much miſconduct, which embittered the relation; and introduced many abuſes, which were inconſiſtent with the original inſtitution. But theſe are not to be conſidered as any part of marriage, as appointed of God: they are the effects of ſin; and whether permitted, connived at, or prohibited in the word of God, would not otherwiſe have exiſted. To this original inſtitution Chriſt again, and again refers; and by this we are to judge of marriage, according to the ſpiritual meaning of the moral law of God, and the pure nature of the Chriſtian religion. Yet the introduction of ſin has introduced ſome *circumſtantial* alterations: the force, which man's paſſions have acquired ſince the fall, has rendered the *prevention of fornication* one expreſs end of marriage: the imperfection of every human character has rendered mutual forbearance, and compliance in matters perhaps not always reaſonable, a neceſſary duty of the conjugal relation: whilſt the ſorrows, and miſeries of life render it requiſite, that in the married ſtate, each party ſhould ſhare, and ſoften the afflictions, as well as participate the comforts of the other. Conſidering marriage in this light, and keeping the intentions of this inſtitution in view, we ſhall be the better able to judge of that commandment, which refers thereto. We need not be exact in defining the term Adultery: according to the judicial law of Moſes, the commerce of any man with a married woman, or one betrothed, was called adultery, and puniſhable by the death of both parties: but the commerce of a married man with an unmarried woman was not viewed in the ſame light: yet in its proper place it will be ſhewn that under the New Teſtament this ſpecies of infidelity to the marriage-bed is called adultery; (*Mark*. c. 10. v. 14. *Matt*. c. 19. v. 9.) But certainly both the one and the other are violations of this ſpiritual commandment: both militate againſt the ends, and intentions of marriage; are inconſiſtent with that union of hearts, and intereſts, which it implies; are breaches of the marriage compact; marr domeſtic peace; prevent the harmonious agreement in training up children; and

17 Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's houſe, thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-ſervant, nor his maid-ſervant, nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

18 And

and form an alienation of that property, which both huſband and wife have in the perſons and affections of the other; and which is ſcarce ever loſt without the bittereſt anguiſh, and the keeneſt reſentment. (1 *Cor.* c. 7. v. 4.) It is true, adultery on the woman's ſide is *more generally* chargeable with the injuſtice of introducing a ſpurious offspring to inherit the huſband's property: but *his* infidelity is not ſeldom productive of a ſimilar effect, when the huſband has the diſpoſal of that, which was the property of the wife. And though jealouſy be eſpecially "the rage of man," and produces the more fatal effects; yet ſometimes female paſſions overpower female timidity, and dreadful conſequences enſue on that ſide alſo. So that in the impartial judgment even of reaſon the difference of the injury, and of its effects, in the two caſes is not very great. Theſe are the more atrocious violations of this precept, and are inconceivably more pernicious to ſociety, than theft: though that be puniſhed with death, and theſe eſcape almoſt without cenſure. All other commerce betwixt the ſexes, except in lawful, and avowed marriage, are alſo prohibited by this commandment, under whatever names diſtinguiſhed; from the temporary connexions, which are formed, and diſſolved at pleaſure, to the loweſt ſcenes of common proſtitution. There are different degrees of malignity in them; they may be more or leſs pernicious; and the diſtinction betwixt the TEMPTER, and the TEMPTED will ever be important; and mark the ſeducer's character *diabolical:* but all claſs under the general words Whoredom, and Fornication, which are almoſt in every black catalogue in the Bible, wherein the perſons are enumerated, who ſhall not enter into the kingdom of God. (1 *Cor.* c. 6. v. 9, 10. *Gal.* c. 5. v. 19—21. *Eph.* c. 5. v. 3—6. *Col.* c. 3. v. 5, 6. *Rev.* c. 21. v. 8. c. 22. v. 16.) And however men may deceive themſelves, and others by vain words: the horrible effects of theſe crimes upon the peace, comfort, morals, and health of mankind; the dreadful havock thereby made of the human ſpecies, which is *vaſtly* beyond the conception of ſuch perſons, who have not enquired into the ſubject: the connection, which they have with, and the introduction, which they form to all other vices, will ever illuſtrate not only the holineſs, and juſtice, but alſo the *goodneſs*, of that law, which ſo peremptorily forbids them, and ſo awfully denounces the wrath of God againſt thoſe, who are guilty of them. Nor muſt we ſtop here: under one word, laſciviouſneſs, is comprehended a variety of ſhameful practices, which could not be enumerated without offence, and cannot be thought of without abhorrence. All theſe fall under the prohibition before us, as utterly inconſiſtent with reaſon, purity, the true dignity of the rational nature, and the intention of God in forming us as we are. Nay every thing, which comports not with the ends, and intentions of marriage, though ſanctioned by that honourable name, will be found inconſiſtent with the ſpirituality of the commandment before us. All that converſation, by which the filthineſs of an impure heart is vented, and communicated to others: all polluted imaginations, and ſpeculative wantonneſs: all lewd deſires are likewiſe prohibited; "and "he that looketh upon a woman to luſt after her, hath "committed adultery with her already in his heart." Writing, publiſhing, vending, propagating, or reading obſcene books: forming, or expoſing to view indecent pictures, or ſtatues, or whatever elſe tends to pollute the imagination, or fire the paſſions, muſt fall under this prohibition. In all theſe caſes, not only the groſſer outrage againſt modeſty is ſinful, but that which is more covert, and inſinuating, which is perhaps of ſtill more fatal tendency. Nor will the wit, elegance, or ingenuity of the performance at all palliate the matter: it is poiſon, and at leaſt no better for being conveyed in an unſuſpected, or agreeable vehicle, whether in the parlour, from the preſs, on the theatre, or at the muſeum. Whatever inſpires the wanton thought, or excites the dormant deſire after a forbidden object, violates the ſpirit of this command. Yea all the arts of dreſs, motion, converſation, or demeanour, which are not conſiſtent with the ſtricteſt rules of decency; but have a tendency to throw temptations in the way of heedleſs youth: all that ſoft inſinuation, and thoſe amorous looks, expreſſions, and dalliances, which ſubſerve the vile art of ſeduction, in either ſex; (for it is not excluſively the ſin of either:) and whatever in the moſt remote degree leads to the groſſer evil here forbidden, is in that degree a violation of the ſeventh commandment. For it requires the utmoſt purity of imagination, heart, converſation and behaviour, in ſecret as well as before the eyes of men; and the utmoſt ſuperiority of the rational ſoul to the animal appetite, not only reſtraining from forbidden indulgences, but producing a holy indifference about, a moderation in, and a regard to expediency reſpecting thoſe, which are moſt honourable. And moreover the deſire and endeavour of preſerving the ſame diſpoſition, and behaviour in all others, as far as we are connected with them; avoiding every expreſſion, and action, which may counteract this deſign, and adopting ſuch language, and behaviour, as may promote it. And how much this would conduce to the true honour, and felicity of the human ſpecies in this world, and ſubſerve religion, and promote the ſalvation of the ſouls of men in another world, need not be ſaid. This is the law of God, imperfectly expounded: the tranſgreſſion of it is ſin, and the wages of ſin is death.

V. 15. *Thou ſhalt not ſteal.*] This commandment is the law of love, as it reſpects our neighbour's property. The earth is given to the children of men: but the productions thereof are obtained, and fitted for uſe by labour: labour gives property; and property deſcends to the children or heirs of the poſſeſſor. Hence that difference in circumſtances, which prevails, and is to be conſidered as the appointment of God, and ſubmitted to accordingly. The portion of worldly things which is allotted to us, as far as it is obtained in any honeſt way, "is the bread, "which God hath given us." For that we ought to be thankful, with it contented, and, in the uſe of lawful means,

18 And all the people ſaw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noiſe of the trumpet, and the mountain ſmoking: and when the people ſaw *it*, they removed, and ſtood afar off.

19 And

means, to truſt his providence for the future. But unbelief, pride, covetouſneſs, and luxury are not thus to be ſatisfied; and ſloth refuſes to labour. From ſuch principles men are induced to employ force, or fraud, and all the arts of ingenious deceit to obtain poſſeſſion of the property of others, without their conſent, fairly, and honeſtly obtained. Theſe things however modified are the objects of this prohibition. Human laws forbid, and human tribunals puniſh various tranſgreſſions of this commandment, which need not be enumerated: we need only obſerve that they will alſo, except repented of, be puniſhed in another way, as diſobedience to the law of God, whether the ſword of human juſtice reach them, or not. But there are innumerable ways of evading the laws of man, or eſcaping human juſtice, whilſt the law of God is violated. Many fraudulent bargains, whereby the ignorance, credulity, or neceſſity of others, are impoſed upon; much abuſe of confidence, extortion, exorbitant gain, deceitful combinations to enhance the price of goods, or to lower the wages of the poor, will be condemned as tranſgreſſions of God's law, though perhaps ſcarce deemed cenſurable in ſociety. Many an overgrown plunderer of provinces, and kingdoms, and oppreſſor of millions, who ſmiles defiance at human juſtice, will ſink under the ſentence of the judge of the earth, in horror, and deſpair. The plunder of the public, whether by oppreſſive rulers, and exorbitant exactions; or by ſmuggling, evading taxes, and ſuch like methods of increaſing wealth, will one day be brought to account; as will the practice of contracting debts for the ſupport of vanity, and luxury, or for any thing not abſolutely neceſſary, without a fair proſpect of paying them: and thoſe advantages which are taken of the humane proviſions of the laws of man, to evade paying juſt debts, when they *become* able to do it. Nay all extravagance, beyond the prudent allowance of our income, is robbery of our families: and ſlothfulneſs, and *unneceſſary* ſubſiſtence upon charity, is robbery of the public, or of it's beſt members: and with-holding from real objects of compaſſion that relief, which they are entitled to, or ſqueezing the poor down ſo low in their wages, as ſcarce to allow them to ſubſiſt, whilſt we live in affluence, muſt be allowed to violate its ſpiritual meaning. In ſhort the commandment excludes covetouſneſs, luxury, and the pride of life; and requires induſtry, frugality, ſobriety, temperance, ſubmiſſion to God's providence, and that indifference about worldly things, which produces contentedneſs with, and thankfulneſs for the meaneſt proviſion; and a diſpoſition "to do to all others" in reſpect of worldly property, "as we would they ſhould do unto us." And how reaſonable this is in itſelf, and how conducive to the felicity of man, is evident to every one.

V. 16. *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs*, &c.] This commandment is the law of love, as it reſpects the reputation of our neighbour; though ſuch is the connexion of cauſes and effects in the actions of men, that the violation thereof may alſo affect his life, or property, and ruin his relative comfort. Nay bearing falſe witneſs amongſt us in a court of juſtice may be a complication of perjury, robbery, ſlander, and murder, if not of other crimes. In ſuch important concerns how careful ſhould we be, that we teſtify nothing, of which we are *not certain!* that we ſuffer not partiality, prejudice, ſelf-intereſt, or any other human paſſion to warp our evidence, or give it a falſe colouring! How circumſpect and exact ſhould we be even to a word, if poſſible, in reporting what we know; and in ſpeaking the truth, the whole truth, and no more than the truth! Equal caution, and circumſpection are requiſite in thoſe, who compoſe juries, and are to bring in the verdict; and in the judge, who ſums up the evidence, and pronounces the ſentence. In all theſe caſes there is danger of breaking this commandment, in connexion with many others, and in the moſt atrocious manner. Next to this we may rank the malicious invention and propagation of falſe reports, in order to injure the reputation, the intereſt, or the comfort of our neighbour: nor is it much leſs criminal when it is done in ſport, as the madman throws about arrows, firebrands, and death. Nor are we allowed to ſpread ſuch reports as have already been framed, if we know, or ſuſpect them to be falſe or aggravated: nay, though we are ſure that they are ſtrictly true, if we have no good reaſon for circulating them, we ſhall contract guilt, by ſo doing: nor is it eaſy to adduce a good reaſon for diſſeminating an injurious report, except the detection of a hypocrite be neceſſary, that others may not be deceived by him: or that of a maſked villain, that they may be upon their guard againſt him. Unleſs in ſuch caſes, the practice of ſpreading diſadvantageous ſtories of others, is the reſult of proud ſelf-preference; of malevolence, which takes pleaſure in diſgracing, and torturing others; or of conceited affectation of wit, which diſregards all conſequences, that may follow it's diſplay. All calumnies, ſlanders, reproaches, ſevere cenſures, and pointed ſarcaſms, which hold up an individual to contempt, and ridicule, however ingenious, and applauded, will be condemned as violations of this commandment: as will the diſpoſition of diſcovering, without evidence, a corrupt motive for an inoffenſive, or even a good action; of putting the worſt conſtruction upon a doubtful one, or of enhancing the malignity of a bad one: and all the inuendos, and miſrepreſentation, whereby the baſe trade of back-biting is carried on; and by which anecdotes are picked up in one family, to furniſh matter of converſation in another, which may gratify the malevolence or curioſity of ſuch perſons, who ſeem to confeſs themſelves incompetent for more rational diſcourſe. Much tranſgreſſion of this commandment is found in books of religious controverſy; (as well as in other books, for a lie, or a ſlander is much worſe, when printed and publiſhed, than when only ſpoken,) and in converſation about religion: for the *bigots* of all ſects, and parties are agreed in bearing falſe witneſs againſt their opponents; in miſtating facts, miſreporting their words, and miſquoting their books: this is a moſt ſhameful offence, and cannot be too ſeverely reprobated, and proteſted againſt

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And

against by all friends to true religion, which is thus exposed to the scorn of its enemies. All lies, however distinguished, or denominated, class amongst the violations of this commandment: and are always an abuse of our own gift of speech; an abuse of the confidence of those, whom we address; and generally one way or other injurious to our neighbours: and are therefore without distinction condemned in the word of God. Even injurious thoughts, groundless suspicions, and secret prejudices, or secret envy of the praises, and commendations, which others receive, consist not with the spirit of this precept: which implies a requisition of sincerity, truth, fidelity, candour, and caution in our whole disposition, conversation, and conduct: and that we love our neighbour as ourselves, and shew that love, by honouring what is honourable; commending what is commendable; vindicating and excusing what can be vindicated and excused; and concealing what may lawfully be concealed: and in every respect consulting, and being tender of his reputation, and even rejoicing in his credit, and renown, as we should were it our own, and might reasonably desire he also should. In our own case we all feel the excellency and reasonableness of the precept in it's strictest sense; we value, and are tender of our reputation, and expect to be treated with candour, respect, and sincerity; and are much pained, and affronted, when we are imposed upon, or held forth to scorn, ridicule, and censure, by the tongues or pens of others. But through the exorbitancy of self-love, and the deficiency of our love to others, we are prone to an amazing degree, to violate the same rules, in respect of our neighbour, and this without much remorse, or sense of guilt. Nor can words express how much this reasonable commandment is every day transgressed in almost all companies, and amongst persons of all characters.

V. 17. *Thou shalt not covet*, &c.] This last commandment is intended as the fence of all the rest; that by attending to it we may be kept at a distance from the violation of the others; as the Israelites were kept at a distance from mount Sinai by the boundaries, which were placed about it. The apostle (*Rom.* c. 7. v. 7, 8.) quotes this commandment as comprising the utmost spirituality of the law; and as that especially, which shews the convinced sinner the depravity of his heart, the insufficiency of his obedience, and the deceitfulness of all his former hopes. Hence it may be inferred, that it was also annexed as a rule of explication to all the rest; and Christ hath placed one species of *concupiscence*, or coveting, under the seventh commandment, as a transgression of it. Indeed it has been the manner of men in all ages to rest in the mere letter of the commandments and, if not chargeable, with the gross wickedness therein prohibited, to think or say, "all these have I kept from my youth:" but the tenth commandment stands in the law itself as a direct confutation of such explications, and as direct a sanction of the more spiritual, and extensive exposition.—Nor is it at all material of which of the commandments our conduct is a transgression, if it be evidently condemned by the law of God. Many things therefore, which have been adduced in the interpretation of the other commandments, might here again be mentioned: but the repetition would be needless. We must not covet any thing which the law of God forbids, or which the providence of God with-holds: the least desire of a forbidden object is coveting: the *inordinate* desire of the object, which might lawfully be possessed, is the same.—The first motion of desire, the most secret wish for the wife of another man is a violation of the precept; but the desire of an union with an unmarried woman, who is not pre-engaged, is only forbidden when it becomes inordinate: because the object of the former desire is unlawful, that of the latter lawful in itself; though there may be circumstances which render it equally sinful to desire it, because evidently impracticable by lawful means. That part of our neighbour's property, which he may with propriety part from, and expresses an intention to dispose of, we may innocently desire upon fair, and equitable terms: but if he be averse to part with his property, though for a valuable consideration, we cannot continue to desire it, without violation of this commandment! To desire in certain circumstances to obtain a part of our neighbour's possessions in a way, which were the circumstances reversed, it would be fair and reasonable for him to desire a part of our substance, is not coveting. The moderate desire of relief from the affluence of a rich man, in the breast of one really in want, is no transgression of this command; though he propose no valuable consideration in lieu of it.—By parity of reason, men embarking in an equally hazardous enterprize, may agree to contribute certain proportions of their substance to relieve the distress, or compensate the loss, which any one of them in that undertaking might sustain; without coveting the property of the others: because this is only agreeing to relieve mutually each other's distresses, should the one be distressed, and the other exempted; which is the law of love. And this will exculpate insurance from the charge of violating this precept, if fairly, and honestly transacted.—But ten persons cannot stake a sum of money each, to cast lots for the whole, without coveting their neighbour's property, and seeking to possess it, in a way contrary to the law of love; in enriching themselves by impoverishing him, and obtaining his property in a way, that they would not, without hopes of winning, risque, much less part with their own. This will evidently conclude all gaming, public as well as private, to be a transgression of this commandment.—It perfectly agrees with the law of love, to desire, and accept of a proportion of our neighbour's abundance to make up our loss, and to relieve our distress: but it is directly contrary thereto to desire, and seize upon his substance to enrich ourselves by impoverishing him. The former is the case of insurances, the latter of gaming and lotteries: for that which is right,

21 And the people ſtood afar off, and Moſes drew near unto the thick darkneſs where God *was*.

22 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Thus thou ſhalt ſay unto the children of Iſrael, ye have ſeen that I have talked with you from heaven.

23 Ye ſhall not make with me gods of ſilver, neither ſhall ye make unto you gods of gold.

24 An altar of earth thou ſhalt make unto me, and ſhalt ſacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy ſheep and thine oxen: In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bleſs thee.

25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of ſtone, thou ſhalt not build it of hewn ſtone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou haſt polluted it.

26 Neither ſhalt thou go up by ſteps unto mine altar, that thy nakedneſs be not diſcovered thereon. CHAP.

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or wrong when two or ten are concerned, is equally right or wrong when millions are embarked therein.—In fine, diſtruſt, diſcontent, ambition, covetouſneſs, ſelf-love, love of the world, love of pleaſure, envy, deſire of change, and the habit of wiſhing, and inordinately ſeeking for any earthly object, or the indulgence of any paſſion in the human heart, are the evils againſt which this precept is directed: as indeed they are the great ſources of all the wickedneſs, that fills the earth; which would be repreſſed, were theſe ſubdued; and ceaſe, were they extinguiſhed. And it requires that indifference about the ſucceſs of our worldly undertakings, and that moderation about worldly objects, which becomes thoſe, whoſe buſineſs it is to do the will of God, and whoſe happineſs it is to enjoy his favour, without looking any further.—This is right and reaſonable, fit for God to command, and profitable for man to obey; the very temper, and felicity of heaven itſelf. But ſo contrary to the diſpoſition of man's heart by nature, and ſo ſuperior to the actual attainment of the beſt of men on earth; that it is hard to purſuade mankind that God requires ſuch perfection, ſtill harder to convince them, that it not only conſiſts with, but is indiſpenſible to the happineſs of the rational creature: and hardeſt of all to convince them, that every thing inconſiſtent with, or ſhort of this is ſin, the wages of which is death. Yet this is the evident doctrine of the Bible; and conviction of it is the very preparation for underſtanding and valuing the Grace of the Goſpel of our ſalvation in any meaſure ſuitable to it's nature and preciouſneſs.

Thy neighbour's houſe, &c.] The things here mentioned were thoſe, which were moſt commonly coveted amongſt them; and imply all poſſible objects of concupiſcence. Thus we cloſe the ſecond table of the law; and therein we find nothing injurious, defective, or redundant: nothing which could he altered, added, or retrenched without marring the perfection of the whole, and allowing of thoſe things, which are inconſiſtent with perſonal, relative, and ſocial felicity.—"Lord have mercy upon us, (forgiving "our paſt tranſgreſſions,) and write all theſe thy Laws in "our hearts we beſeech thee. Amen."

V. 19. *Speak thou with us*, &c.] By this the people confeſſed their need of a Mediator, and that they could not in their own perſons ſtand before this holy God, according to this ſpiritual law; for they could not endure the "things, which were ſpoken." But it was rather the language of their terrors, and preſent feelings, than of their judgment. It however ſhews us our real condition; and in this whole tranſaction Moſes typified, that "Prophet like unto himſelf," whom he predicted.

V. 20. *Fear not, for God*, &c.] They were encouraged not to fear immediate deſtruction; for theſe awful diſplays were intended for their conviction and humiliation, not for their condemnation: and in connexion with the Goſpel, were to put them upon trial, and to evince who was, and who was not diſpoſed to obey, when properly warned, encouraged, and inſtructed: and at the ſame time to impreſs them with reverential fear, which is connected with love, and promotes obedience; and is totally different from that ſervile fear, which is connected with enmity, produces deſpondency, and leads to further ungodlineſs:—unleſs the juſtice and holineſs of God, and the ſeverity of his law be viewed in connexion with the Goſpel, and this terror be mitigated by hope, and this enmity ſupplanted by the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghoſt.

V. 24. *An altar of earth*, &c.] That is of the meaneſt materials: as the faith, humility, and holineſs of the offerer was that, to which God had moſt reſpect, next to Jeſus, whom the ſacrifices typified.

Record my name.] The Lord recorded his name in the tabernacle, and temple, which were built according to his command, and called by his name: as in like manner in all the ordinances, which he hath appointed as means of grace to us, and of honourable worſhip to himſelf.

V. 25. *Lift up a tool*, &c.] This was intended to keep them at a diſtance from the idolatries and ſuperſtitions of the Heathens; and from attempting to pleaſe him by human inventions, or by external ſplendour in his worſhip. But the temple, altar, and ſacrifices repreſented Chriſt's atonement, and righteouſneſs, to which as the meritorious ground of our acceptance we can attempt to add nothing, without offending God, and precluding our own juſtification, or at leaſt our comfortable ſenſe of it.

V. 26. *Leſt thy nakedneſs*, &c.] The Heathen worſhip was attended by ſhameful indecencies, from which the Lord would keep his people at the utmoſt diſtance; and as they wore looſe garments, this precaution was very proper.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though we hear not the thunders, nor ſee the lightnings, nor witneſs the awful circumſtances, with which this holy law was given: nor yet hear the voice of God pronouncing theſe ſolemn words: yet if we will attend

CHAP. XXI.

Contains Laws; 1st. About the releaſe, or detention of Hebrew ſlaves, v. 1—5. 2d. About their treatment of their female ſlaves, v. 6—11. 3d. About murder, manſlaughter, the ſmiting, or curſing of parents, maiming any perſon, killing or wounding a ſlave, hurting of women with child, &c. v. 12—27. 4th. About miſchiefs occaſioned by cattle, or by pits, v. 28—36.

NOW theſe *are* the judgments which thou ſhalt ſet before them.

2 If

attend to the things, which were then ſpoken, and in which we are equally concerned; we ſhall perceive, that we have as much occaſion to tremble for ourſelves, as ever Iſrael had before mount Sinai. This law, which is ſo extenſive, that we cannot meaſure it; ſo ſpiritual, that we cannot evade it; and ſo reaſonable, that we cannot find fault with it, will be the rule of the future judgment of God, as it is of the preſent conduct of man. Nor would it conſiſt with the glory of the divine perfections, the honour of his government, the intereſts of his univerſal, and everlaſting kingdom; or even with the felicity of any of his rational creatures, to reverſe, or repeal, or relax one precept of it; for it is all perfectly "holy, juſt, and "good." Compared with this holy law we ſee moſt evidently that man is a fallen ruined creature; for his character, diſpoſition and conduct, ſo far from being conformable thereto in full perfection, is the very contrary; the carnal mind of man is enmity againſt God; for it is "not ſubject to the law of God, nor indeed can be." Examined by this rule we ſhall find our whole paſt lives to be a continued ſeries of tranſgreſſions: our beſt actions to be all defective in their principle, end, and meaſure, and defiled with ſin; and our judgment, will, and affections, the very reverſe of what they ought to be: and in ſhort we ſhall be conſtrained to uſe the language of the prophet, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our "righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags." (*Iſaiah*, c. 64. v. 6.) When we have thus by the law obtained ſome acquaintance with the number of our tranſgreſſions, and of the ſinfulneſs of our fallen nature: we may further perceive the danger our ſouls are in, when we read "curſed is *every* "*one*, that continueth not in *all* things, which are written "in the book of the law to do them." (*Gal.* c. 3. v. 10.) Which curſe Chriſt expounds, when he declares that he will ſay to thoſe on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye "*curſed*, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil, and "his angels:" and adds, "theſe ſhall go away into ever-"laſting puniſhment." (*Matt.* c. 25. v. 41—46.) And when we have impartially conſidered the excellency of every commandment, we ſhall gradually be conſtrained to approve of the law, to allow of the evil of tranſgreſſion, and to perceive a little of the equity of that wrath of God, which is revealed from "Heaven againſt all ungodlineſs, "and unrighteouſneſs of men." For if tranſgreſſion of human laws in any caſe juſtly merits the death of the body, which is the utmoſt puniſhment, that man can inflict: tranſgreſſion of God's law (conſidering who he is, and what are our obligations to him) may ſurely be allowed juſtly to merit the utmoſt effect of his power, who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell. Thus does the law, in the hand of the convincing Spirit of God, ſhew men their loſt eſtate, their guilt, their danger, and their miſery; and effectually demonſtrate to their conſciences, that their own righteouſneſs cannot juſtify, their own arm cannot ſave them. Further than this the law cannot go; but muſt leave us under condemnation, and in deſpair, ſeparated from God, and neither allowed, nor able, nor willing in this world to approach unto his holy majeſty, with any acceptable ſervice: yet at laſt required to ſtand before his tribunal, in order to receive the recompence of our evil deeds. With this holy law, and awful judgment, and eternal retributions before our eyes, who can deſpiſe the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt? an almighty Saviour, a vicarious atonement, and righteouſneſs, juſtification by faith alone, acceſs unto God upon a mercy ſeat with acceptance through a Mediator; the renewal of our ſouls to holineſs by the ſanctification of the Spirit; and eternal life as *the free gift* of a gracious God, to loſt ſinners, can only appear contemptible to him, who knows not the extent, ſpirituality or excellency of the law of God; or hath never carefully compared his heart and life therewith, having the day of judgment placed before his eyes. In the perſon, undertaking, obedience, and death of Chriſt, this law was magnified, and made honourable, and the juſtice of God was ſatisfied: ſo that this hatred of ſin now harmonizes with his love to ſinners. Here is "the knowledge "of ſalvation to his people by the remiſſion of their ſins;" "for Chriſt hath redeemed them from the curſe of the law, "being made a curſe for them." View the character of Chriſt; in human nature, in the midſt of temptations, and ſufferings, and even unto the death upon the croſs, he was perfectly obedient to this law in its fulleſt extent: on this obedience his divine nature ſtamped infinite value. This, O ſelf-condemned ſinner, is the proviſion God hath made for thy juſtification! this righteouſneſs, being commenſurate with the largeſt demands of the divine law, and being the righteouſneſs of God himſelf, "is upon all, and "unto all them, that believe; for there is no difference;" (*Rom.* c. 3. v. 22. 2 *Cor.* c. 5. v. 21.) and through the atoning blood, and the interceſſion grounded thereon, we have open acceſs to the throne of grace of a reconciled God, notwithſtanding our perſonal guilt and unworthineſs. But can it then be poſſible, if the law be ſo holy and excellent, and ſuch honour have been put upon it by the obedience and ſufferings of the incarnate Son of God, that any redeemed ſinner ſhould be allowed to diſobey it? it is abſurdity, impoſſibility, blaſphemy. The knowledge of the law ſhews our need of repentance; the knowledge of Chriſt crucified is introduced, attended, and followed with repentance itſelf. In every believer's heart ſin is dethroned and crucified, the law of God is written, and the image of God is renewed: Chriſt is made his ſanctification: by his holy Spirit he diſpoſes, inclines, and enables him to hate and flee from ſin; to love, delight in, and

keep

2 If thou buy an Hebrew ſervant, ſix years he ſhall ſerve: and in the ſeventh he ſhall go out free for nothing.

3 If he came in by himſelf, he ſhall go out by himſelf: if he were married, then his wife ſhall go out with him.

4 If his maſter have given him a wife, and ſhe have born him ſons or daughters; the wife and her children ſhall be her maſter's, and he ſhall go out by himſelf.

5 And if the ſervant ſhall plainly ſay, I love my maſter, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free:

6 Then his maſter ſhall bring him unto the judges; he ſhall alſo bring him to the door, or unto the door-poſt: and his maſter ſhall bore his ear through with an awl; and he ſhall ſerve him forever.

7 And if a man ſell his daughter to be a maid-

keep this law in ſincerity and truth; and to copy daily his example, who perfectly fulfilled it; nor ever to ceaſe from the exerciſe of repentance, the purſuit of holineſs, or the earneſt application to Chriſt for increaſing ſanctification, till he become holy in heaven, as he who hath called him is holy. By theſe rules may we judge of our religion: may Chriſt be the end of the law for righteouſneſs to each of us; may the ſanctification of the ſpirit unto obedience prove the reality of our juſtification; and may we make the law of God the rule, and the example of Chriſt the pattern of our daily walk: and may his ſtatutes be the delight and counſellors of all who read theſe obſervations. Then ſhall we daily more and more rejoice in, and glorify God, adorn the Goſpel, ſerve our generation, and ripen for the world of glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *Judgments.*] This word here means *judicial laws*, or rules of judgment, by which their magiſtrates, and judges ſhould proceed in determining cauſes, and trying criminals.—Making proper allowances for the different circumſtances of the times, there is a ſpirit of equity in theſe laws, which is well worthy to be transfuſed into the laws of any ſtate.

V. 2. *An Hebrew ſervant*, &c.] Through poverty the Iſraelites ſometimes ſold themſelves, or their children: magiſtrates ſold ſome perſons for their crimes; and creditors were in ſome caſes allowed to ſell their inſolvent debtors.—In theſe ways ſlavery was, or would be ſoon introduced amongſt them; and even the ſlavery of their brethren, as well as that of ſtrangers: and God was pleaſed, in the judicial law not totally to prohibit this, and ſeveral other things, which are not according to the law of love; but ſo to regulate them, as in great meaſure to prevent the bad conſequences of them.—The moral law is the ſtandard, by which every action is to be tried, whether it be right or wrong in itſelf: but in the government of nations, legiſlators muſt judge how far it is practicable, expedient, or tending to the grand ends of magiſtracy, to require *all* that is right, and forbid *all* that is wrong, under penal ſanctions. The nation of Iſrael, like other nations, was to be governed by a *judicial law*, as to their outward conduct, for the well being of ſociety; the violations of which were cognizable, and puniſhable by the civil magiſtrate with temporal puniſhments. This could not be the ſame law, as that which eſpecially regarded the internal diſpoſitions of the heart, for the glory of God, known and puniſhable only by him, in a future ſtate, with eternal puniſhments.—As the lawgiver was the ſame, they would, as far as his infinite wiſdom ſaw it proper, and expedient, and conducive to the grand ends, which he had in view, coincide: but as they were intended for ſuch diſtinct purpoſes, they muſt in many things vary. The moral law commanded every thing ſpiritually good, in it's utmoſt perfection; and tolerated nothing wrong in the ſmalleſt degree: but it's ſentence is reſerved againſt "that day, when God ſhall "judge the SECRETS of men by Jeſus Chriſt." The judicial law commanded nothing morally bad, forbad nothing morally good: but as it's ſentence was to proceed from the civil magiſtrate, it required not the ſame perfection: and, beſides that it enjoined nothing concerning the ſtate of the heart, it had reſpect unto the ſituation, national character and peculiar circumſtances of the nation to be governed; and ſuppoſed the exiſtence of ſome evils, which could not be eradicated without a conſtant miracle; and provided againſt their effects."—This diſtinction carefully attended to, will account for many things being *ſeemingly tolerated* in the Moſaic law, which are condemned in the New Teſtament; and not only there, but in the Ten Commandments, or moral law of "loving our neighbour as "ourſelves."—They are not ſanctioned, but *merely ſuffered*, becauſe of the hardneſs of their hearts; or on ſome account to prevent worſe conſequences.—Slavery was almoſt univerſal in the world; and though, like wars, it always proceeded of evil; and was generally evil in itſelf; yet the wiſdom of God deemed it better to regulate, than to prohibit it: but we are not to judge of the practice itſelf by theſe judicial regulations, but by the law of love. And ſlavery, like war, may in ſome caſes, in the preſent ſtate of things, be lawful: the crime which forfeits life, ſeems to forfeit liberty; and it does not appear inconſiſtent with even the moral law of God, for a criminal to be ſold for, and treated as a ſlave, for a term of time proportioned to his offence.—In moſt if not in all other caſes, it muſt be inconſiſtent with the law of love: and it *may be* inexpedient ever to inflict that puniſhment, becauſe it forms ſo undeſirable a precedent.

V. 4. *If his maſter have given*, &c.] Sometimes ſuch ſlaves were previouſly married, and their wives either by conſtraint, or choice attended them. But at other times their maſters gave them wives of their Heathen ſlaves, (for it does not ſeem, that they could thus diſpoſe of a Hebrew female) and the iſſue of ſuch marriage, as well as the wife, continued the maſter's property when the ſervant was diſcharged.

V. 7—11. *Sell his daughter*, &c.] Being induced by poverty, a parent might ſometimes thus ſell his child in her youth,

maid-ſervant, ſhe ſhall not go out as the men-ſervants do.

8 If ſhe pleaſe not her maſter, who hath betrothed her to himſelf, then ſhall he let her be redeemed: To ſell her unto a ſtrange nation he ſhall have no power, ſeeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.

9 And if he have betrothed her unto his ſon, he ſhall deal with her after the manner of daughters.

10 If he take him another *wife*; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage ſhall he not diminiſh.

11 And if he do not theſe three unto her, then ſhall ſhe go out free without money.

12 He that ſmiteth a man, ſo that he die, ſhall be ſurely put to death.

13 And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver *him* into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he ſhall flee.

14 But if a man come preſumptuouſly upon his neighbour to ſlay him with guile; thou ſhalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

15 And he that ſmiteth his father or his mother, ſhall be ſurely put to death.

16 And he that ſtealeth a man, and ſelleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he ſhall ſurely be put to death.

17 And he that curſeth his father, or his mother, ſhall ſurely be put to death.

18 And if men ſtrive together, and one ſmite another with a ſtone, or with *his* fiſt, and he die not, but keep *his* bed:

19 If he riſe again, and walk abroad upon his ſtaff, then ſhall he that ſmote *him*, be quit: only he ſhall pay *for* the loſs of his time, and ſhall cauſe *him* to be thoroughly healed.

20 And if a man ſmite his ſervant, or his maid with a rod, and he die under his hand; he ſhall be ſurely puniſhed.

21 Notwithſtanding, if he continue a day or two, he ſhall not be puniſhed: for he *is* his money.

22 If men ſtrive and hurt a woman with child, ſo that her fruit depart *from her*, and yet no miſchief follow: he ſhall be ſurely puniſhed, according as the woman's huſband will lay upon him; and he ſhall pay as the judges *determine*.

23 And if *any* miſchief follow, then thou ſhalt give life for life,

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youth, with engagement, or expectation that ſhe ſhould become the concubine, or wife of the perſon who bought her.—Therefore, if he afterwards changed his mind, and did not marry her, the parents, or other friends were to be allowed the liberty of redeeming her, at a reaſonable price; but if they did not do it, ſhe was by no means to be ſold as a ſlave, or even to become the concubine of any Heathen, where ſhe would be out of the way of recovering her liberty, and likely to forget her religion: but the perſon who bought her, muſt either keep her himſelf, or diſpoſe of her amongſt the Iſraelites, that ſhe might enjoy the benefit of their religion, and laws: for having already deceived her, he muſt not add one injury to another.—But if, after he had married her, he took another wife, and neglected her, ſhe was to go out free, as a recompence for the injury, which ſhe had received.

V. 12—14. *He that ſmiteth*, &c.] That is, wilfully, whether out of previous reſentment, or ſudden anger, if the blow itſelf was given with the intention of doing hurt.—But when it was merely by accident, as we term it, but which the Scripture here calls "God's delivering him "into his hand;" as by his providence he thus is pleaſed to take away the life he gave, the cities of refuge were to be appointed for him to flee to: but ſo far were they from being a ſecurity to the wilful, preſumptuous, deliberate murderer; that he was even to be torn from the altar of God itſelf, and put to death.—The Heathen altars and temples were generally refuges for criminals; but God would not have his altar profaned by protecting thoſe, who deſerved puniſhment; nor did he appoint any ſacrifice for murder.

V. 15. *Smiteth his father*, &c.] Though it were not of fatal conſequence: this offence, and curſing, or venting imprecations againſt parents, conſtituted ſuch daring rebellion againſt the authority of God veſted in them; and were ſo ungrateful and unnatural in themſelves, that no provocation was to be pleaded in excuſe; but they who committed them were to be puniſhed with death.

V. 20, 21. *With a rod*, &c.] The murder of a ſlave with a ſword, or other ſuch fatal weapon was, it ſeems, always puniſhable with death: but when after correction he happened to die, the maſter was not to be thus puniſhed, except this conſequence immediately followed: becauſe it might be preſumed that he had no intention of killing him, and was already a ſufferer in the loſs of his property.

V. 22. *No miſchief follow*, &c.] In caſe a woman with child interpoſed in behalf of her huſband aſſaulted by another perſon, and was hurt by him, ſo as to miſcarry; but no further miſchief enſued either to her, or her huſband: ſatisfaction was then to be made to the latter.

V. 23—25. *And if any miſchief*, &c.] Theſe were not allowances to private revenge; but laws to regulate the judge's determination in the adminiſtration of juſtice; who might proceed thus far, but no further.

24 Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

25 Burning for burning, wound for wound, ſtripe for ſtripe.

26 And if a man ſmite the eye of his ſervant, or the eye of his maid, that it periſh; he ſhall let him go free for his eye's ſake.

27 And if he ſmite out his man-ſervant's tooth, or his maid-ſervant's tooth; he ſhall let him go free for his tooth's ſake.

28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox ſhall be ſurely ſtoned, and his fleſh ſhall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *ſhall be* quit.

29 But if the ox were wont to puſh with his horn in time paſt, and it hath been teſtified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox ſhall be ſtoned, and his owner alſo ſhall be put to death.

30 If there be laid on him a ſum of money, then he ſhall give for the ranſom of his life, whatſoever is laid upon him.

31 Whether he have gored a ſon or have gored a daughter, according to this judgment ſhall it be done unto him.

32 If the ox ſhall puſh a man-ſervant, or maid-ſervant; he ſhall give unto their maſter thirty ſhekels of ſilver, and the ox ſhall be ſtoned.

33 And if a man ſhall open a pit, or if a man ſhall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an aſs fall therein;

34 The owner of the pit ſhall make *it* good, *and* give money unto the owner of them; and the dead *beaſt* ſhall be his.

35 And if one man's ox hurt another's that he die, then they ſhall ſell the live ox, and divide the money of it, and the dead *ox* alſo they ſhall divide.

36 Or if it be known that the ox hath uſed to puſh in time paſt, and his owner hath not kept him in: he ſhall ſurely pay ox for ox, and the dead ſhall be his own.

CHAP.

V. 30. *If there be*, &c.] The owner, who neglected to take care of a miſchievous ox, was to be anſwerable for the conſequences; and might be puniſhed by the magiſtrate as a murderer: but in caſe of alleviating circumſtances, they were empowered to change his ſentence into a fine, as a ranſom of his life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The commandments of God's law, as well as the diſpenſations of his providence, not only relate to the grand outlines of his adminiſtration, but deſcend to the minuteſt concerns, and the meaneſt objects; eſpecially wherein righteouſneſs, goodneſs, and truth are concerned. With a condeſcending regard he particularly watches over thoſe, who are moſt expoſed to oppreſſion, to injuſtice, or to damage; and has reſpect to all ranks from the pooreſt beggar, to the mightieſt monarch; and to all the ſtages of human exiſtence, from the newly conceived embryo in the womb, to the decrepit old age.—Though he no longer reigneth over any ſingle nation in that peculiar ſenſe, in which he reigned over Iſrael; yet is he king over all the earth, and will at his awful tribunal arraign and condemn thoſe violations of his law, which here eſcape notice, or elude the ſword of human juſtice.—With his precepts, and his example before our eyes, and this judgment in our remembrance; with what equity, ſincerity, and humanity ſhould we treat our ſervants, dependants, and inferiors! We ought ſo to behave towards our domeſtics, that though free from other bonds, they may be attached to us by the ties of love, and count it their privilege to ſpend and cloſe their days in our ſervice.—We ſhould be cautious not to act deceitfully in the important concern of marriage: but ſtill more ought we to abhor the baſeneſs of conſigning to laſting diſgrace, and miſery, an unhappy object, over whom we have by any means acquired an aſcendancy, for the ſake of a worthleſs gratification: on the contrary, we ſhould learn habitually to ſacrifice perſonal advantage or indulgence, to general benevolence.—If this were our diſpoſition, there would not need laws to reſtrain us from ſuch unnatural crimes as ſtealing our brethren; and ſo many methods to inſpire us with horror of the ſin of murder; for ſo far from laying wait to ſhed blood, or trading in the bodies of men; we ſhould watch for, and gladly embrace the opportunity of preſerving the liberty or life of our enemy; ſtill repreſſing the riſing emotions of anger, pouring out our prayers, and attempting acts of kindneſs under the greateſt provocations: and inſtead of enforcing the law of retaliation, we ſhould ever be ambitious of overcoming evil with good.—Then ſhould we guard, though with trouble, and loſs againſt whatever could endanger the life, or property of another: and whilſt we were ever ready in any way to make up any damage, which we have indiſcreetly, or even without any blame, occaſioned to others, to the utmoſt of our power; we ſhould be very backward in demanding ſuch ſatisfaction to ourſelves. But let children hear with trembling, the ſentence of God's word upon the ungrateful, and diſobedient; and remember that God will certainly require it, if they have even curſed their parents in their hearts, or lift up their hand in intention againſt them; except

CHAP. XXII.

Contains Laws: 1st. Concerning theft, and fraud, kindling fires, which occasion damage, breach of trust, things borrowed, or hired, &c. v. 1—15. *2d. Concerning seducers, v.* 16, 17. *3d. Concerning the punishment of witchcraft, beastiality, and idolatry, v.* 18—20. *4th. Concerning the treatment of strangers, widows, and orphans, v.* 21—24. *5th. Against usury, v.* 25—27. *6th. Against reviling rulers; concerning the first-fruits, and firstlings, and their not eating the flesh of torn animals, v.* 28.—31.

IF a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.

2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, *there shall* no blood *be shed* for him.

3 If the sun be risen upon him, *there shall be* blood *shed* for him: *for* he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.

4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.

5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field: of the best of his

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cept they repent, and flee for refuge to the Saviour.—And let parents hence learn double care in training up their children; in inculcating all good instructions; in setting them a good example, especially in the government of their passions; and in praying for them: taking heed not to provoke them to wrath by unreasonable harshness, and severity; lest they themselves should prove the occasions to their children of contracting such enormous guilt, and of suffering such heavy punishment.—And whilst we rejoice that the circumstances of the times in this land render these statutes about slavery, and it's appendages needless; let us take care that we sell not ourselves, or our children to work wickedness out of love to unhallowed gain: and instead of being so attached to the service of sin and Satan, now that the Gospel proclaims full deliverance to all, who will break off their former sinful connections, and leave all for the sake of true liberty: let us as the redeemed of the Lord, out of love to him and his service, have, as it were, our ear nailed to the posts of his door; that hearkening to his voice, we may be his willing servants forever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1. *If a man steal an ox*, &c.] Much of the property of the Israelites consisted in their cattle, which are therefore particularly mentioned in these laws against theft. If the thief had proceeded so far to kill or sell what he had stolen, he was to restore four-fold; and in the case of oxen, which were useful also for their labour, five-fold: if they were found alive in his hand, he was only to be constrained to return double: (v. 4.) but if through remorse of conscience he restored what he had stolen, voluntarily, and previous to discovery, he was only to add a fifth part thereto. (*Lev.* c. 6. v. 4, 5.) But in case he was not able to make the appointed restitution, he was to be sold for a slave; and probably the money was given to make up the loss of the injured party. We should deem such laws inadequate to the security of our property: but though circumstances are exceedingly altered since the times of Moses, human nature is the same; and we are not apt to consider the nation of Israel, as better disposed than other people: yet God himself deemed these laws sufficient in their case. It is true theft amongst us is very commonly connected with an avowed, or apparent intention of murder, in case of resistance, which exceedingly enhances the crime: but it is worthy of consideration, whether equalling the punishment of theft to that of murder, by making both capital, do not contribute to confound the disparity of the crimes in the minds of unthinking men; as well as to remove that restraint from committing, or threatening murder, which would arise from the dread of a severer punishment. However where the intention of murder is out of the question, it seems not consistent with equity, or humanity, to punish theft as severely, as that most atrocious crime: and it is evident from the increase of criminals, though such numbers are put to death, that it does not answer the intended purpose; but seems to meet with a frown in God's providence. One reason of it's ill success seem this: humane persons are loth to take away the life of a fellow creature for the loss of a small sum of money, or other property; therefore they do not prosecute, when they can help it: and in many other respects natural compassion opens a way for young criminals to escape: by which means they frequently remain unpunished till they have arrived at a pitch of hardened wickedness, and have corrupted many others: and by the same means, whilst such numbers escape all punishment for so long a time, every one is encouraged to promise himself impunity. If in the case of lotteries, self-flattery induces every adventurer to hope for the capital prize, though so many chances are against him; much more will the thief flatter himself with the hopes of escaping; when so many chances appear for him: and it seems incontrovertible, that the *sure prospect* of a lesser punishment would operate more powerfully in preventing crimes, than the distant possibility of death; especially with men, whose headstrong passions rushing upon present gratification, disregard all temporal *future* consequences, in proportion to their distance; and are totally regardless of things eternal.

V. 2. *Breaking up*, &c.] That is breaking into an house. If this were attempted in the night, it might be construed into an assault upon the lives, as well as the property of the inhabitants, and be repelled with force; and if the assailant were slain, the person who slew him was not liable to punishment. But after the sun was risen, he might not be killed in defence merely of property;

his own field, and of the beſt of his own vineyard, ſhall he make reſtitution.

6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, ſo that the ſtacks of corn, or the ſtanding-corn, or the field be conſumed *therewith*; he that kindled the fire ſhall ſurely make reſtitution.

7 If a man ſhall deliver unto his neighbour money or ſtuff to keep, and it be ſtolen out of the man's houſe; if the thief be found, let him pay double.

8 If the thief be not found, then the maſter of the houſe ſhall be brought unto the judges, *to ſee* whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods.

9 For all manner of treſpaſs, *whether it be* for ox, for aſs, for ſheep, for raiment, *or* for any manner of loſt thing, which *another* challengeth to be his: the cauſe of both parties ſhall come before the judges; *and* whom the judges ſhall condemn, he ſhall pay double unto his neighbour.

10 If a man deliver unto his neighbour an aſs, or an ox, or a ſheep, or any beaſt to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man ſeeing *it*:

11 *Then* ſhall an oath of the LORD be between them both, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods: and the owner of it ſhall accept *thereof*, and he ſhall not make *it* good.

12 And if it be ſtolen from him, he ſhall make reſtitution unto the owner thereof.

13 If it be torn in pieces, *then* let him bring it *for* witneſs, *and* he ſhall not make good that which was torn.

14 And if a man borrow *ought* of his neighbour, and it be hurt, or die, the owner thereof *being* not with it; he ſhall ſurely make *it* good.

15 *But* if the owner thereof *be* with it, he ſhall not make *it* good: if it *be* an hired *thing*, it came for his hire.

16 And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her; he ſhall ſurely endow her to be his wife.

17 If her father utterly refuſe to give her unto him, he ſhall pay money according to the dowry of virgins.

18 Thou ſhalt not ſuffer a witch to live.

19 Whoſoever

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perty; becauſe there was another way of ſecuring or recovering it.

V. 9. *Whom the judges*, &c.] In all theſe caſes a diſcretionary power was lodged with the magiſtrate, to ſettle the diſpute according to equity.

V. 16. *If a man entice*, &c.] Nothing could be more equitable than ſome regulation of this kind, if it could be properly reſtricted to the caſe of *real ſeduction* by an unmarried man. But even in the preſent ſtate of things, it is matter of fact, capable of demonſtration, that in theſe licentious days many young women in inferior circumſtances, and even encouraged by their parents, (ſhocking as it may ſeem) employ their utmoſt addreſs to attract the attention of young men of better circumſtances: in order that under the pretence of ſeduction, they may be married to better advantage. In attempting to remedy the grievous evil of real ſeduction, this ſhould by no means be encouraged, and increaſed. Otherwiſe it ſeems highly reaſonable, that every unmarried man, whatever were his circumſtances, who debauched a virgin, with promiſes of marriage, or any engagements, which had the ſame effect upon her mind; ſhould be obliged actually to marry her. And that if a married man, profeſſing himſelf unmarried, thus ſeduced a virgin; he ſhould be obliged to maintain her, whilſt ſhe continued unmarried. But a young woman, who ſuffers herſelf to be enticed by a man, whom ſhe knows to be married, ſeems not entitled to the ſame compenſation, whatever puniſhment he merits. It is not at all to our purpoſe to enquire whether, by this law, the ſeducer, though previouſly married, was to take her, whom he had ſeduced, to wife alſo. Polygamy was an *evil*, which then actually exiſted; and many regulations were made, which ſuppoſed, though they did not ſanction it's exiſtence. But in the beginning it was not ſo; nor is it under the Chriſtian diſpenſation, nor according to our municipal laws.

V. 17. *If her father*, &c.] Even in this caſe, where neither the ſeducer, nor the perſon ſeduced were allowed a negative, the father was allowed one: which ſhews how eſſential the conſent of parents is to render marriage honourable according to the laws of God. It ſeems a ſum of money was to be paid to the father, whether he conſented to the marriage or not. (*Deut.* c. 22. v. 28, 29.)

V. 18. *Thou ſhalt not ſuffer a witch to live.*] Witchcraft is generally underſtood to mean, "a combination or "compact with evil ſpirits, by whoſe agency, and "aſſiſtance, applied for by certain incantations, effects of "various kinds may be produced, by which the malice, "or covetouſneſs, &c. of the perſon guilty thereof may "be gratified." A vaſt variety of practices, with different degrees of aggravation, which will in ſucceſſion hereafter come in our way, agree in common with witchcraft in avowedly, or interpretatively making "Satan the God of "the world," and the God of thoſe who thus apply to him for information, or aſſiſtance. It is readily allowed that much impoſture on the one hand, (which forms a very ſingular kind of hypocriſy!) and much ſuperſtition, folly, and cruelty, on the other hand, have taken place, in reſpect

of

19 Whosoever lieth with a beast, shall surely be put to death.

20 He that sacrificeth unto *any* god, save unto the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

21 Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

22 Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child.

23 If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me: I will surely hear their cry;

24 And my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

25 If thou lend money to *any of* my people *that is* poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury.

26 If thou at all take thy neighbour's raiment

of pretensions to, and accusations of these practices. But it seems one of the most flagrant absurdities of modern Sadducéism, to suppose that God himself would repeatedly command the magistrates of his people, to punish a crime with death, which never was committed. The existence, the sagacity, the malice, the ambition, and the power of evil spirits are sufficiently declared in Scripture: that they are both capable and willing thus to interpose, if permitted, there can be no doubt: and that human nature is capable of such wickedness as *even* knowingly to combine with them, can scarce be denied: that witchcraft may be, that it hath been, and that it is still in some parts of the world actually practised seems capable of proof, were there any collateral evidence necessary, to confirm the truth of the divine testimony. But as, by certain degrees of cultivation, wild beasts are banished, or extirpated wholly, or nearly: so in some stages of civilization the practice of witchcraft is nearly excluded. The truth is; in such circumstances it no longer so well answers Satan's grand purpose of deception, and destruction: he therefore changes his ground, and varies his attack; nor is he any loser, by exchanging the practice of witchcraft, for the prevalence of scepticism.

V. 20. *Shall be utterly destroyed.*] Idolatry was before by the moral law forbidden to all men: but *an Israelite* guilty thereof is here commanded to be punished with immediate death. We find afterwards that whole cities involved in that guilt, were to be utterly destroyed. (*Deut.* c. 13. v. 12—17.) For this was a breach of their national covenant. (*Deut.* c. 17. v. 2.) But whilst their judges thus punished it, it would not be accounted a national forfeiture of their charter.

V. 21. *Thou shalt not vex*, &c.] They were to encourage strangers to live amongst them, and to recommend the true religion to them, by their kind usage of them: not forgetting how hard they thought their own treatment in Egypt.

V. 25. *Thou shalt not be to him as an usurer.*] Usury seems to consist in taking increase of the poor, on what they borrow for present subsistence: which tends to enrich the lender, by still more impoverishing the borrower. This was frequently carried to such a pitch amongst the ancients, and even amongst the Israelites, that the creditors constrained their debtors to sell themselves, or their children for slaves, (*Neh.* c. 5. v. 2—5.) which was an evident violation of the law of love. The Israelites were but little engaged in commerce; and their law was not only calculated, but *intended* to prevent them from being so; and to keep them from mingling by any means with other nations: their land also was divided to them by lot, and they were not allowed to alienate their inheritances: they were not therefore much in the way of lending or taking up money upon interest, to employ in trade, or to expend in estates; in which cases, and in those of the like nature, it appears not inconsistent with either equity, or love, for the lender to receive a proportion of the profits from the borrower. However every thing of the kind was prohibited to the Israelites in their dealings with their brethren; though allowed in their transactions with strangers, (*Deut.* c. 23. v. 19, 20.) whom yet they were not to *oppress*. So that though for special reasons the Lord would not allow Israel to take interest of their brethren in any case; yet the *express* allowance to take it of strangers, shews that it is not sinful in all cases of itself, but only so far as it violates the law of love, and is attended by oppression.

V. 26. *Thou shalt not take thy neighbour's raiment to pledge*, &c.] How far the business of a pawnbroker, in the present state of society, consists with the spirit of these precepts, is a question, which involves much difficulty. Some are of opinion, and seem to argue with considerable plausibility *at least*, that the very business is *radically* injurious to society, and inconsistent with Christianity: and certainly, as it is frequently conducted, it's tendency is so. But as all *receiving increase* is not absolutely prohibited; it may be doubted whether the *full* conclusion can *in all cases* be drawn from the premises. It is not however an employment, to which a real Christian can be supposed so partial, as to chuse it either for himself or his children, after he hath become acquainted with the truth, power, and spirit of the Gospel. But should the grace of God meet with a person already engaged in this business, as having been educated to it, and accustomed to get his livelihood by it: and should he be formed indeed to uprightness, benevolence, and conscientiousness; it may be questioned whether, by rendering his employment less lucrative to himself, he might not render it beneficial, or at least not oppressive, to others; so that he might in that business have the prayers of the poor for him, not their cries against him. In this case the employment may be lawful; but not otherwise, at least in my judgment. If such a person should, after serious examination, and fervent prayers to God for direction, find himself at liberty to continue in his calling, he would

ment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down:

27 For that *is* his covering only, it *is* his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I *am* gracious.

28 Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

29 Thou shalt not delay *to offer* the first of thy ripe fruits and of thy liquors: the first-born of thy sons shalt thou give unto me.

30 Likewise shalt thou do with thine oxen, *and* with thy sheep: seven days it shall be with his dam; on the eighth day thou shalt give it me.

31 And ye shall be holy men unto me: neither shall ye eat *any* flesh *that is* torn of beasts in the field: ye shall cast it to the dogs.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains Laws; 1st. Forbidding slander, wresting of judgment, bribery, and oppression; and requiring kindness to enemies, v. 1—9. 2d. The law of the sabbatical year, and of the weekly sabbath, with a caution against idolatry, v. 10—13. 3d. The appointment of the three great annual feasts, v. 14—19. 4th. Promises of conducting Israel safe to Canaan, putting them in possession, enlarging their borders, and destroying their enemies; accompanied with cautions, and precepts, v. 20—33.

THOU shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

2 Thou shalt not follow a multitude to *do* evil;

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endeavour to "abide therein with God;" he would consider it as his cross, and take it up as such; and disdaining the prospect of heaping up wealth, by every profit, which the laws of the land may connive at; he would carefully consult the law of God, of equity, of humanity, and of love; and would only go so far in his employment, as he verily deemed consistent therewith. And if a man's heart be upright, the Lord will either satisfy him to proceed, or encourage him to cast himself upon his providence, in renouncing it.

V. 28. *The gods,*] This is generally understood to mean the magistrates or rulers of God's people; who represented his authority amongst them, and were entitled to honour on that account; though perhaps not personally. (*Acts*, c. 23. v. 5.) These commandments from v. 20. having no punishment to be inflicted by the judge annexed to them, are rather to be considered as moral precepts, binding upon the conscience in the sight of God, than judicial laws. What follows is ceremonial, and will hereafter be spoken upon to more advantage.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

According to the spirit of these laws, the people of God should ever be inclined to mildness, and mercy: and be tender of the lives, and souls even of thieves, and robbers; and not value their own property so highly, as to put it in competition therewith: nor ever be willingly accessary to the death of another, except in the defence of their own lives, or in the execution of public justice: then they should go about it as a painful duty, with reluctancy, and sorrow of heart: not urged on by resentment, or self-interest, but by conscience, to sacrifice the life of an individual to the public good. We should ever keep in mind, that we are answerable in the sight of God, not only for the consequences of what we do maliciously, but of what we do heedlessly: and not only are chargeable with injustice, if we do those things, which expose us to the lash of the law: but for various acts of selfishness, abuse of confidence, secret double dealing, and even carelessness of things borrowed. And therefore, if we are conscious of having thus injured our neighbour, and are truly penitent, we shall endeavour to make restitution to the utmost of our ability, though not compelled to it by the sentence of the magistrate. The fear of God ruling within us, the law of God written in our hearts, an humble recollection of what we were in our lost estate, and a thankful sense of what the Lord hath done for us, will produce tenderness of conscience; carefulness to avoid all appearance of evil, and all occasions of injury; humanity to the fatherless and widow; kindness to the stranger, and to all the sons and daughters of penury; the subjection of our appetites and passions to the will of God; a regard to the credit of our religion; and a disposition "to honour the Lord "with our substance and with the first-fruits of all our "increase;" and to devote ourselves to be an holy people unto the Lord. What a contrast do such characters form to those, whose selfish and filthy hearts are capable of crimes more than brutal, and truly diabolical! who need to be held in with such laws, and punishments as these; and all too little! who have the cries of the oppressed, the widow, the orphan, and the poor; and the wrath of God against them: and who must be cut off by the avenging sword of human justice, to prevent further mischief. This is human nature unchanged and unrestrained: the other is true Grace converting, and ruling in the heart. "Turn thou us, O Lord, and so shall we be turned," that we may be "unto thee a peculiar people zealous of "good works," through Jesus Christ, Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *Thou shalt not,* &c.] This is indeed a general rule of conduct, which allows of no exceptions. But here it is introduced with especial reference to bearing false witness; being influenced in giving evidence by common report, or popular clamour. As Mr. Brown

evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause, to decline after many to wrest *judgment*.

3 Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause.

4 If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.

5 If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldst forbear to help him: thou shalt surely help with him.

6 Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause.

7 Keep thee far from a false matter: and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.

8 And thou shalt take no gift: for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

9 Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger: for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof.

11 But the seventh *year* thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave, the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, *and* with thy olive yard.

12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger may be refreshed.

13 And in all *things* that I have said unto you, be circumspect: and make no mention of the names of other gods, neither let it be heard out of thy mouth.

14 Three

Brown expresses it: "Neither parties, friends, judges, "witnesses, or vulgar opinions, must move us, to lessen "great faults, aggravate small ones, vindicate offenders, "accuse the innocent, or misrepresent any thing, to "procure an unjust sentence."

V. 7, 8. *Keep thee far*, &c.] These verses are especially addressed to the judges, by way of caution, and warning to them. For if they knowingly, or incautiously admitted the evidence of a false witness; and in consequence thereof, or from any corrupt motive, gave a *false* sentence, in a case of life, and death; they would be considered in God's sight, as murderers of the righteous, and innocent: and by parity of reason, in causes relating to property, of robbery, or oppression: and if they were so wicked, as to condemn the innocent, God would never *justify them*, when they stood before his righteous judgment seat; (which hath no relation to the method of the penitent believing sinner's justification according to the Gospel.) They must not therefore take any bribe, nor any present from the persons, whose cause they were to decide, though without an express condition annexed: for that would be a temptation, which would tend to warp the judgment, and pervert the sentence even of such, as were otherwise wise and righteous. It is recorded of Sir Matthew Hale, that upon his circuit as judge, he refused to try the cause of a gentleman, who had sent him the *customary present* of venison, until he had paid him for it. It seems he well understood the *spirit of these laws*, which is by no means antiquated.

V. 11. *But the seventh year*, &c.] This law seems to have been intended to remind them, that they were the Lord's tenants for their estates, and they were to observe his rules in cultivating them; as well as in disposing of the product of them; otherwise they would incur a forfeiture of their lease: to teach them dependance on his providence, and observation of his faithfulness in sending them the larger increase, whilst they kept his appointments: to inculcate indifference about corruptible riches; and a spirit of liberality to the poor, who were to appropriate the spontaneous productions of the land, during this year: it would also be a real advantage to the land to lie thus fallow from time to time: it was also typical of the heavenly rest, when all earthly labours, cares, and interests shall cease for ever: some have moreover supposed, that the seventh thousand year of the world will have somewhat analogous to this sabbatical year.

V. 13. *Make no mention of the names*, &c.] Lest the familiar use of their names, should abate their abhorrence of them, and make way to the worship of them. It is worth while to enquire how far the familiar acquaintance with the Heathen mythology, which accompanies a classical education, consists with this law; and whether it does not subserve the cause of scepticism, and immorality; and prove of unfavourable consequence to genuine Christianity. The characters, and anecdotes of Jupiter, Bacchus, Apollo, Mars, Venus, &c. agreeably told in the fictions of the poets, lose their horror, and fill the youthful mind with delight, and admiration: and the imagination furnished with abundance of such ideas, and the judgment perverted by such examples, promise nothing very desirable in prospect, either in respect of the chastity, sobriety, humility, faith, or piety of those, who are thus educated. It were to be wished that such books as Ovid's Metamorphoses, and many others, were either totally kept out of the hands of *inexperienced* youth, or more cautiously entrusted in them. As to the chief places of public diversion, they subsist by accommodation to the more plausible passions of depraved human nature; and the *Heathenism* of them, only forms an additional proof of their unfavourable aspect on Christianity; and an additional reason, why real

14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.

15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee in the time appointed of the month Abib: for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:

16 And the feast of harvest, the first-fruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of in-gathering *which is* in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the LORD God.

18 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, neither shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until the morning.

19 The first of the first-fruits of thy land thou shalt bring into the house of the LORD thy God. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk.

20 Behold, I send an Angel before thee to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.

21 Beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name *is* in him.

22 But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.

23 For mine Angel shall go before thee, and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, *and* the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and I will cut them off.

24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.

25 And ye shall serve the LORD your God, and he shall bless thy bread, and thy water: and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee.

26 There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land: the number of thy days I will fulfil.

27 I will send my fear before thee, and will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come, and I will make all thine enemies turn their backs unto thee.

28 And I will send hornets before thee, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before thee.

29 I will not drive them out from before thee in one year; lest the land become desolate, and the beast of the field multiply against thee.

30 By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land.

31 And I will set thy bounds from the Red sea even unto the sea of the Philistines, and from the desert unto the river: for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand; and thou shalt drive them out before thee.

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real Christians should keep themselves, and their children from them.

V. 14—17.] We shall meet with these feasts again ere long, under the names of the Feast of Passover, of Weeks, and of Tabernacles, when we shall once for all make some observations on them.

V. 19. *Thou shalt not seethe*, &c.] This singular practice, which is more than once prohibited, might be deemed to have some semblance of cruelty in it; or might be considered as an unnatural gratification of the appetite: but probably it was a superstition, or a sort of incantation in use amongst the Heathen nations.

V. 21. *My name is in him.*] When we recollect the ...y scriptures, which call an angel, that appeared to ...ple of God by the name, Jehovah, and Elohim, ...d, we cannot mistake the meaning of this expression, or be in doubt, who this Angel was, who had power on earth to forgive, or not to forgive sins, and in whom was the name of *Jehovah:* which seems naturally to mean the participation of the divine perfections, as well as acting with divine authority; as one with the Father, the brightness, or effulgency of his glory, and the express image of his person, (*Heb.* c. 1. v. 3.)

V. 28. *Hornets.*] We have reason to believe that this promise was literally accomplished, after the manner of the plagues of Egypt, in some one, or in many of their engagements with the Canaanites; though it be not any where recorded.

V. 31. *River.*] The river Euphrates, to which the territories extended in the days of David and Solomon; and were contracted afterwards only in punishment of their sins.

ma...
the pe...
that is ...

32 Thou

32 Thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor with their gods.

33 They shall not dwell in thy land, lest they make thee sin against me: for if thou serve their gods, it will surely be a snare unto thee.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. Moses delivering God's message to Israel, and their consent to enter into covenant with God according to it, v. 1—3. 2d. The covenant solemnly ratified with sacrifices, and the sprinkling of blood, v. 4—8. 3d. Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel going up to the mount, favoured with a vision of God, and feasting together before him, v. 9—11. 4th. Moses at God's command, attended part of the way by Joshua, ascending into the mount, and continuing there forty days, and forty nights, v. 12—18.

AND he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and worship ye afar off.

2 And

V. 33. *A snare unto thee.*] Entangling the people in sin, it would assuredly involve them in sufferings. All the latter part of this chapter, primarily relates to their national covenant, the solemn ratification of which is recorded in the next chapter: and only by way of accommodation to true believers, and to spiritual and eternal blessings.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How manifold are the occasions of, and temptations to sin in this evil world! He, who would keep a conscience void of offence towards God, and man, must not only watch against and subjugate his own covetousness, pride, resentment, envy, and sensuality; and resist such temptations as directly are addressed thereto: but he must take heed that his judgment be not biassed, and his heart prejudiced, by the authority, example, or reasonings of men, who are held in reputation for their wisdom, learning, and virtue; or by the influence of the rich and great; or by gratitude to benefactors, by natural affection to relations, or by partiality to beloved friends; or by fear of offending those, on whom he hath dependance, or from whom he hath expectations; or by reverence to superiors; or by popular clamours, or by a party spirit, or by vulgar reports; or by conformity to the maxims, customs, and fashions of the world; or even by good nature, and compassion for the poor and afflicted. For there is no passion, or propensity in the human heart, however amiable in its general exercise, which will not betray us into imprudence, injustice, and even impiety, except it is regulated by divine Grace, and subordinated to the fear and love of God. Under the Mosaic dispensation the divine law not only required the same equity, and truth; the same tenderness of men's reputation, and comfort, as well as the same regard to their liberty, and property; but even the same love to enemies, which are inculcated by the precepts of the Gospel; and the same disposition, however injured, or exasperated, to mortify malevolence, and to return good for evil: though the blind guides of the Jewish church were incapable of discerning it. This integrity, impartiality, and benevolence, united with a noble disinterestedness, great firmness, and boldness, and an habitual fear of God, and expectation of the great day of retribution, are peculiarly requisite in all persons who are concerned in the public administration of justice; as legislators, judges, magistrates, lawyers, juries, witnesses, prosecutors, &c. For when human wisdom has done its utmost, such persons will have manifold opportunities, and various strong temptations to wrest or mislead judgment; to the great injury and oppression of numbers; and even to the murder of the innocent and righteous. Such legal murders have in many ages and nations been extremely frequent: with considerable confidence, and gratitude we may however assert, that they are well guarded against in this favoured nation: but it is desirable that we could without hesitation add, "*and in all its distant* "*provinces.*" But wherever they are committed, they are the most malignant of all murders, and will be found so, at the day, "when the earth shall disclose her blood, "and no more cover her slain." Even true Christians have need not only to pray "lead us not into temptation," but to keep at a distance from all occasions of it. For there is a magnetic sympathy betwixt the evil which remains in our hearts, and that evil which is in the world: and when they come near together, they forcibly attract each other, until they come into contact: then the eyes of the wisest are blinded; and the words, and works of the righteous perverted. We have need therefore to be circumspect in every thing; for without much diligence and attention we cannot ourselves be saved, nor yet can we glorify God, and do good: but mere heedlessness will ruin our souls, dishonour God, and do mischief. We should then beware of covetousness, should study and pray for contentment with food and raiment, and should learn to expect and seek our daily bread from God, in the way, which he directs, and to trust him for the morrow. Then should we chearfully render to God, and to man their dues; and devote with pleasure to his service that portion of our time, which he requires, and count his sabbaths and ordinances to be feasts to our souls; and willingly impart a proportion of our little to the relief of others still poorer than ourselves, though we had nothing to depend upon in future but his providence, and promise. Thus under the guidance, and banner of the great Angel of the covenant, in whom is the name of Jehovah; obeying his voice; submitting to his will; fearing nothing but his indignation, and failing of his forgiveness; desiring the comforts of his Spirit, depending on his arm, and expecting the fulfilment of his promises; we shall march forward towards the heavenly Canaan, through hosts of opposing foes, whilst he doth make us daily more than conquerors. And though it is not his will to destroy our inward enemies all at once, but

2 And Moſes alone ſhall come near the LORD: but they ſhall not come nigh, neither ſhall the people go up with him.

3 And Moſes came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people anſwered with one voice, and ſaid, All the words which the LORD hath ſaid, will we do.

4 And Moſes wrote all the words of the LORD, and roſe up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Iſrael.

5 And he ſent young men of the children of Iſrael, which offered burnt-offerings, and ſacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6 And Moſes took half of the blood, and put *it* in baſons; and half of the blood he ſprinkled on the altar.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they ſaid, All that the LORD hath ſaid, will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Moſes took the blood, and ſprinkled *it* on the people, and ſaid, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all theſe words.

9 Then went up Moſes and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and ſeventy of the elders of Iſrael.

10 And they ſaw the God of Iſrael: and *there was* under his feet, as it were a paved work

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by little and little, yet they ſhall finally be extirpated; and he will take occaſion from their exiſtence and oppoſition to diſplay his own glory, and to promote our good: ſo that the whole ſhall iſſue in deeper humility, in more admiring love, and ardent gratitude for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *He ſaid unto Moſes.*] Moſes had been receiving laws from God ever ſince, "he drew "near to the thick darkneſs, where God was." (ch. 20. v. 21). Though probably he had not aſcended to the ſummit of the mountain, "into the midſt of the cloud," as we read that he did, at the cloſe of this chapter. But he is now ſent down to the people, with thoſe laws, which he had already received, to ratify the covenant before ſpoken of.

Worſhip ye afar off.] Theſe perſons were to come up unto the Lord, that is nearer than the people; yet they were not to aſcend to the top of the mount, as Moſes did; but to worſhip reverently at that diſtance.

V. 3. *All the words—and all the judgments*, &c.] All thoſe judicial laws, moral precepts, cautions, and promiſes, which he had received.

V. 4. *Moſes wrote*, &c.] The people having a ſecond time, after hearing the law, conſented to enter into covenant, and be obedient, Moſes wrote, as is probable, the four foregoing chapters in a book, as the terms, and tenor of their *national* covenant, which was now to be ſolemnly ratified: for ſuch it muſt be; the covenant of works has nothing to do with altars, ſacrifices, and the ſprinkling of blood; and the covenant of Grace is not made with whole nations, or collective bodies of people of divers characters; but only repreſentatively with Chriſt as the ſurety of the Elect; and perſonally with true believers. But whilſt it was made with the nation of Iſrael with reſpect to their outward bleſſings, it was a "ſhadow of "good things to come:" (*Heb.* c. 10. v. 1.) and had many things in it, which accord to the ſituation of thoſe, who live under an outward diſpenſation of the Goſpel, and have God's ordinances, and oracles amongſt them.

Builded an altar—and twelve pillars.] The altar ſeems to have been intended to denote God's preſence as a party in this covenant; and the twelve pillars, the twelve tribes of Iſrael as the other party: perhaps not without reference to the hardneſs of their ſtony hearts. Betwixt theſe two covenanting parties Moſes acted as a typical mediator.

V. 5. *Young men.*] It does not appear whether theſe were the ſame perſons, who are called prieſts, (c. 19. v. 22.) or not. But in this tranſaction they acted only as aſſiſtants to Moſes, who officiated as prieſt in this, and ſeveral other inſtances.

V. 6—8.] The blood was ſprinkled on the altar, on the book, and on the people; (ſome conjecture that it was ſprinkled on the pillars, which repreſented the people.) This implied, that the covenant was made with them only through the blood of the atoning ſacrifice: that neither their perſons, their moral obedience, or religious ſervices, would meet with acceptance with a holy God, except through the ſhedding and ſprinkling of blood: that in this way, being purged from ſin, they might be preſented unto, and accepted of God: and that the bleſſings, granted them even by their *national covenant*, were all of mercy; and that though they were only ſecured unto them during their obedience; yet that the Lord would deal with them in kindneſs, and not conſtrue every act of diſobedience into a forfeiture of the covenant. In this manner was this buſineſs tranſacted before all the people: and thus the ſinner by faith in the blood of Chriſt, and through his mediation, enters into covenant with God, receives the law from his merciful hands, as a rule of duty; and having his heart ſprinkled from an evil conſcience; and his perſon, and all his ſervices preſented as ſprinkled with the atoning blood of Chriſt, devotes himſelf to God, and renders him willing, and acceptable obedience: though he be a poor, guilty, polluted ſinner, approaching a God of infinite majeſty, juſtice, and holineſs. (See *Heb.* c. 9. v. 18—22.)

V. 10. *And they ſaw the God of Iſrael.*] This ſtrong expreſſion, and that which follows, "*under his feet*," &c. incline

work of a ſapphire-ſtone, and as it were the body of heaven in *his* clearneſs.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Iſrael he laid not his hand: alſo they ſaw God, and did eat and drink.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of ſtone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayeſt teach them.

13 And Moſes roſe up, and his miniſter Joſhua: and Moſes went up into the mount of God.

14 And he ſaid unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: And behold, Aaron and Hur *are* with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

15 And Moſes went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.

16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it ſix days: and the ſeventh day he called unto Moſes out of the midſt of the cloud.

17 And the ſight of the glory of the LORD *was* like devouring fire on the top of the mount, in the eyes of the children of Iſrael.

18 And Moſes went into the midſt of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moſes was in the mount forty days, and forty nights.

CHAP.

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incline many commentators to underſtand this viſion, of a viſible appearance in human form of the Son of God, anticipating his incarnation; as he certainly did appear to the patriarchs and others. And though the expreſſion, (*Deut.* c. 4. v. 15.) "Ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude," ſeems to militate againſt this opinion: yet it may be anſwered, that that was ſpoken concerning the people in general, as receiving the law in an audible voice from the mount: but this of a private audience of a few individuals ſome time after. It is ſaid of Moſes, (*Num.* c. 12. v. 8.) "The *ſimilitude* of the Lord ſhall he behold."—Chriſt is the image of the inviſible God; the effulgency of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. The two appearances under conſideration are a direct contraſt: the former is that of the holy Lawgiver and Judge in terrible majeſty delivering to ſinners the miniſtration of condemnation: the latter is that of God our Saviour, through the ſacrifice, and ſprinkling of blood, admitting believers into communion with himſelf. Now it is only in Chriſt that God manifeſts himſelf as reconciled to ſinners, or admits one of them into communion with him. God in Chriſt was, and is the God of Iſrael. Of him this was a gracious diſcovery: but whether in a viſible human form or no, I leave the reader to determine for himſelf.

Under his feet, &c.] If we reject the opinion of a viſible appearance in human form, this muſt be underſtood figuratively, of *that* which appeared beneath the viſible glory, of which no deſcription could be given. "This "was like a pavement of ſapphires, and like the azure "ſky on a clear day." (*Ezek.* c. 1. v. 26—28.)

V. 11. *He laid not his hand.*] Though they had a far more diſtinct viſion of the glory of God, than at the delivery of the law, when they ſaw nothing but clouds, darkneſs, fire, and tempeſt: yet through the ſacrifice, and the ſprinkling of blood; through the Mediator, and the covenant now ratified, this glory inſpired not terror, but confidence; they received no hurt, but comfort; and feaſted upon the ſacrifices in the preſence of the Lord.—Thus the believer ſeeing in the face of Jeſus Chriſt far clearer diſcoveries of the glorious juſtice, and holineſs of God, than ever he ſaw under his moſt terrifying convictions; yet feels no diſmay, as before, nor receives any harm; but with humble confidence, through the mediation of the Saviour, holds communion with a holy God, and is inſpired with ſweet comfort, peace, and joy.

V. 13. *His miniſter Joſhua.*] Joſhua was to be the ſucceſſor of Moſes, and was thus trained up under him to communion with God; and gradually had honour put upon him before the people.

V. 16. *Six days*, &c.] So long Moſes waited without, before he was introduced into the Lord's more immediate preſence. Doubtleſs he, and Joſhua ſpent the time in holy conference, and in fervent exerciſes of devotion. Theſe ſix days do not appear to have been a part of the forty days, and forty nights, afterwards mentioned, during which Moſes faſted: but we have reaſon to think that both Moſes and Joſhua, had manna, &c. to eat, at this time; and Joſhua during the forty days, which he appears to have waited here for Moſes' return; and which doubtleſs he ſpent in prayer, and meditation.

V. 18. *Moſes went up*, &c.] Encouraged by the call of God, and the inward comforts of his grace, he entered with holy boldneſs into that cloud, which to Iſrael appeared as a devouring fire: there he continued forty days, and forty nights, favoured with divine diſcoveries, and receiving further inſtructions for the people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the miniſtry of the Goſpel, and in the inſpired writings, we have not only all the words, and judgments, which Moſes received from the Lord; but all the meſſage of love, which the only begotten of the Father brought to ſinners, laid before us, and propoſed to us. Having therefore God's oracles, and ordinances amongſt us, we are under a diſpenſation of mercy, and have outward ſigns, and pledges of the good-will of God to ſinners. Numbers outwardly conſent to, and receive the external ſeals of his covenant, eat and drink in his preſence, and hear him teach in their ſtreets, to whom the Judge at laſt will ſay, "I tell you, I know you not "whence

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1ſt. God commanding Moſes to raiſe a voluntary collection from the Iſraelites for the building of the tabernacle, v. 1—9. 2d. Giving directions for the making of the ark of the covenant, and of the mercy-ſeat, v. 10—22. 3d. And for the table of ſhew-bread, v. 23—30. 4th. And for the golden candleſtick, with the tongs, and ſnuff-diſhes thereof, v. 31—40.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart, ye ſhall take my offering.

3 And this *is* the offering which ye ſhall take of them; gold, and ſilver, and braſs,

4 And blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen, and goat's *hair*.

5 And rams ſkins died red, and badgers ſkins, and ſhittim-wood,

6 Oil for the light, ſpices for anointing oil and for ſweet incenſe,

7 Onyx-ſtones, and ſtones to be ſet in the ephod and in the breaſt-plate.

8 And let them make me a ſanctuary; that I may dwell amongſt them.

9 Ac-

" whence ye are, depart from me all ye workers of ini-" quity." (*Luke*, c. 13. v. 25—28.) And theſe will be a prey to a more terrible devouring fire, than that which afterwards conſumed Nadab, and Abihu. We muſt therefore not only " ſee, that we refuſe not him that " ſpeaketh;" but, " whilſt we think we ſtand, we muſt " take heed leſt we fall:" and be very careful that we reſt not in outward privileges, forms, or notions; or in any thing ſhort of the experience of the efficacy of divine Grace upon the heart, and the ſeal of the Holy Spirit, which is the earneſt of our inheritance. The true Iſraelite hears the awful words of God's moſt holy law, and is filled with a conſciouſneſs of guilt, and a fear of wrath; until he hears alſo the ſweet words of mercy, and grace: hearing of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and the covenant made in, by, and through him, with all believers, he by faith applies for this ſalvation, and accedes to this covenant; and by the ſprinkling of the Redeemer's blood has " his conſcience purged from dead works to " ſerve the living God:" then he receives from his reconciled Father's hands the book of the law, as it were ſprinkled alſo with blood, as the rule of his future delightful obedience; and therewith the ſpirit of adoption inclining and enabling him thereto. Thus the covenant is conſented to, and ratified: now he has acceſs to God upon a mercy-ſeat, ſees his glory in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, enjoys communion with him, and is thereby encouraged to ſerve him in righteouſneſs, and true holineſs. And though his future life be not all one continued feaſt upon divine conſolations; yet from time to time he is thus favoured; and has generally " the peace of God, " which paſſeth all underſtanding, keeping his heart and " mind through Chriſt Jeſus;" except when by ſin he grieves the Spirit, or brings down upon himſelf the chaſtening rod of his loving Father.

But let us not forget to obſerve, that they, who would draw near to God, muſt not only come at his call, but wait for him in faith, and patience, and not be weary of ſo doing: that the comforts of communion with God will compenſate for the want of all other comforts; and that the power of divine Grace can raiſe a man above the cravings of thoſe inclinations, which otherwiſe are moſt importunate; and whilſt a man is enabled to approach with boldneſs to the mercy-ſeat of a reconciled Father, and finds it good to be there, he will not quickly be willing to depart thence. Finally, they, who would be honoured of God in important ſervices, muſt be willing to begin low, muſt be faithful in a little, and muſt ſpend much time in ſolitude, prayer, and meditation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1. *The Lord ſpake*, &c.] Doubtleſs Moſes in the mount, as Paul in the third heaven, ſaw and heard very glorious, and wonderful things; but it was not lawful or poſſible to utter them; and he reports nothing to the people, but what had reference to their duty.

V. 2. *Willingly with his heart.*] Of the ſpoils of the Egyptians, every one of them was to offer for the eſtabliſhment of religious worſhip amongſt them, according as he was diſpoſed in his heart, not extorted by compulſion, nor regulated by preſcription; for the obedience unto death of Chriſt, which was in all this typified, derived its value from being entirely voluntary: and no ſervice, which we can render, is any further acceptable, than as it ſprings freely from a willing mind, (2 *Cor.* c. 8. v. 12. c. 9. v. 5—15.)

V. 4. *Blue and purple*, &c.] That is wool, or other materials for working into cloths, died of theſe colours, which were highly valued: for the Lord had ſo ordered it, that they had received of the Egyptians all theſe ſeveral particulars towards building the tabernacle; which not only intimated favour to the Gentiles; but repreſented the uſe, which God oft makes of the abilities, and ſubſtance of thoſe, who are ſtrangers to true religion, in ſupporting, and promoting it.

V. 8. *A ſanctuary*, &c.] A holy habitation for the Lord's immediate reſidence. This was intended for a viſible pledge, and token of the Lord's inviſible reſidence amongſt them, where he was preſent to protect, inſtruct, guide, and govern them; to pardon their ſins, to accept their ſervices, and to ſupply their wants. The tabernacle was alſo a type of the human nature of Jeſus Chriſt, " in " whom

9 According to all that I ſhew thee, *after* the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the inſtruments thereof, even ſo ſhall ye make *it*.

10 And they ſhall make an ark *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits and a half *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

11 And thou ſhalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without ſhalt thou overlay it: and ſhalt make upon it a crown of gold round about.

12 And thou ſhalt caſt four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in the four corners thereof; and two rings *ſhall be* in the one ſide of it, and two rings in the other ſide of it.

13 And thou ſhalt make ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with gold.

14 And thou ſhalt put the ſtaves into the rings, by the ſides of the ark, that the ark may be borne with them.

15 The ſtaves ſhall be in the rings of the ark: they ſhall not be taken from it.

16 And thou ſhall put into the ark the teſtimony which I ſhall give thee.

17 And thou ſhalt make a mercy-ſeat *of* pure gold: two cubits and a half *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit and a half the breadth thereof.

18 And thou ſhalt make two cherubims *of* gold: *of* beaten work ſhalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy-ſeat.

19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end: *even* of the mercy-ſeat ſhall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

20 And the cherubims ſhall ſtretch forth *their* wings on high, covering the mercy-ſeat with their wings, and their faces *ſhall look* one to another: toward the mercy-ſeat ſhall the faces of the cherubims be.

21 And thou ſhalt put the mercy-ſeat above upon the ark, and in the ark thou ſhalt put the teſtimony that I ſhall give thee.

22 And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee, from above the mercy-ſeat, from between the two cheru-

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"whom dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." (*Col.* c. 2. v. 9. c. 1. v. 19. *John*, c. 2. v. 19—21.) Of the Church of God, which as one with him, is a ſpiritual houſe: of every true believer, who as a part of that great temple, is "an habitation of God through the "Spirit:" (*Eph.* c. 2. v. 22.) And of heaven, where the preſence of God is viſibly diſplayed, and he dwells amongſt his holy angels, and redeemed ſinners, as their everlaſting felicity; and accepts their holy worſhip.

V. 9. *The tabernacle.*] In the wilderneſs, and for ſome time in Canaan, the ſanctuary was only a tent, or moveable building; but afterwards a temple was built upon mount Zion; and theſe typical ordinances were confined to one place: this ſeems to mark the difference between the Church on earth, and the Church in heaven: wandering and journeying through this wilderneſs, we take our religion, and the ordinances of it, along with us all the way: but in heaven there is reſt for ever for the Church of God, and no more removals.

V. 10. *An ark*, &c.] This was a cheſt made of wood, which was not liable to rot, of ſomewhat more than four feet in length, and two feet and an half in breadth, and in thickneſs, plated all over both within and without with plates of gold, with a border, or corniſh of gold round about; and covered with a covering all of maſſy gold, which was called, the propitiatory, or the mercy-ſeat. In this ark were put the two tables of ſtone, which contained the law of ten commandments: it was placed in the holy of holies; before it was the blood of the ſacrifice ſprinkled and the incenſe burnt by the high prieſt, on the day of atonement: and above it appeared the viſible glory, which was the ſymbol of the divine preſence. This was an evident type of Chriſt, in his ſinleſs human nature, which ſaw no corruption, in perſonal union with his divine nature, magnifying the law, and covering our tranſgreſſions of it, by "having it in his heart," obeying it in his life, and atoning for our ſins againſt it by his death: through the ſprinkling of his blood, and the interceſſion, which as our High Prieſt, he makes in the true holy of holies, God appears to ſinners with mild glory, upon a mercy-ſeat; and accepts the ſervices of, dwells amongſt, and abundantly bleſſes thoſe, who believe in him.

V. 16. *The teſtimony.*] That is the tables of the law, which teſtified God's authority over the Iſraelites, and his regard for them, and his preſence with them: they alſo teſtified, that whilſt he was merciful to them, he required obedience from them: and they would teſtify againſt them, if they neglected, or forſook his ſervice, and worſhip.

V. 18. *Two cherubims.*] Theſe were emblematical repreſentations of the angels, "deſiring to look down "into the myſteries of redeeming love," (1 *Pet.* c. 1. v. 12.) therefore they were formed with their faces towards the mercy-ſeat, as poring upon it, and the myſteries, which it contained: and as "becoming miniſtering "ſpirits to the heirs of ſalvation," and being *joint worſhippers* of the ſame God of grace; even of our Emmanuel, "God dwelling in human nature. (*Heb.* c. 1. v. 6. 14. *Rev.* c. 5. v. 9—12.)

bims which *are* upon the ark of the teſtimony, of all *things* which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Iſrael.

23 Thou ſhalt alſo make a table *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

24 And thou ſhalt overlay it with pure gold, and make thereto a crown of gold round about.

25 And thou ſhalt make unto it a border of an hand-breadth round about, and thou ſhalt make a golden crown to the border thereof round about.

26 And thou ſhalt make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings in the four corners that *are* on the four feet thereof.

27 Over againſt the border ſhall the rings be for places of the ſtaves to bear the table.

28 And thou ſhalt make the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be borne with them.

29 And thou ſhalt make the diſhes thereof, and ſpoons thereof, and covers thereof, and bowls thereof to cover withal: *of* pure gold ſhalt thou make them.

30 And thou ſhalt ſet upon the table, ſhew-bread before me alway.

31 And thou ſhalt make a candleſtick *of* pure gold, *of* beaten work ſhall the candleſtick be made: his ſhaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers ſhall be of the ſame.

32 And ſix branches ſhall come out of the ſides of it: three branches of the candleſtick out of the one ſide, and three branches of the candleſtick out of the other ſide.

33 Three bowls made like unto almonds, *with* a knop and a flower in one branch; and three bowls made like almonds in the other branch, *with* a knop and a flower: ſo in the ſix branches that come out of the candleſtick.

34 And in the candleſtick *ſhall be* four bowls made like unto almonds, *with* their knops and their flowers.

35 And *there ſhall be* a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, according to the ſix branches that proceed out of the candleſtick.

36 Their knops and their branches ſhall be of the ſame: all it *ſhall be* one beaten work *of* pure gold.

37 And thou ſhalt make the ſeven lamps thereof: and they ſhall light the lamps thereof, that they may give light over againſt it.

38 And the tongs thereof, and the ſnuff-diſhes thereof, *ſhall be of* pure gold.

39 *Of* a talent of pure gold ſhall he make it, with all theſe veſſels.

40 And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was ſhewed thee in the mount.

CHAP.

V. 23—30.] This table, with its furniture, and uſe, ſeems to typify, the communion, which in his ordinances the Lord holds with his redeemed people; the proviſions of his houſe; the feaſts, which they ſometimes are favoured with, and the food for their ſouls, which they always find, when they hunger after it; and the delight, which he takes in their perſons, and ſervices, as preſented in Chriſt Jeſus before him. (*Rev.* c. 3. v. 20. *Canticles*, c. 5. v. 1.)

V. 31—39.] This candleſtick, with its furniture and uſe, repreſents the light of God's word and Spirit, in and through Chriſt Jeſus, afforded in this dark world to his believing people, to direct their worſhip, and their obedience, and to adminiſter to their conſolations. The tabernacle had no other light but this; no more has the Church of God on earth; but in heaven "the Lord will be unto her "an everlaſting light, and God himſelf her glory." (*Iſai.* c. 60. v. 19.) Many things here regulated concerning theſe ſacred utenſils, were either intended for the conveniency of removing them, or for ornament: for the religion of Chriſt is appointed to accompany us through life, and is fitted to be diffuſed through all nations: and there is in him all beauty, and glory; and he adorns his church with the graces of the Spirit, and all the beauty of holineſs. They were all appointed to be made of pure and ſolid gold, the moſt precious of metals; for Chriſt himſelf is moſt precious in himſelf, and in the eſtimation of the Father, and of his people, and of all the inhabitants of heaven. His Church alſo conſiſts of the excellent of the earth: and he requires us to conſecrate unto him the beſt, and moſt valuable of every thing, of our time, of our ſubſtance, of our abilities, and eſpecially of our affections; and he will accept of nothing, but that which is the very beſt of the kind.

V. 40. *Look that thou*, &c.] The whole of the Moſaic ceremonial was of the nature of inſtituted worſhip, which hath its whole foundation in the ſovereign appointment of God; and was alſo in all things typical of Chriſt, in his ſeveral characters and offices: therefore it was to be exactly according to the pattern ſhewn in the mount. Uniformity, therefore, in worſhip, as far as the tabernacle, and temple ſervice was concerned; and exact conformity

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains directions, 1st. Concerning the inner curtains, the second curtains, and the two-fold covering of the sanctuary, v. 1—14. 2d. Concerning the boards, sockets, and bars thereof, v. 15—30. 3d. Concerning the vail, and the separation between the holy place, and the most holy place; the disposal of the furniture in the sanctuary, and the hanging for the door of it, v. 31—37.

MOREOVER thou shalt make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: *with* cherubims of cunning work shalt thou make them.

2 The length of one curtain *shall be* eight and twenty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain, four cubits: and every one of the curtains shall have one measure.

3 The five curtains shall be coupled together one to another: and *other* five curtains *shall be* coupled one to another.

4 And thou shalt make loops of blue upon the edge of the one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling: and likewise shalt thou make in the uttermost edge of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second.

5 Fifty loops shalt thou make in the one curtain, and fifty loops shalt thou make in the edge of the curtain that *is* in the coupling of the second; that the loops may take hold one of another.

6 And thou shalt make fifty taches of gold, and couple the curtains together with the taches: and it shall be one tabernacle.

7 And

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to a prescribed rule, was evidently the Old Testament plan; (though is was very seldom adhered to) For there way is but one of a sinner's justification, and sanctification. But the same exact uniformity amongst ourselves, and conformity to a prescribed rule, in the *minute externals* of worship, could never be intended under the new dispensation: the very disputes, which this subject has so long occasioned, are a demonstration that no such exact, and explicit rules subsist; for if they did, the controversy must cease of course, or rather could never have been started. The old ritual is evidently antiquated, and nothing of the same kind is substituted in it's place: therefore a latitude is allowed us of God; and we have no right to censure, despise, condemn, or impose our own sentiments, or practices upon others: only we must remember, that we are accountable to God for the use, which we make of this liberty; and must take heed that we do not reject the truths, or commandments of God to keep our own traditions; or lay any stress, or place any dependance upon any thing of this kind, further than a mere circumstance, expedient in our judgment for our own more regular attendance on God's ordinances, profession of his truths, and obedience to his commandments. (See note, *Ex.* c. 20. v. 4.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In all things the Lord is beforehand with us, and we can present nothing to him, but what was previously his gift to us: and in the great concerns of salvation, his love suggested the gracious design, his wisdom formed the wondrous plan: the Father loved the world, and gave his Son; the Son loved us, and gave himself a sacrifice for our sins; his word reveals this salvation; his providence by special designation hath sent it to us; the ordinances, in which he will meet us, are of his appointment, and are rendered effectual by his blessing; and his preventing grace produces at first the willing mind to attend thereto. But whilst he reveals himself in Christ Jesus, as a reconciled Father upon a mercy-seat, affords us the light of his word, and promises the teaching of his holy Spirit, to direct us to the bread of life, and guide us into sweet communion with him, that we may feast upon the plenteousness of his holy temple: he reasonably requires that we diligently attend on his ordinances, come to his mercy-seat, enquire his will, feed upon the bread of life, seek for, and walk in the light of his word, and Spirit: and that we present our bodies, and souls, and substance, and all we are, to him, to be employed according to his commandment, and allowance: and that we, with a willing and liberal mind, according to the ability, which he giveth us, do actually separate to his service, both for the support of religion, and communicating to the poor, a proportion of our substance, to prove the sincerity of our faith and love. If we have no heart so to do, we have no proof that we are his true people: if we have indeed a willing mind, and give the best we have in simplicity, we may take the comfort of this good evidence; but we must give God the glory of his grace bestowed upon us; (2 *Cor.* c. 8. v. 1.) And though no exact proportion be prescribed, yet this the Lord saith, "that he which soweth sparingly, shall "reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, "shall reap also bountifully:" That is in peace, and assurance on earth, and in abundant glory in heaven. Finally, let us remember, that we are the temples of the Holy Ghost, have the law of God in our hearts, live a life of communion with God, feast on his ordinances, and are the light of the world, if indeed we are Christians. God help us to try ourselves by, and walk according to this view of Christianity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 6. *One tabernacle.*] These rich curtains are generally thus called. They were formed of the most valuable materials, and wrought with the most exquisite skill; they were embroidered with the emblematical

7 And thou ſhalt make curtains *of* goats *hair* to be a covering upon the tabernacle: eleven curtains ſhalt thou make.

8 The length of one curtain *ſhall be* thirty cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: and the eleven curtains *ſhall be all* of one meaſure.

9 And thou ſhalt couple five curtains by themſelves, and ſix curtains by themſelves, and ſhalt double the ſixth curtain in the fore-front of the tabernacle.

10 And thou ſhalt make fifty loops on the edge of the one curtain *that is* outmoſt in the coupling, and fifty loops in the edge of the curtain which coupleth the ſecond.

11 And thou ſhalt make fifty taches of braſs, and put the taches into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one.

12 And the remnant that remaineth of the curtains of the tent, the half-curtain that remaineth, ſhall hang over the back-ſide of the tabernacle.

13 And a cubit on the one ſide, and a cubit on the other ſide of that which remaineth in the length of the curtains of the tent, it ſhall hang over the ſides of the tabernacle, on this ſide, and on that ſide, to cover it.

14 And thou ſhalt make a covering for the tent, *of* rams ſkins died red, and a covering above *of* badgers ſkins.

15 And thou ſhalt make boards for the tabernacle, *of* ſhittim-wood, ſtanding up.

16 Ten cubits *ſhall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and an half *ſhall be* the breadth of one board.

17 Two tenons *ſhall there be* in one board, ſet in order one againſt another: thus ſhalt thou make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

18 And thou ſhalt make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards on the ſouth ſide, ſouthward.

19 And thou ſhalt make forty ſockets of ſilver, under the twenty boards: two ſockets under one board for his two tenons, and two ſockets under another board for his two tenons.

20 And for the ſecond ſide of the tabernacle on the north ſide, *there ſhall be* twenty boards,

21 And their forty ſockets *of* ſilver: two ſockets under one board, and two ſockets under another board.

22 And for the ſides of the tabernacle weſtward, thou ſhalt make ſix boards.

23 And two boards ſhalt thou make for the corners of the tabernacle in the two ſides.

24 And they ſhall be coupled together beneath, and they ſhall be coupled together above the head of it unto one ring: thus ſhall it be for them both; they ſhall be for the two corners.

25 And they ſhall be eight boards, and their ſockets *of* ſilver, ſixteen ſockets: two ſockets under one board, and two ſockets under another board.

26 And thou ſhalt make bars *of* ſhittim-wood: five for the boards of the one ſide of the tabernacle,

27 And five bars for the boards of the other ſide of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the ſide of the tabernacle for the two ſides weſtward.

28 And

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tical repreſentation of angels, as joint worſhippers of Iſrael's God; and joined together, by taches, or buttons, of gold, and loops: theſe were ſpread over the top of this moveable building, as its roof, and hung down nearly to the ground on each ſide.

V. 7—14.] Theſe curtains of meaner materials, being made both longer, and broader, were caſt over, and completely covered the others, and were defended from the weather by a two-fold covering of ſkins. The whole repreſents the perſon, and doctrine of Chriſt, and the Church of true Chriſtians, and all heavenly things; which are outwardly, and to the carnal eye, mean: but are inwardly, and in the ſight of God, exceedingly glorious, and precious. The ſecure protection, which he prepares for thoſe, who are inwardly precious in his ſight, may alſo be denoted: and the unity of the whole, formed of ſo many pieces, and of ſuch different materials, into one covering of the ſanctuary, repreſents the ſpiritual temple formed of perſons of different nations, diſpoſitions, abilities, and attainments, compacted together into one church, by the uniting influence of the Spirit of love.

V. 16—29.] The ſockets of ſilver, each weighing a talent, that is about an hundred weight, were placed in rows upon the ground; forty on the ſouth, forty on the north, ſixteen on the weſt, and two at each of the corners on the weſt end. In every couple of theſe ſockets, and by

28 And the middle bar in the midſt of the boards ſhall reach from end to end.

29 And thou ſhalt overlay the boards with gold, and make their rings *of* gold *for* places for the bars: and thou ſhalt overlay the bars with gold.

30 And thou ſhalt rear up the tabernacle according to the faſhion thereof which was ſhewed thee in the mount,

31 And thou ſhalt make a vail *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubims ſhall it be made.

32 And thou ſhalt hang it upon four pillars of ſhittim-*wood*, overlaid with gold: their hooks *ſhall be of* gold, upon the four ſockets of ſilver.

33 And thou ſhalt hang up the vail under the taches, that thou mayeſt bring in thither within the vail, the ark of the teſtimony: and the vail ſhall divide unto you, between the holy *place* and the moſt holy.

34 And thou ſhalt put the mercy-ſeat upon the ark of the teſtimony, in the moſt holy *place*.

35 And thou ſhalt ſet the table without the vail, and the candleſtick over againſt the table on the ſide of the tabernacle toward the ſouth: and thou ſhalt put the table on the north ſide.

36 And thou ſhalt make an hanging for the door of the tent, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work.

37 And thou ſhalt make for the hanging, five pillars *of* ſhittim-*wood*, and overlay them with gold, *and* their hooks *ſhall be of* gold: and thou ſhalt caſt five ſockets of braſs for them.

CHAP.

by two tenons fitted to the hollows of them, were fixed a ſubſtantial board of ſhittim-wood, covered with plates of gold. Thus a wall was formed on the two ſides, and on the weſt end of the ſanctuary: which was further held together by bars of wood covered with gold, that ran through rings of gold, and compacted the whole together ſo cloſely, that it could not be ſhaken much eaſier, than a ſtone building. Over this the curtains were ſpread. Though it was a moveable ſtructure, and eaſily taken down, and put together again, it's materials were very coſtly, and it's ſtability very great. In all which it was a type of the Church of God, "built upon the foundation "of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being "the chief corner ſtone; in whom all the building fitly "framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the "Lord," (*Eph.* c. 2. v. 20, 21.)

V. 31—33.] This vail ſeparated the holy place, or what the apoſtle calls the firſt tabernacle, (*Heb.* c. 9. v. 6.) from the *moſt holy place:* and it was hung upon pillars fixed in ſockets of ſilver, in the manner of the boards. Of theſe things we need *at preſent* ſpeak no more, than juſt to hint, that ſin had ſo excluded man from the gracious preſence of God, that nothing ſhort of the death of Chriſt could remove the obſtacle, rend the vail, and give him free acceſs with boldneſs to the mercy-ſeat.

V. 36, 37.] This hanging formed the eaſt end of the building, and the entrance into the ſanctuary. In veneration of the riſing ſun, the Heathens worſhipped towards the eaſt. But Iſrael was required to proteſt againſt that idolatry, by turning their backs upon the eaſt, in worſhipping God. For we muſt diſregard the moſt precious creatures, when they would divert our homage, and affections from the Creator.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

With this typical deſcription of Chriſt, and his Church before our eyes, let us aſk ourſelves what is our judgment of theſe matters? Do we ſee any glory in the perſon of Chriſt? any excellency in his character, or preciouſneſs in his ſalvation; or wiſdom in the doctrine of the croſs? do we perceive any beauty in holineſs, or any amiableneſs in the character of Chriſtians? Theſe things are hid under external meanneſs from the carnal eye of the ſuperficial obſerver; but are diſcovered by the ſpiritual eye of every true believer; who ſees through the exterior covering the internal glory, and hidden excellency, which are in heavenly things. As our judgment, choice and conſequent practice are, ſo is our ſtate towards God. "To you that believe, He is precious." Let us alſo examine ourſelves as to the ſtate of our own hearts; whether we poſſeſs an *inward* conſciouſneſs of dependance on, and love to the Lord, hatred of ſin, and deſire after holineſs, and a purpoſe of heart through divine Grace to glorify him? Will our religion bear examination? and are we more careful to approve our hearts to God, than our characters to men? (1 *Pet.* c. 3. v. 4.) Notwithſtanding all our imperfections, this ſtate of mind is in the ſight of God of great price. The hypocrite is the reverſe of all this: he keeps up a ſpecious appearance before men; but he ſhrinks from examination; for "his inward part is "very wickedneſs," and God knows it. Thus alſo the Chriſtian's comfort, and his inheritance are not an outſide ſhew of mirth, and proſperity, covering an aching heart, and a ſoul doomed to deſtruction: but an inward ſweetneſs and peace unobſerved of men, and a glorious inheritance reſerved within the vail. Nay the mean appearance of the Church, and of the Chriſtian, is oft a ſe-

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains directions, 1ſt. Concerning the making of the brazen altar for burnt ſacrifice, v. 1—8. *2d. Concerning the court of the tabernacle with it's hangings, and entrance, v.* 9—19. *3d. Concerning the oil for the lamp, or candleſtick, with the ordering of it, v.* 20, 21.

AND thou ſhalt make an altar *of* ſhittim-wood, five cubits long, and five cubits broad: the altar ſhall be four-ſquare, and the height thereof *ſhall be* three cubits.

2 And thou ſhalt make the horns of it upon the four corners thereof: his horns ſhall be of the ſame: and thou ſhalt overlay it with braſs.

3 And thou ſhalt make his pans to receive his aſhes, and his ſhovels, and his baſons, and his fleſh-hooks, and his fire-pans: all the veſſels thereof thou ſhalt make *of* braſs.

4 And thou ſhalt make for it a grate of network of braſs; and upon the net ſhalt thou make four braſen rings in the four corners thereof.

5 And thou ſhalt put it under the compaſs of the altar beneath, that the net may be even to the midſt of the altar.

6 And thou ſhalt make ſtaves for the altar, ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with braſs.

7 And the ſtaves ſhall be put into the rings, and the ſtaves ſhall be upon the two ſides of the altar to bear it.

8 Hollow with boards ſhalt thou make it: as it was ſhewed thee in the mount, ſo ſhall they make *it*.

9 And thou ſhalt make the court of the tabernacle for the ſouth ſide, ſouthward: *there ſhall be* hangings for the court *of* fine twined linen of an hundred cubits long, for one ſide.

10 And the twenty pillars thereof, and their twenty ſockets *ſhall be of* braſs: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *ſhall be of* ſilver.

11 And likewiſe for the north ſide in length, *there ſhall be* hangings of an hundred *cubits* long, and his twenty pillars, and their twenty ſockets *of* braſs: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

12 And *for* the breadth of the court, on the weſt ſide, *ſhall be* hangings of fifty cubits: their pillars ten, and their ſockets ten.

13 And the breadth of the court on the eaſt ſide, eaſtward, *ſhall be* fifty cubits.

14 The hangings of one ſide *of the gate ſhall be* fifteen cubits: their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

15 And on the other ſide *ſhall be* hangings fifteen *cubits:* their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

16 And for the gate of the court *ſhall be* an hanging of twenty cubits, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, wrought with needle-work: *and* their pillars *ſhall be* four, and their ſockets four.

17 All the pillars round about the court, *ſhall be* filleted with ſilver: their hooks *ſhall be of* ſilver, and their ſockets *of* braſs.

18 The length of the court *ſhall be* an hundred cubits, and the breadth fifty every where, and the height five cubits, *of* fine twined linen, and their ſockets *of* braſs.

19 All the veſſels of the tabernacle in all the

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curity from perſecution, and from temptation. As every part of this ſpiritual building of God, in ſubſerviency to his power and love, conduces to the ſtability of the whole; let us conſider how much it behoves us to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: and let us watch againſt diſcontent, envy, ambition, and contention; and each in his proper place ſtudy to ſerve the common intereſts of genuine Chriſtianity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *An altar*, &c.] The altar mentioned, ch. 20. v. 24, ſeems to have only been intended for the preſent purpoſe, until further orders were given; and eſpecially for thoſe ſacrifices, with which the national covenant was ratified. (c. 24.)

V. 2. *Horns.*] A ſort of turrets, or pinnacles on the four corners of the altar; to which, at ſome times, the animals, about to be ſacrificed, were bound. (*Pſalm* 118. v. 17.) The altar was entirely covered with braſs, to prevent the wood being conſumed by the fire: as the human nature of Chriſt could not have ſupported the fire of the divine wrath for ſin; had it not been in union with his divinity.

V. 3. *Baſons.*] In theſe was received the blood of the ſacrifices, in order to it's being ſprinkled.

V. 9—19.] The tabernacle, when ſet up, was to be incloſed in a court, between fifty, and ſixty yards long, and between

the service thereof, and all the pins thereof, and all the pins of the court *shall be of* brass.

20 And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil-olive beaten, for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.

21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which *is* before the testimony; Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *It shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations, on the behalf of the children of Israel.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1st. The appointment of Aaron, and his sons to the priesthood, v. 1. 2d. The directions for making the holy garments for the high priest, consisting of the ephod and girdle; the breast-plate of judgment, with Urim, and Thummim; the robe of the ephod; the mitre, and the coat of fine linen, v. 2—39. 3d. Directions for making the garments of the other priests, v. 40—43.

AND take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister

between twenty-five, and thirty broad; formed by curtains hung upon brazen pillars, fixed in brazen sockets, after the manner of the boards of the sanctuary: and having an entrance at the east end, similar to the entrance of that building. Within this inclosure the priests, and Levites offered the sacrifices, and hither the people were admitted: the priests had access into the sanctuary; but none, except the high priest into the holy of holies, and that but one day in a year: yet was the whole people of Israel a kingdom of priests and an holy nation, compared with the Heathens. The whole is suited to teach us, how far sin hath separated betwixt us, and a holy God; and what difficulties bar our re-union: the whole evinces the falshood of that proud sentiment, which represents man's poor services, as *in themselves*, acceptable and even meritorious before God: for even this kingdom of priests could not approach the *very mercy-seat* of God, in their own persons, or with their own services, however costly; but only by their representative, their typical mediator, with the sprinkling of blood, and the burning of incense: these distinctions also represented the difference betwixt the visible nominal church, and the true spiritual Church, which alone hath access to, and communion with God.

V. 20, 21.] The candlestick with it's seven lamps would afford no light, without they were supplied with oil; and the oil must be kindled, and the lamps ordered by the priests; who tended them, it seems, all night.—Nor will even the word of God truly enlighten our hearts, without the unction of the Holy Ghost, (1 *John*, c. 2. v. 20. 27.) which is communicated to us through that great, High Priest, whom Aaron and his sons typified, and who walketh continually amidst his golden candlesticks: (*Rev.* c. 2. v. 1.) But ministers in opening and applying the word of God, and by their prayers for a blessing thereon; as well as Christians in their several situations, may be instrumental in diffusing abroad this divine light in this dark world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Of what vast importance in true religion, must the person, the priesthood, and the sacrifice of the Son of God be; when they are forced upon our attention in such a variety of types, and representations.—It is true that he is our prophet; and we must submit to his teaching; our king, and we must willingly obey him; our example, and we must imitate him.—But he is also our altar, our priest, our sacrifice, our Mediator; and we were never truly taught by him, nor ever yield him the obedience of faith, if he have not taught us to trust in him as such; to come to the Father, as lost sinners, through him, the only way, truth and life; and to draw all our sufficiency for obedience from his fulness, as the fountain of Grace, as well as to build on his merits, as the foundation of our hope.—Whilst we bless God that we are within the inclosure of his visible church, and favoured with the means of Grace, let us be careful that we rest not in this outward court of profession, but be of the number, who truly have fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.—And whether we are ministers, or private Christians, let us carefully tend the lamp of God's word, that we may both walk in the light ourselves, and be instrumental in communicating it to others.—Not forgetting to join our prayers, that he may send forth able ministers to diffuse this light all over the world: for, blessed be God, this light is not now confined to the Jewish tabernacle; but is a light to lighten the Gentiles, and for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1. *Take unto thee Aaron*, &c.] Intimations had before been given, but this is the first express appointment of Aaron, and his sons, to the priesthood. The heads of families had hitherto officiated as priests, and offered sacrifices without any special appointment; but now this was restricted, and confined to the family of Aaron only. Moses not only gave a proof of his disinterestedness, in leaving his own posterity in the rank of private Levites, whilst he confirmed Aaron and his posterity in this important, and honourable service: but gave also proof, that he acted entirely by divine directions. (*Heb.* c. 5. v. 4, 5.) Which is further evinced by the remarkable circumstance of no provision being made about the succession to the priesthood, in case Aaron's family should be extinct. This was, according to human observation, very probable, especially after the death of Nadab, and Abihu, and must have been follow-

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niſter unto me in the prieſt's office, *even* Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, Aaron's ſons.

2 And thou ſhalt make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, for glory and for beauty.

3 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto all *that are* wiſe-hearted, whom I have filled with the ſpirit of wiſdom, that they may make Aaron's garments to conſecrate him, that he may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office.

4 And theſe *are* the garments which they ſhall make; a breaſt-plate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle: and they ſhall make holy garments for Aaron thy brother, and his ſons, that he may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office.

5 And they ſhall take gold, and blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen.

6 And they ſhall make the ephod *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, *of* ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, with cunning work.

7 It ſhall have the two ſhoulder-pieces thereof joined at the two edges thereof; and *ſo* it ſhall be joined together.

8 And the curious girdle of the ephod which *is* upon it, ſhall be of the ſame, according to the work therefore; *even of* gold, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen.

9 And thou ſhalt take two onyx-ſtones, and grave on them the names of the children of Iſrael.

10 Six of their names on one ſtone, and *the other* ſix names of the reſt on the other ſtone, according to their birth.

11 With the work of an engraver in ſtone, *like* the engravings of a ſignet, ſhalt thou engrave the two ſtones, with the names of the children of Iſrael: thou ſhalt make them to be ſet in ouches of gold.

12 And thou ſhalt put the two ſtones upon the ſhoulders of the ephod, *for* ſtones of memorial unto the children of Iſrael. And Aaron ſhall bear their names before the LORD, upon his two ſhoulders for a memorial.

13 And thou ſhalt make ouches *of* gold;

14 And two chains *of* pure gold at the ends: *of* wreathen work ſhalt thou make them, and faſten the wreathen chains to the ouches.

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ed by the entire ſubverſion of the whole form of worſhip, inſtituted by Moſes: for it was fundamental thereto, that no perſon in any age, or in any caſe, ſhould officiate as prieſt, under the penalty of death, except he were of Aaron's family. Yet in entire confidence that God would provide for the continuance of the religion, which he had appointed; and being conſcious that he acted by his authority, he left the whole dependant on an apparent mere contingency; which human policy never would have done. But the providence of God took care of that, which was thus ſimply committed thereto; and the prieſts of the family of Aaron increaſed, and continued, as long as that diſpenſation continued, and until the new diſpenſation was introduced.

V. 2. *Holy garments.*] Whatever was ſeparated from common uſes, and conſecrated to the immediate ſervice of God, was called HOLY, whether it were perſon, or thing. Theſe garments were not only intended to diſtinguiſh the prieſts from the people, and to decorate, and render them, and their miniſtrations reſpected by the people: but they were emblematical of that holy converſation, and conduct, which ſhould ever be the "glory, "and beauty," the diſtinguiſhing mark of the miniſters of religion; without which their perſons, and their miniſtrations, will be had in contempt. And they were alſo, and more eſpecially typical of the glory of the divine majeſty, and the beauty of complete holineſs, which rendered Jeſus Chriſt ſuch an High Prieſt, as became us, and ſtamped infinite value on his whole work.

V. 3. *Wiſe-hearted*, &c.] Whoever is endued with ſkill to perform the ſervice aſſigned to him in the Church of God, and does it uprightly, and diligently, is "*wiſe-*"*hearted*," and will give God the glory of making him ſo. All natural wiſdom is the gift of God, but this ſeems to have been ſupernaturally beſtowed.

V. 6—7. *Ephod of gold.*] The ephod, or the prieſt's outer garment, was a ſhort coat without ſleeves. Ephods were worn by the inferior prieſts, and even by others on ſome occaſions, as by Samuel, when a child; and by David, when he danced before the ark: but they were made only of linen. This ephod of gold was formed of coſtly materials, and had much gold wrought up in it; it was girded on by a girdle curiouſly woven, or wrought of the ſame materials; and was buttoned upon each ſhoulder with a precious ſtone ſet in gold, on which was engraven the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael; which buttons were faſtened into chains of gold. Thus Chriſt appeared to John, "girt about the paps with a golden "girdle:" "righteouſneſs was the girdle of his loins;" "he was clad with zeal as a cloak," and "the govern-"ment was upon his ſhoulders:" for he bears the names of his people before God, as a memorial; and as their repreſentative, and advocate, with all his power, acts in their behalf, and maintains their cauſe.

15 And

15 And thou ſhalt make the breaſt-plate of judgment with cunning work: after the work of the ephod thou ſhalt make it; *of* gold, *of* blue, and *of* purple, and *of* ſcarlet, and *of* fine twined linen ſhalt thou make it.

16 Four-ſquare it ſhall be *being* doubled; a ſpan *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a ſpan *ſhall be* the breadth thereof.

17 And thou ſhalt ſet in it ſettings of ſtones, *even* four rows of ſtones: *the firſt* row *ſhall be* a ſardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: *this ſhall be* the firſt row.

18 And the ſecond row *ſhall be* an emerald, a ſapphire, and a diamond.

19 And the third row a ligure, an agate, and an amethyſt.

20 And the fourth row a beryl, and an onyx, and a jaſper: they ſhall be ſet in gold in their incloſings.

21 And the ſtones ſhall be with the names of the children of Iſrael, twelve, according to their names; *like* the engravings of a ſignet, every one with his name ſhall they be according to the twelve tribes.

22 And thou ſhalt make upon the breaſt-plate chains at the ends, *of* wreathen work, *of* pure gold.

23 And thou ſhalt make upon the breaſt-plate two rings of gold, and ſhalt put the two rings on the two ends of the breaſt-plate.

24 And thou ſhalt put the two wreathen *chains* of gold in the two rings *which are* on the ends of the breaſt-plate.

25 And *the other* two ends of the two wreathen *chains*, thou ſhalt faſten in the two ouches, and put *them* on the ſhoulder-pieces of the ephod before it.

26 And thou ſhalt make two rings of gold, and thou ſhalt put them upon the two ends of the breaſt-plate, in the border thereof, which *is* in the ſide of the ephod inward.

27 And two *other* rings of gold thou ſhalt make, and ſhalt put them on the two ſides of the ephod, underneath towards the fore-part thereof, over againſt the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

28 And they ſhall bind the breaſt-plate by the rings thereof, unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that *it* may be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breaſt-plate be not looſed from the ephod.

29 And Aaron ſhall bear the names of the the children of Iſrael in the breaſt-plate of judgment, upon his heart, when he goeth in unto the holy *place*, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

30 And thou ſhalt put in the breaſt-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they ſhall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the LORD: and Aaron ſhall bear the judgment of the children of Iſrael upon his heart, before the LORD continually.

31 And

V. 15—29.] The breaſt-plate of judgment was a doubled piece of cloth, a ſpan ſquare, richly wrought, and faſtened with chains of gold, &c. to the ephod of gold, upon the breaſt of the high prieſt. In this breaſt-plate were fixed twelve precious ſtones of different kinds, (an emblem of the divers excellencies of the various members of the Church of Chriſt, who amongſt them poſſeſs all that is truly valuable upon earth;) ſet in gold, each with the name of it's tribe engraved upon it. It is not certain whether Ephraim, and Manaſſeh had each a diſtinct ſtone, or whether they were accounted for one tribe in Joſeph: or whether Levi had any ſtone, or was accounted ſufficiently repreſented in the high prieſt himſelf, who was of that tribe. This breaſt-plate Aaron wore, when he went into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord; not only that he might preſent their cauſe before him; but that he himſelf might be reminded, that he acted in a public character, and was to have the intereſt of all the tribes of Iſrael, whom he repreſented, near his heart, without any prejudice, or partiality. This was an evident type of Chriſt, who has the name even of every individual of his people engraven upon his heart; and within the vail will be ſure never to forget, or neglect any of them, or of their concerns, however deſtitute or deſpicable they may be upon earth; but will care for them with his whole heart.

V. 30. *Urim and Thummim.*] It does not appear what theſe were; if indeed there was any thing put into the breaſt-plate called by theſe names: the paſſage may be rendered thus, "Thou ſhalt add to the breaſt-plate of "judgment illuminations, and perfections," &c. and it ſeems only to denote the uſe, which was to be made of it. When the high prieſt, either before the vail, or elſewhere, as Iſrael's repreſentative, put on this breaſt-plate of judgment with the Urim and Thummim, to enquire for them before the Lord, what they were to do; he was

31 And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all *of* blue.

32 And there shall be an hole in the top of it, in the midst thereof: it shall have a binding of woven work, round about the hole of it, as it were the hole of an habergeon, that it be not rent.

33 And *beneath*, upon the hem of it, thou shalt make pomegranates *of* blue, and *of* purple, and *of* scarlet round about the hem thereof; and bells of gold between them round about.

34 A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about.

35 And it shall be upon Aaron, to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy *place* before the LORD, and when he cometh out; that he die not.

36 And thou shalt make a plate *of* pure gold, and grave upon it, *like* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

37 And thou shalt put it on a blue lace, that it may be upon the mitre: upon the forefront of the mitre it shall be.

38 And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts: and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

39 And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre *of* fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle *of* needle-work.

40 And for Aaron's sons thou shalt make coats, and thou shalt make for them girdles, and bonnets shalt thou make for them, for glory and for beauty.

41 And thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him: and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office.

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illuminated to form a right judgment, and to give perfect counsel, in the most difficult matter; which was suggested to him either by a voice from heaven, or by an immediate prophetical impulse upon his mind. Thus Christ is our High Priest with Urim and Thummim, and imparts unto us, by his word and Spirit, wisdom, judgment, and grace, from the Father of lights, and the giver of every good, and perfect gift.

V. 31. *The robe of the ephod*, &c.] This was the middle garment, which was worn under the ephod, and above the coat. (v. 39.) It had a hole, through which the head was to pass, when it was put on; and seems to have been formed carefully of one piece, and that it should not be rent: this reminds us of Christ's coat, which was without seam, woven from the top throughout; and was not rent, but cast lots for by the soldiers: and was emblematical of his perfect, uninterrupted obedience to the divine law; and of the unbroken harmony, which should subsist in his Church. Upon the hem of this robe were golden bells, and pomegranates round about: which may represent the sound of divine truth preached, or professed; being joined with the precious fruits of holiness in the ministers of the Gospel, and in true Christians: and especially typified the glad tidings, which Christ is anointed to preach, and the fragrant fruits of his priesthood, which he confers upon his Church. The bells were also intended to give notice to the people when the high priest entered into the most holy place, perhaps that they might join his burning the incense, and sprinkling the blood, with their prayers. (*Luke*, c. 1. v. 10.) It is added, "That he "die not:" which he might expect to do, if he acted not according to the prescribed rules.

V. 36—39.] Upon the mitre, which was a sort of cap with a high crown, made of linen, was to be affixed a golden plate, on which was inscribed HOLINESS TO THE LORD; that was to be worn always on his forehead. This might teach him to remember his sacred office, and character, and to take care not to disgrace it, nor to be ashamed of it, or to wish to conceal it: it might also remind the people to honour his person, and ministrations. But especially it represented our great High Priest; whose perfect holiness, and voluntary dedication of himself in our behalf unto the Father, to fulfil his will, and magnify his law, by his obedience unto death, have rendered him a fountain of holiness to his people also, who in consequence are sanctified by his truth, and by his spirit: through the same he also bears the iniquity of our holy things, and by his prevailing intercession renders our sinful persons, and imperfect services, acceptable with an holy God.

Coat of fine linen, &c.] This was the innermost garment, which had sleeves to the wrist, as is supposed, and was bound on with a linen girdle.

V. 40, 41.] The garments of the inferior priests; though neither so costly as those of the high priest, nor so particularly described, are said to be for "glory, and for "beauty," as well as the others: and they typified that holiness, which was glorious and beautiful in Christ; and which is for glory and beauty to all, who are adorned with it.

42 And

42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness: from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach.

43 And they shall be upon Aaron, and upon his sons, when they come in unto the tabernacle of the congregation, or when they come near unto the altar to minister in the holy *place*; that they bear not iniquity, and die. *It shall be* a statute for ever unto him, and his seed after him.

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, 1st. Directions for the consecration of the priests, by washing, arraying, and anointing them with oil, and blood; and by offering sacrifices for them during seven days, v. 1—35. 2d. Directions for the consecration of the altar, v. 36, 37. 3d. Directions for the daily sacrifice, with gracious promises, v. 38—46.

AND this *is* the thing that thou shalt do unto them to hallow them, to minister unto me in the priest's office: Take one young bullock, and two rams without blemish,

2 And unleavened bread, and cakes unleavened tempered with oil, and wafers unleavened anointed with oil: *of* wheaten flour shalt thou make them.

3 And thou shalt put them into one basket, and bring them in the basket, with the bullock and the two rams.

4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water.

5 And thou shalt take the garments, and put upon Aaron the coat, and the robe of the ephod, and the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the curious girdle of the ephod.

6 And thou shalt put the mitre upon his head, and put the holy crown upon the mitre.

7 Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour *it* upon his head, and anoint him.

8 And

V. 42.] The priests were to be clothed in the most decent and modest manner. Our garments were first necessary to hide the shame of a sinner's nakedness; and when we use them for ostentation, we foolishly glory in our shame; they, who prefer ornament to modesty, do still worse; but it is worst of all to be guilty of this pride, and indecency, in the courts of the Lord's house.

V. 43. *That they bear not*, &c.] All this was to impress them, and us, with a sense of God's holiness, and of our sinfulness; and to teach us, that God will be had in reverence of all them, that are round about him, and will not be approached by a sinner, but in the name of Jesus Christ.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Blessed be God, that we have such an High Priest, as is in this chapter typically delineated: one solemnly appointed of God, and consecrated to his work; one furnished for his high office by the glory of his divine majesty, and the beauty of perfect holiness: one who bears the names of all his people, on his shoulders, and upon his heart, presenting them, and all their several cases before the Father in heaven, and ever living by his continual intercession, to apply the salvation, which his sacrifice has purchased: in whom are illuminations, and perfections, even inexhaustible treasures of wisdom and grace, to be communicated to them: who, HOLINESS TO THE LORD himself, is made sanctification to his people, that they might be holiness unto the Lord also, in and through him, in their measure in this world, perfectly in that to come. Happy are we, if by the law spiritually understood we have so obtained the knowledge of sin, as to see that such an High Priest became us: that we can have no access to, or acceptance with an holy God, but by him: no light, no wisdom, no perfection but from him; no glory, nor beauty, but in conformity to him. If this be our judgment, and experience, let us take encouragement from the power, love, and compassion of our High Priest to the meanest of his people, "to draw near with boldness to the throne of grace, that we obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (*Heb.* c. 4. v. 14—16.) Yet "let us have grace to worship him with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire." (*Heb.* c. 12. v. 28, 29.) Let us make a bold profession of his truth, accompanied with the fruits of righteousness in our lives: and making him our counsellor, by whom we may enquire of the Lord, let us seek to profit by his illuminations and perfections, that we may be wise-hearted for every service, to which God shall appoint us. Daily meditating upon his word, let us endeavour, "with open face as in a glass, so to behold his glory, that we may be changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 *Cor.* c. 3. v. 18.) Clothed in his righteousness for glory, and for beauty, who in his death hath borne the iniquity of our holy things, let us through him, as his spiritual priests, offer unto God the sacrifice of praise continually, giving thanks unto his name.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 6. *Holy crown*, &c.] That is, the golden plate, which was inscribed HOLINESS TO THE LORD. This being called a crown, may intimate, that the true High Priest should also be a King.

V. 7. *Anointing oil.*] The composition of this is prescribed in the next chapter. The preparation, as it were, of Christ for his priestly work, may here be typified: and

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8 And thou ſhalt bring his ſons, and put coats upon them.

9 And thou ſhalt gird them with girdles (Aaron and his ſons) and put the bonnets on them: and the prieſt's office ſhall be their's for a perpetual ſtatute: and thou ſhalt conſecrate Aaron and his ſons.

10 And thou ſhalt cauſe a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his ſons ſhall put their hands upon the head of the bullock.

11 And thou ſhalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

12 And thou ſhalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beſide the bottom of the altar.

13 And thou ſhalt take all the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul *that is* above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, and burn *them* upon the altar.

14 But the fleſh of the bullock, and his ſkin, and his dung ſhalt thou burn with fire without the camp: it *is* a ſin-offering.

15 Thou ſhalt alſo take one ram, and Aaron and his ſons ſhall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

16 And thou ſhalt ſlay the ram, and thou ſhalt take his blood, and ſprinkle *it* round about upon the altar.

17 And thou ſhalt cut the ram in pieces, and waſh the inwards of him, and his legs, and put *them* unto his pieces, and unto his head.

18 And thou ſhalt burn the whole ram upon the altar: it *is* a burnt-offering unto the LORD: it *is* a ſweet ſavour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

19 And thou ſhalt take the other ram, and Aaron and his ſons ſhall put their hands upon the head of the ram.

20 Then ſhalt thou kill the ram, and take of his blood, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his ſons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their

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we ſhould not forget, that as the high prieſt alſo was waſhed, as well as clothed with his robes, and anointed with holy oil: ſo Chriſt, though no ſinner, yet being "made in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh," previous to his ſolemn entrance on his work, ſubmitted to the baptiſm of John, which was an ordinance, that in it's general uſe denoted the waſhing away of the pollution of ſin; as this waſhing of the prieſts alſo did. He was alſo anointed with the Holy Ghoſt without meaſure, not for himſelf only, but for all his people, even the meaneſt: which the pouring the oil upon the head of Aaron, "which ran "down to the ſkirts of his garments," (*Pſalm* 133. v. 2.) repreſented. But this whole conſecration ſeems particularly to denote the admiſſion of a ſinner into the ſpiritual prieſthood, to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt. Such muſt firſt be waſhed from all their filthineſs, in regeneration: they muſt be clothed in that righteouſneſs, which is upon all them, that believe: they muſt be anointed with the unction of the Holy Ghoſt; and have an intereſt in the one great ſacrifice for ſin; before they can glorify God as his holy Prieſthood, or rejoice in their own precious privileges.

V. 9. *Conſecrate*, &c.] The literal tranſlation is "Fill "the hands of, &c." probably this was done by putting the ſacrifice into their hands, to be waved before the Lord.—But the miniſters of God have their hands filled, when they enter upon their office, and will continue to have their hands full of work of one ſort, or other, if they duly ſeek for it, and attend unto it: but more covet the emolument, or honour of the miniſtry, than ſeek to have their hands filled with it's work.—And indeed the caſe is the ſame with all Chriſtians, each has his hands filled with work, if he have but his heart diſpoſed to do it, (See *Mark*, c. 13. v. 34).

V. 10. *Put their hands*, &c.] As confeſſing their ſins over it, the guilt of which was thus typically transferred to, in order to it's being puniſhed in the ſacrifice: for the prieſts themſelves were ſinners, but not ſo our great High Prieſt (*Heb.* c. 7. v. 26—28).

V. 12. *Upon the horns of the altar.*] The altar itſelf was firſt to be cleanſed, made atonement for, and ſanctified (c. 36, 37) by ſacrifice, and the application of blood, before it could ſanctify the gift. For every creature of God upon earth has been ſo abuſed, and polluted by man's ſin, that none is deemed meet to be ſet apart for his immediate ſervice, 'till purged with blood: and all our miniſtrations are ſo defiled, that our beſt would condemn us, even our moſt ſolemn ſacrifices, unleſs ſprinkled with the blood of Chriſt. All this was evidently intended to teach them the holineſs of God, the defiling nature of ſin, their own ſinfulneſs, and their need of the promiſed Saviour, who ſhould take away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf.

V. 13.] We ſhall have a more ſuitable opportunity of entering upon the conſideration of the ſacrificial laws, and ſhall therefore at preſent wave it.

V. 20, 21.] This implied that they could neither hear the Lord's command, do his work, or walk in his ways; but through the application of atoning blood: which is always

their right foot, and ſprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

21 And thou ſhalt take of the blood that *is* upon the altar, and of the anointing oil, and ſprinkle *it* upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his ſons, and upon the garments of his ſons with him: and he ſhall be hallowed, and his garments, and his ſons, and his ſons garments with him.

22 Alſo thou ſhalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, and the right ſhoulder; for it *is* a ram of conſecration:

23 And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the baſket of the unleavened bread, that *is* before the LORD.

24 And thou ſhalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his ſons; and ſhalt wave them *for* a wave-offering before the LORD.

25 And thou ſhalt receive them of their hands, and burn *them upon* the altar for a burnt-offering, for a ſweet ſavour before the LORD: it *is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

26 And thou ſhalt take the breaſt of the ram of Aaron's conſecration, and wave it *for* a wave-offering before the LORD: and it ſhall be thy part.

27 And thou ſhalt ſanctify the breaſt of the wave-offering, and the ſhoulder of the heave-offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up of the ram of the conſecration, *even* of *that* which *is* for Aaron, and of *that* which *is* for his ſons.

28 And it ſhall be Aaron's and his ſons' by a ſtatute for ever, from the children of Iſrael: for it *is* an heave-offering: and it ſhall be an heave-offering from the children of Iſrael of the ſacrifice of their peace-offerings, *even* their heave-offering unto the LORD.

29 And the holy garments of Aaron ſhall be his ſons after him, to be anointed therein, and to be conſecrated in them.

30 *And* that ſon that is prieſt in his ſtead ſhall put them on ſeven days, when he cometh into the tabernacle of the congregation to miniſter in the holy *place*.

31 And thou ſhalt take the ram of the conſecration, and ſeethe his fleſh in the holy place.

32 And Aaron and his ſons ſhall eat the fleſh of the ram, and the bread that *is* in the baſket, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

33 And they ſhall eat thoſe things, wherewith the atonement was made, to conſecrate *and* to ſanctify them: but a ſtranger ſhall not eat *thereof*, becauſe they *are* holy.

34 And if ought of the fleſh of the conſecrations, or of the bread remain unto the morning; then thou ſhalt burn the remainder with fire: it ſhall not be eaten, becauſe it *is* holy.

35 And thus ſhalt thou do unto Aaron, and to his ſons, according to all *things* which I have commanded thee: ſeven days ſhalt thou conſecrate them.

36 And thou ſhalt offer every day a bullock *for* a ſin-offering, for atonement: and thou ſhalt cleanſe the altar, when thou haſt made an atonement for it, and thou ſhalt anoint it to ſanctify it.

37 Seven days thou ſhalt make an atonement for the altar and ſanctify it: and it ſhall be an altar moſt holy: whatſoever toucheth the altar ſhall be holy.

38 Now this *is that* which thou ſhalt offer upon the altar; two lambs of the firſt year, day by day continually.

39 The

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always accompanied with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. The further particulars of this conſecration ſhall be ſpoken of, when we read of theſe orders being carried into execution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Bleſſed be God our High Prieſt is not altogether like the high prieſts of the family of Aaron.—He indeed is ſolemnly ſet apart to his office, and has his hands filled; for he has the intereſts of all his people to maintain, and their cauſe to plead; and has all power in heaven, and earth given unto him for that purpoſe: he is alſo clothed with majeſty, and honour, and has not only the anointing, but the fulneſs of the Spirit treaſured up in himſelf. But he needed not to offer any ſacrifices for himſelf; and by

39 The one lamb thou ſhalt offer in the morning, and the other lamb thou ſhalt offer at even.

40 And with the one lamb a tenth-deal of flour mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil: and the fourth part of an hin of wine *for* a drink-offering.

41 And the other lamb thou ſhalt offer at even, and ſhalt do thereto according to the meat-offering of the morning, and according to the drink-offering thereof, for a ſweet ſavour, an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

42 *This ſhall be* a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations, *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD: where I will meet you, to ſpeak there unto thee.

43 And there I will meet with the children of Iſrael, and *the tabernacle* ſhall be ſanctified by my glory.

44 And I will ſanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will ſanctify alſo both Aaron and his ſons, to miniſter to me in the prieſt's office.

45 And I will dwell amongſt the children of Iſrael, and will be their God.

46 And they ſhall know that I *am* the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell amongſt them: I *am* the LORD their God.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains directions, 1ſt. Concerning the altar of incenſe, and it's uſe, v. 1—10. 2d. Concerning the half ſhekel of ranſom money, v. 11—16. 3d. Concerning the brazen laver, &c. v. 17—21. 4th. Concerning the holy anointing oil, and the incenſe, v. 22—38.

AND thou ſhalt make an altar to burn incenſe upon: *of* ſhittim-wood ſhalt thou make it.

2 A cubit *ſhall be* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof (four-ſquare ſhall it be), and two cubits *ſhall be* the height thereof: the horns thereof *ſhall be* of the ſame.

3 And thou ſhalt overlay it with pure gold, the top thereof, and the ſides thereof round about, and the horns thereof: and thou ſhalt make unto it a crown of gold round about.

4 And two golden rings ſhalt thou make to it under the crown of it, by the two corners thereof, upon the two ſides of it ſhalt thou make *it:* and they ſhall be for places for the ſtaves to bear it withal.

5 And thou ſhalt make the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlay them with gold.

6 And thou ſhalt put it before the vail, that

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one ſingle ſacrifice he hath fully atoned for all the ſins of all his people, and opened for them the gates of heavenly bliſs. But are we of that number? Do we waſh our ſinful ſouls "in the fountain, which he hath opened for ſin, "and for uncleanneſs;" conſcious that in ourſelves we need ſuch waſhing? Do we preſent ourſelves before God day by day, arrayed in the prieſtly garments of his righteouſneſs, truſting only in his merits, and not at all in ourſelves, or in our ſervices, for acceptance with God? Are we anointed with the unction of the Holy Spirit, purifying our hearts from the love of ſin, and ſhedding abroad therein the love of God? Do we in confeſſion of ſins, and the exerciſe of faith lay our hands upon the head of this great Sacrifice? And are our hearts, and conſciences cleanſed by his blood from dead works to ſerve the living God; and our bodies preſented, not as a burnt offering, but as a living ſacrifice, holy and acceptable to God; whilſt the members thereof, which once were inſtruments of unrighteouſneſs unto ſin, are now made inſtruments of righteouſneſs unto him? And do we maintain daily communion with him, preſenting our morning and evening ſacrifice of ſecret and family worſhip, acceptable through the atoning ſacrifice of "the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſin of the world?" And are our hands filled with his work, and our time, and talents offered to the Lord, as a wave-offering, and improved to his glory? Is this the ſincere intention, and aim our hearts, all the day long? Alas! how little do the moſt of profeſſing Chriſtians know of this ſpiritual conſecration unto God through Chriſt Jeſus! yet all the reſt is but the name, and the form; this, and nothing ſhort of this is the religion of the "royal prieſthood, the holy nation, "the peculiar people, whom he hath called out of dark-"neſs into marvellous light, to ſhew forth his praiſe." (1 *Pet.* c. 2. v. 5—9.) Let us not then reſt in any thing ſhort of it, but preſs forward to this mark; then will God ſpeak to us in his Word, meet us in his ordinances, make himſelf known to us as our God and Saviour, and fill our hearts with his holy conſolations.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 6. *Before the vail,* &c.] This altar, formed, like the ark, of the incorruptible wood covered over with pure gold, repreſented the Son of God in

that *is* by the ark of the teſtimony; before the mercy-ſeat, that *is* over the teſtimony, where I will meet with thee.

7 And Aaron ſhall burn thereon ſweet incenſe every morning: when he dreſſeth the lamps he ſhall burn incenſe upon it.

8 And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he ſhall burn incenſe upon it; a perpetual incenſe before the LORD, throughout your generations.

9 Ye ſhall offer no ſtrange incenſe thereon, nor burnt-ſacrifice, nor meat-offering; neither ſhall ye pour drink-offering thereon.

10 And Aaron ſhall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year, with the blood of the ſin-offering of atonements: once in the year ſhall he make atonement upon it, throughout your generations: it *is* moſt holy unto the LORD.

11 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

12 When thou takeſt the ſum of the children of Iſrael, after their number; then ſhall they give every man a ranſom for his ſoul unto the LORD, when thou numbereſt them: that there be no plague amongſt them, when *thou* numbereſt them.

13 This they ſhall give, every one that paſſeth among them that are numbered; half a ſhekel after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary (a ſhekel *is* twenty gerahs) an half-ſhekel *ſhall be* the offering of the LORD.

14 Every one that paſſeth among them that are numbered from twenty years old and above, ſhall give an offering unto the LORD.

15 The rich ſhall not give more, and the poor ſhall not give leſs than half a ſhekel, when *they* give an offering unto the LORD, to make an atonement for your ſouls.

16 And thou ſhalt take the atonement-money of the children of Iſrael, and ſhalt appoint it for the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Iſrael before the LORD, to make an atonement for your ſouls.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

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in human nature: and the incenſe burnt thereon typified his interceſſion; as the altar of burnt-offering, and it's oblations, typified his ſacrifice. The former was therefore placed within the ſanctuary, the latter in the court without; for his ſacrifice was offered on earth, his interceſſion is in heaven. But it was not fixed *within* the moſt holy place; becauſe the *continual* interceſſion of Chriſt was to be repreſented by the daily burning of incenſe thereon, morning, and evening, by the other prieſts, as well as the high prieſt: ſuch ſituation therefore would have interfered with the ſolemn inſtitution of the *annual* entrance of the high prieſt alone within the vail, on the day of atonement only, and at no other time; which had a very important ſignification. It was therefore placed on the *outſide* of the vail, yet over againſt the mercy-ſeat.

V. 7, 8.] The one ſacrifice of Chriſt's death had it's efficacy every day from the beginning, and ſhall have to the end of the world: this was repreſented by the daily ſacrifice: his interceſſion is unremitting and perpetual, which is thus repreſented. Their dreſſing, and lighting the lamps prefigured the preaching of the word, which could only be rendered effectual by the interceſſion of Chriſt bringing down a bleſſing thereon, in anſwer to the prayers, with which it is accompanied.

V. 9, 10.] The application of the blood of the atonement to the altar of incenſe denoted, that the interceſſion of Chriſt derives all it's efficacy from his ſufferings on earth: and therefore they muſt confine that altar to it's preſcribed uſe; for we need no other ſacrifice, or interceſſor, but Chriſt alone.

V. 11—16.] This ſum, which was about fifteen-pence a-piece of our money, was employed at this time in forming the ſilver ſockets for the ſanctuary, &c. (ch. 38. v. 25—27.) but was generally, as is ſuppoſed, expended in purchaſing ſacrifices, wood, &c. for the ſervice of the ſanctuary: probably it was a tribute paid ever after, though now firſt raiſed, either annually, or as oft as was neceſſary, and the ſame that was demanded of Chriſt. (*Matt.* c. 17. v. 24—27.) Other contributions were to be voluntary, and in proportion to the ability, or liberality of the offerer. But this was the ranſom of their ſouls, and was to be the ſame ſum for every man above twenty years of age, whether rich or poor: if any refuſed to pay it, they could have no intereſt in the ſacrifices, and might expect to be viſited with the plague (v. 12.) for their contempt. For the ſouls of all are of equal value, equally forfeited, and equally need a ranſom: Chriſt is equally propoſed to all who hear the Goſpel; and true believers have an equal intereſt in him, and in him there is neither male nor female: without that intereſt in him, we can have no benefit from his ſacrifice; but inſtead of ranſom for our ſouls, may expect additional vengeance, for neglecting and deſpiſing ſuch great ſalvation. And though we can add nothing to the all-ſufficient atonement of Chriſt, which is freely, without money, and without price, given to periſhing ſinners, who believe: yet we may, by our worldly ſubſtance, aſſiſt in maintaining the expences of religious ordinances, which are memorials to us, of the atonement made for us.

18 Thou

18 Thou shalt also make a laver *of* brass, and his foot *also of* brass, to wash *withal:* and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein.

19 For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat.

20 When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not: or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD.

21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, *even* to him, and to his seed throughout their generations.

22 Moreover the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

23 Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred *shekels*, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, *even* two hundred and fifty *shekels*, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty *shekels*,

24 And of cassia five hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of oil-olive an hin.

25 And thou shalt make it an oil of holy ointment, an ointment compound after the art of the apothecary: it shall be an holy anointing oil.

26 And thou shalt anoint the tabernacle of the congregation therewith, and the ark of the testimony,

27 And the table and all his vessels, and the candlestick and his vessels, and the altar of incense,

28 And the altar of burnt-offering with all his vessels, and the laver and his foot.

29 And thou shalt sanctify them, that they may be most holy: whatsoever toucheth them, shall be holy.

30 And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister unto me in the priest's office.

31 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, This shall be an holy anointing oil unto me, throughout your generations.

32 Upon man's flesh shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make *any other* like it, after the composition of it: it *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy unto you.

33 Whosoever compoundeth *any* like it, or whosoever putteth *any* of it upon a stranger, shall even be cut off from his people.

34 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; *these* sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like *weight*.

35 And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure *and* holy.

36 And thou shalt beat *some* of it very small, and put of it before the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.

37 And *as for* the perfume which thou shalt make, you shall not make to yourselves according to the composition thereof: it shall be unto thee holy for the LORD.

38 Whosoever shall make like unto that, to smell thereto, shall even be cut off from his people.

CHAP.

V. 18—21. *Laver of brass, and his foot,* &c.] The laver of brass was a large cistern, in which was continually kept a quantity of water; and perhaps the foot was a bason, which received the water out of the cistern by a cock, or some other contrivance, for their immediate use. For the priests, though washed at their consecration, were to wash their hands and feet every time they officiated, on pain of death; intimating the continual guilt, which they contracted in their daily employments in, and converse with the world. (*John*, c. 13. v. 8—11.)

V. 22—33.] This ointment, compounded of the most valuable ingredients, with which the priests, the altar, &c. were to be anointed, represented the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost; without which, we cannot attend upon any ordinance, or officiate in any sacred service, acceptably or profitably. The compounding of any like it, or using it for ordinary purposes, denoted hypocrisy, which counterfeits; and profaneness, which ridicules the operations of the Spirit, and bring down swift destruction on those, who are guilty of them.

V. 34—38.] This was the incense, which before was spoken of, and was burnt upon the golden altar: they who take occasion, from the doctrine of Christ's intercession,

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1ſt. The appointment of the perſons, who were to be employed in erecting, and furniſhing the tabernacle, with promiſes to them of ſuitable qualifications, v. 1—11. *2d. Laws concerning the ſabbath, v.* 12—17. *3d. The tables of the law delivered to Moſes, v.* 18.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 See, I have called by name Bezaleel the ſon of Uri, the ſon of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.

3 And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wiſdom, and in underſtanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanſhip,

4 To deviſe cunning works, to work in gold, and in ſilver, and in braſs,

5 And in cutting of ſtones to ſet *them*, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanſhip.

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ceſſion, and grace, to indulge in ſin; and they who make interceſſors of ſaints and angels, alike violate the ſpirit of the reſtriction hereto annexed.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If men do not wilfully ſhut their eyes to the things, which are written in the word of God, they cannot but ſee in theſe ceremonial inſtitutions, compared with the New Teſtament, that Jeſus Chriſt is the grand ſubject of the Scriptures; and the ſum of all true religion, as made of God unto us, "wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption." To ſuppoſe that the New Teſtament language concerning his prieſthood, oblation, entrance into the holies, &c. were accommodations to theſe Old Teſtament rites; is to ſuppoſe that, in planning and erecting the ſpiritual temple, the all-wiſe Architect, without any intention, planned and formed a very intricate, and unneceſſary ſcaffolding, and then erected the building for the ſake, and according to the pattern of that ſcaffolding. But "known unto God are all "his works from before the foundation of the world;" and indeed he firſt formed the model of the Goſpel ſalvation in his own infinite mind, then ſhewed that model to Moſes in the mount, according to the pattern of which this ſcaffolding was formed, for the ſake of the intended building; which accordingly has ſince been erected, exactly anſwerable thereto. From this chapter let us obſerve, that our duty, and our indigence call upon us daily to approach our Creator, and benefactor, with our thankſgivings, and ſupplications: but that we are not worthy to draw nigh in our own name, or in any other way, than through the meritorious, and prevailing interceſſion of the Son of God. Though we are *without* on earth, and he is aſcended into heaven, and is out of our ſight, let us by faith behold him, and realize him to our minds, as ever living to receive and preſent our worſhip, perfumed with the ſweet incenſe of his interceſſion before the Father's mercy-ſeat for acceptance. Let us therefore not be ſlack, unfrequent, or doubtful in our ſupplications, but aſk much, and oft, and expect much in anſwer to our poor prayers, that our joy may be full, and our God be glorified. Bleſſed be God the Prieſt, the ſacrifice, the incenſe, and anointing oil are all ready prepared to our hands, without any concurrence of ours: but if we know the value of this great ſalvation, we ſhall not grudge either time, labour, or expence, which the maintaining, or attending on divine ordinances may require: and it is to be feared that we have no intereſt in the ſacrifice, if we heſitate to contribute thereto. Nor ſhould we forget that the poor are as welcome to Chriſt as the rich; and the rich as much in want of his ranſom for their ſouls, as the poor; for no external diſtinctions make any difference here; (*Rom.* c. 3. v. 22.) And all are alike bound to expreſs their valuation of Chriſt, and of his ſalvation. Even they, who are waſhed, in their firſt converſion, from the ſins of their paſt lives, and from prevailing ſin, in their hearts, have occaſion for renewed repentance, forgiveneſs, and grace from day to day: and muſt ſtill approach as ſinners waſhed in the blood, anointed by the Spirit, and pleading the merits of Jeſus. But let us beware of rendering a religious profeſſion ſubſervient to our ſecular intereſts; of treating heavenly things with irreverence, or contempt; of counterfeiting, or ridiculing the operations of the Spirit; or of gratifying our ſinful inclinations under the pretence of Chriſtian liberty: for theſe are moſt dangerous, and fatal perverſions of the Goſpel of Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 3—5.] It could not be ſuppoſed that the Iſraelites, who had been employed as bond-ſlaves in Egypt, were qualified for ſuch curious workmanſhip, as had been preſcribed: any more than that the apoſtles, taken from their fiſhing boats, &c. were capable of converſing in the languages of all nations, to whom they were commanded to preach: but by the operation of the ſame Spirit, which gave them utterance in divers tongues, theſe perſons here appointed were miraculouſly endued with the requiſite ſkill. Neither Moſes, nor Aaron, nor any of Aaron's ſons were appointed to this ſervice: the honour already conferred upon them muſt ſuffice for them; and if they attended to their proper work, they would find that alſo ſufficient. Nor were Moſes' ſons appointed; for it was the Lord's will that his diſintereſtedneſs, and divine legation, ſhould appear illuſtrious, in the *obſcurity* of his poſterity: and if Hur was (as ſome think) Miriam's huſband, and in conſequence Bezaleel a diſtant relation of Moſes, the appointment of him was the Lord's doing: that there might be no occaſion given for murmuring and envy.

6 And I, behold, I have given with him, Aholiab the ſon of Ahiſamach of the tribe of Dan; and in the hearts of all that are wiſe-hearted I have put wiſdom; that they may make all that I have commanded thee:

7 The tabernacle of the congregation, and the ark of the teſtimony, and the mercy-ſeat that *is* thereupon, and all the furniture of the tabernacle,

8 And the table and his furniture, and the pure candleſtick with all his furniture, and the altar of incenſe,

9 And the altar of burnt-offering with all his furniture, and the laver and his foot,

10 And the clothes of ſervice, and the holy garments for Aaron the prieſt, and the garments of his ſons, to miniſter in the prieſt's office,

11 And the anointing oil, and ſweet incenſe for the holy *place:* according to all that I have commanded thee, ſhall they do.

12 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

13 Speak thou alſo unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Verily my ſabbaths ye ſhall keep: for it *is* a ſign between me and you, throughout your generations; that *ye* may know that I *am* the LORD, that doth ſanctify you.

14 Ye ſhall keep the ſabbath therefore: for it *is* holy unto you. Every one that defileth it, ſhall ſurely be put to death: for whoſoever doeth *any* work therein, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from amongſt his people.

15 Six days may work be done, but in the ſeventh *is* the ſabbath of reſt, holy to the LORD: whoſoever doeth *any* work in the ſabbath-day, he ſhall ſurely be put to death.

16 Wherefore the children of Iſrael ſhall keep the ſabbath, to obſerve the ſabbath throughout their generations, *for* a perpetual covenant.

17 It *is* a ſign between me and the children of Iſrael for ever: for *in* ſix days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the ſeventh day, he reſted, and was refreſhed.

18 And he gave unto Moſes, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of teſtimony, tables of ſtone, written with the finger of God.

CHAP.

V. 13. *Verily my ſabbaths*, &c.] The Iſraelites were not to violate the ſabbath reſt, even when building the temple. That appointment was a token of God's eſpecial regard to them, and their peculiar relation to him, as the worſhippers of that God, who created the world in ſix days, and reſted on the ſeventh. And whilſt, at his command, for his honour, and in his worſhip, they ſanctified this day, it would both diſtinguiſh them from all other people as the covenant people of God, (verſe 16.) and be a means of promoting true godlineſs amongſt them.

V. 14, 15.] By this penal ſanction, the obſervation of the ſabbath, which before was a part of the moral law, the rule of conſcience with reference to the judgment of God; now became alſo a judicial law, and a rule of the magiſtrate's duty in adminiſtering juſtice.

V. 17. *Was refreſhed.*] Such ſatisfaction did the Lord take in the manifeſtation of his glory in his works; and ſuch refreſhment ſhould we find in contemplating them, in giving him the praiſe, and in performing the duties of the holy ſabbath!

V. 18.] Theſe tables of ſtone, both framed, and engraved of God himſelf, (c. 24. v. 12.) denote the perpetual obligation of the moral law; not perhaps without reference to the ſtony heart of man, on which this law can never be written, except God himſelf both prepare the heart, and write it therein by his own Spirit.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord confers his *unmerited* favours on whom he pleaſes: but the honour, which cometh from him, is always attended with a work to be done: and indeed to be employed for God is the higheſt honour, and the nobleſt privilege: (*Pſalm* 103. v. 20, 21.) Although men are not now called forth by name, as in the days of Moſes: yet the Lord generally marks out the perſons, whom he hath made choice of, by endowing them with correſpondent diſpoſitions, and qualifications by his Spirit; and by opening their way to their work, in his providence. And though we may certainly know that we are not employed of God in any ſervice, for which we continue utterly unqualified: yet there are caſes, in which men are unexpectedly, and evidently called to ſituations, for which they feel themſelves conſciouſly inſufficient: but they may depend upon God to give them the Spirit of "wiſdom, "underſtanding, and knowledge" for it; even after they are engaged in it; if they ſimply ſeek his glory, do his will, and are employed by him. The Lord is pleaſed to confer differing gifts on different perſons; by which they may feel their need of, and receive mutual benefit from each other, as the members do in the human body: let then each perſon mind his proper work, and improve his own talent diligently; remembering that whatever wiſdom any man poſſeſſes; the Lord hath put it in his

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1st. Israel weary of waiting for Moses' return, and persuading Aaron to make a graven image; Aaron prevailed upon, the golden calf made, and worshipped, v. 1—6. 2d. The Lord informing Moses of their idolatry, and threatening to destroy them; with his intercession, v. 7—14. 3d. Moses descending from the mount, witnessing their wickedness, breaking the tables of the law, destroying the golden calf, and expostulating with Aaron; with his unmeaning excuse, v. 15—24. 4th. The Levites, being summoned, and commissioned by Moses, slaying three thousand of the criminals, v. 25—29. 5th. Moses again pleading with the Lord in the behalf of Israel, v. 30—35.

AND when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods which shall go before us: for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden ear-rings which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden ear-rings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron.

4 And he received *them* at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These *be* thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

5 And

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heart, to the end that he may do *all* his commandments. Let no one therefore envy, despise, intermeddle with, or depreciate the gift, or work of others: and let every one study to be quiet, and to do his own business; and to rejoice in the superior endowments of others, without murmuring, or disputing; or by ostentation provoking the envy, or resentment of others. Every work is beautiful in its season: but the more interior exercises of religion belong especially to the sanctification of the sabbath: and as the appointment thereof is an external sign of the Lord's good will to sinful men; so our love to it, and delight in hallowing it, is a good *internal* evidence, that he hath begun, and will continue to sanctify our souls.—May the Lord therefore have mercy upon us, and pardon all our transgressions, take away the heart of stone, and write *this* and all his laws in our inmost souls: then, though every sweet season of communion with God on earth must come to a close, we shall at length be admitted into his presence in heaven, where there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1. *And when*, &c.] Just when Moses, Israel's faithful representative, had transacted all their great concerns upon the mount with God; and was coming down fully instructed, and authorized to erect the tabernacle, and set up the worship of God amongst them; a sad interruption took place, through Israel's shameful disobedience.—The people seem to have been weary of waiting so long at Sinai; though had they properly applied their minds, they would have found the time short enough for the proper digesting of what they had heard: and whilst some of them in heart turned back into Egypt; (*Acts*, c. 7. v. 39, 40.) others were perhaps in great haste for the corn, and wine, the milk, and honey of Canaan.—But the grand evil was, that their carnal minds did not relish the spiritual worship of an invisible holy God.—They doubtless had witnessed in Egypt religious feasts, suited to a sensual mind: the same they expected in the feast, which they were to hold unto the Lord: but in this they were grievously disappointed, and the whole was a very serious, disrelishing, painful business to them. Moses therefore being out of the way, they formed the project of a religious feast more suited to their taste, which, when they had solemnized, they intended to leave Sinai, and to march either back into Egypt, or forward to Canaan. They, who duly consider how *religious festivals* are observed amongst millions of professing Christians, will readily perceive how agreeable *such a religion* must be to a sensual mind, that consists "in sitting down to eat and to drink, and rising "up to play;" that is to dance, and sing, and divert themselves. In forwarding this project they pretended that they "wot not what is become of this Moses," of whom they speak with the utmost indifference: they would intimate, that the fire had consumed him, or that he was perished with hunger, or perhaps was taken up into heaven.—They had indeed no reason to doubt but he was safe, and faithfully employed for them; and that he would in due time return to them: but supposing he had been dead, surely a decent respect should have been shewn to his memory: and had they then questioned whether Aaron, and Hur should succeed him, or some other persons be appointed, there might have been some reason in it: but to propose making them gods, because Moses was gone, shewed them "mad upon their idols," and glad of any pretence to return to them.—Not much above forty days before they had heard God speak unto them out of the midst of the fire, whilst they saw no similitude; and he had expressly prohibited them to form any image of him: that fire and the cloud attending it was still before their eyes; all the other wonders fresh in their memories; they daily ate of the manna from the clouds, and drank of the water from the rock: "yet even in Horeb they forgat "God their Saviour," ascribed their being brought out of Egypt, first to the man Moses, whom they neither knew any thing of, or cared any thing about; and then to the idol,

5 And when Aaron ſaw *it*, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made proclamation, and ſaid, To-morrow *is* a feaſt to the LORD.

6 And they roſe up early on the morrow, and offered burnt-offerings, and brought peace-offerings: and the people ſat down to eat and to drink, and roſe up to play.

7 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Go, get thee down: for thy people, which thou broughteſt out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themſelves*.

8 They have turned aſide quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worſhipped it, and have ſacrificed thereunto, and ſaid, Theſe *be* thy gods, O Iſrael, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, I have ſeen this people, and behold, it *is* a ſtiff-necked people.

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot againſt them, and that I may conſume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

11 And Moſes beſought the LORD his God, and ſaid, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot againſt thy people, which thou haſt brought forth out of the land of Egypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand?

12 Where-

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idol, which they had formed. Such was this tranſaction! (*Pſalm* 106. v. 19—21.)

Make us gods, &c.] That is a viſible repreſentation of the object of their worſhip; for even theſe idolaters were not ſtupid enough to think the image itſelf really was God. (v. 4, 5.) It is the very ſame word in the original, which is every where uſed for the true God; (See Note, *Gen.* c. 1. v. 1.) though it is joined with a plural verb, which is not common in that uſe of it.

V. 4, 5.] If the conduct of Iſrael as a people be ſurpriſing, much more ſo was that of "Aaron the ſaint "of the Lord." Many conjectures have been made of his reaſons for acting in this manner; but it ſeems to have been too unreaſonable to be either excuſed, or accounted for. He expreſſes no reluctancy; though he could ſpeak well, he ſays nothing againſt it, but enters into the project with apparent approbation, and zeal.—Indeed we can only ſay that the Lord permitted it, that it might appear, of what man is capable: and to ſhew that the prieſthood was given him of *mere grace*, when he might juſtly have been cut off for his tranſgreſſion; and that he might wear his honours the more humbly ever after, (as Peter did after denying his Lord:) that when the ſin offering of conſecration was offered, he might indeed feel his need of the atonement: and that it might appear that we needed an High Prieſt of another ſort, and of a nobler order. The Jews indeed have a tradition that Hur was killed for oppoſing the project, and that Aaron feared the ſame fate: but if ſo, Aaron would have had a better excuſe before Moſes: he might indeed be frighted, but he had not ſuch juſt cauſe. The demand of the gold of their ear-rings has been conſtrued into an attempt to put them off from their purpoſe; and as there was much more gold in their camp, it looks more like an heſitation, than any other circumſtance: but if ſo intended, it was a feeble project.—They readily parted with them, and he as readily (I wonder where he obtained his ſkill!) melted them, moulded them, and haſtily formed a rough reſemblance of a calf, which was one of the Egyptian deities, (*Ezek.* c. 20. v. 8. c. 23. v. 8.) with this they were mightily well pleaſed; and though probably but a clumſy repreſentation of a beaſt, they ſtupidly conſidered it as a very proper ſimilitude of the God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt; for it is evident that they intended to worſhip Jehovah therein.—Yet was this infinitely diſhonourable to his incomprehenſible majeſty, and no better than "turning their "glory into the ſimilitude of an ox, that eateth graſs." And our wonder at Iſrael's, and Aaron's conduct may be ſomewhat abated, when we conſider how great a part of the profeſſing Chriſtian Church hath for ages concurred in, pleaded for, and vindicated ſimilar practices, in as direct oppoſition to the written word of God, as this was to the law, which they had juſt heard from mount Sinai; and with no better excuſes, than Aaron could have pleaded, had not Moſes ſilenced him.—But when the word of God coincides not with our intereſts, inclinations, and prejudices, the chief diſcovery of man's ingenuity is manifeſted, in explaining it away.

V. 7. *For thy people*, &c.] As the people ſeemed to renounce their relation to God, by aſcribing their being brought up out of Egypt, firſt to Moſes, and then to their golden calf; God therefore ſeemed to renounce his relation to them, and called them the people of Moſes, &c.

V. 9. *Stiff-necked.*] That is ſtubborn, and untractable, like unruly bullocks, upon whoſe neck the yoke could not be put.

V. 10. *Let me alone*, &c.] Whilſt Moſes continued praying, the Lord was, as it were, rendered incapable of proceeding to extremities againſt them, which his righteous indignation prompted him to do; this, which ſeemed to forbid, really encouraged his prayer, and Moſes took the hint.

I will make of thee, &c.] This propoſal of exceedingly multiplying the poſterity of Moſes, that the promiſes, made to the patriarchs, which Iſrael had forfeited, might be entailed on his family, was intended to prove the ſincerity of his love, and the extent of his diſintereſtedneſs.

V. 11—14.] In this prayer, Moſes, without either mentioning the propoſal, which the Lord had made to him,

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12 Wherefore ſhould the Egyptians ſpeak and ſay, For miſchief did he bring them out, to ſlay them in the mountains, and to conſume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil againſt thy people.

13 Remember Abraham, Iſaac, and Iſrael thy ſervants, to whom thou ſwareſt by thine own ſelf, and ſaidſt unto them, I will multiply your ſeed as the ſtars of heaven, and all this land that I have ſpoken of will I give unto your ſeed, and they ſhall inherit *it* for ever.

14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

15 And Moſes turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the teſtimony *were* in his hand: the tables *were* written on both their ſides; on the one ſide and on the other *were* they written.

16 And the tables *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God graven upon the tables.

17 And when Joſhua heard the noiſe of the people as they ſhouted, he ſaid unto Moſes, *There is* a noiſe of war in the camp.

18 And he ſaid, *It is* not the voice of *them that* ſhout for maſtery, neither *is it* the voice of *them that* cry for being overcome: *but* the noiſe of *them that* ſing do I hear.

19 And it came to paſs as ſoon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he ſaw the calf, and the dancing: and Moſes' anger waxed hot, and he caſt the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and ſtrawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Iſrael drink *of it*.

21 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou haſt brought ſo great a ſin upon them?

22 And Aaron ſaid, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knoweſt the people that they *are ſet* on miſchief.

23 For they ſaid unto me, Make us gods, which ſhall go before us: for *as for* this Moſes, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

24 And I ſaid unto them, Whoſoever hath any gold, let them break *it* off: So they gave *it* me: then I caſt it into the fire, and there came out this calf.

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or attempting to palliate the ſin of the people, pleads only in their behalf the glory of the divine perfections, as concerned in the event: for if the Lord deſtroy Iſrael, of whom he ſays "Thy people, whom *thou* haſt brought," &c. the Egyptians will impeach his juſtice, and goodneſs: nor could their deſtruction be *apparently* reconciled with his promiſe, and oath to Abraham, Iſaac, and Iſrael: and whatever their ſin deſerved, it would not be for the glory of Jehovah, to give occaſion to ſuch injurious reflections being caſt upon his own great name. This regard to the divine honour was well-pleaſing to the Lord, who in anſwer to his prayers, intimated his purpoſe of ſparing them, as he had before *ſeemed* determined upon their deſtruction; which change of his *external diſcovery* of his purpoſe is called "repenting of the evil," &c. (*Pſalm* 106. v. 19—23. *Numb.* c. 14. v. 13—20.)

V. 17. *Joſhua*, &c.] He had waited hitherto, patiently, where Moſes had left him, below the ſummit of the mount, at a diſtance from the people, and out of the way of their ſin and temptation.

V. 19. *Caſt the tables*, &c.] Though Moſes' anger was hot, and he would by this action expreſs his abhorrence of their crime: yet his breaking of the tables of the covenant was no raſh ſally of paſſion; but a ſignificant action, done probably by a divine ſuggeſtion, to denote that the covenant was now broken, and that they lay expoſed to, and were deſerving of the ſevereſt vengeance of their offended God.

V. 20. *Drink of it.*] Intimating that they muſt expect to experience the fatal effects of their ſin, bringing a curſe upon all their comforts.

V. 24. *There came out this calf.*] Never did any wiſe man make a more unmeaning, and fooliſh excuſe than this of Aaron's. We ſhould never have ſuppoſed "that "he could ſpeak well," if we were to judge of his eloquence thereby; for a child might have ſpoken better. If the people were bent upon miſchief, Aaron the ſaint, and ſervant of the Lord, who was entruſted with authority over Iſrael, ſhould have ventured, and ſuffered all extremities, in oppoſing their mad deſign: but whilſt he was as pliant as they could wiſh, and very active in the buſineſs, he would charge all the blame on others, and ſpeaks as if the golden calf had been produced almoſt by accident, without his concurrence, and beyond his expectation, and ſeems only intent to deprecate the anger of Moſes, not that of the Lord.—No wonder that the Lord was angry with him alſo to have deſtroyed him; but Moſes prayed for him too, (*Deut.* c. 9. v. 20;) and we may be ſure that he was deeply humbled for, and greatly aſhamed of his conduct ever after.

25 And when Moſes ſaw that the people *were* naked (for Aaron had made them naked unto *their* ſhame, amongſt their enemies)

26 Then Moſes ſtood in the gate of the camp, and ſaid, Who *is* on the LORD's ſide? *let him come* unto me. And all the ſons of Levi gathered themſelves together unto him.

27 And he ſaid unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, Put every man his ſword by his ſide, *and* go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and ſlay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.

28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moſes: and there fell of the people that day about three thouſand men.

29 For Moſes had ſaid, Conſecrate yourſelves to-day to the LORD, even every man upon his ſon, and upon his brother; that he may beſtow upon you a bleſſing this day.

30 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that Moſes ſaid unto the people, Ye have ſinned a great ſin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I ſhall make an atonement for your ſin.

31 And Moſes returned unto the LORD, and ſaid, Oh, this people have ſinned a great ſin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now if thou wilt, forgive their ſin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou haſt written.

33 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Whoſoever hath ſinned againſt me, him will I blot out of my book.

34 Therefore now go, lead the people unto *the place* of which I have ſpoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel ſhall go before thee: Nevertheleſs, in the day when I viſit, I will viſit their ſin upon them.

35 And the LORD plagued the people, becauſe they made the calf, which Aaron made.

CHAP.

V. 25. *The people were naked*, &c.] Their ſin had deſpoiled them of all claim to the Lord's protection from their enemies, and had left them expoſed without excuſe to his righteous vengeance. They had ſtripped themſelves of part of their ornaments to make the golden calf; and they were ordered to lay aſide the reſt in a way of humiliation, (c. 33. v. 5, 6.) which being on ſo ſhameful an occaſion may be alſo alluded to.

V. 27—29.] Thus they were commiſſioned to ſlay the ring-leaders in this wickedneſs; without reſpect of friendſhip, relation, or any other ſocial tie; for idolatry was a crime to be puniſhed by their magiſtrates: yet it ſeems none were executed, but thoſe, who openly and boldly ſtood forth; whilſt thoſe, who retired as aſhamed, were ſpared. This commiſſion being faithfully executed brought a great bleſſing upon the tribe. (*Deut.* c. 33. v. 9.) For by this it appeared, that it had been peculiarly exempt from the guilt of this national crime, and was valiant for God, and his honour: and as they were ſeconded by the divine power, which confounded, and intimidated the tranſgreſſors, no oppoſition was made to this execution.

V. 32. *Blot me out*, &c.] Moſes here in ſtrong affection for the people utters a very vehement expreſſion, ſimilar to that which St. Paul uſes upon a like occaſion.—(*Rom.* c. 9. v. 3.) the import of which hath much been diſputed. We cannot ſuppoſe that Moſes means, that he would be willing finally to periſh for the people's ſake; for this would in one ſenſe exceed, and in another ſenſe be contrary to the rule of duty, as we are to love our neighbour as ourſelves, and not more than ourſelves.—But in this Moſes was a type of Chriſt, and having that mind in him, which was in Chriſt, he ſeems to have been willing to have laid down his life in the moſt painful manner, if by that he might preſerve his people from deſtruction.—This may be the meaning of the expreſſion; "Blot me out of thy book," &c. (*Ezek.* c. 13. v. 9;) which is an alluſion to the affairs of men, that we ſhall hereafter frequently meet with, in different ſenſes.—Probably, when Moſes ſaid "Peradventure I ſhall make an atonement for your ſin," he had reference to his intention of making this propoſal for reconciliation: however ſo far was he from acceding to the propoſal of their being deſtroyed, and himſelf becoming a great people, that he had rather die for them, or even with them, than ſurvive them. When he was afterwards excluded from Canaan, as if in remembrance of this requeſt, he was blotted out of the Lord's book, which he had written of the heirs of that promiſed land.

V. 34.] Thus the breach was in ſome meaſure made up. The Lord engaged that he would not immediately deſtroy them; but declares that he would lay up this tranſgreſſion in ſtore againſt them, and remember it, when he ſhould afterwards viſit them for other ſins; and in the mean time he plagued them with his judgments. Nor was Moſes ſatisfied about the angel, that was to go before them, 'till he knew who that angel was, (c. 33. v. 12.) nor ſhould it paſs unnoticed, that, though Aaron exculpated himſelf, yet the Lord deems him a principal in the crime, (v. 25. 35.) though the people alſo were guilty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is not in general adviſable for magiſtrates, miniſters, or heads of families to be long abſent from their reſpective charges; and if they have no good reaſon to give for ſuch

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1st. The Lord commanding Moſes to lead the people to Canaan, and promiſing to ſend an angel before them, to put them in poſſeſſion; and their ſorrow, and humiliation, v. 1—6. 2d. Moſes removing the tabernacle to a diſtance from the camp, the Lord there manifeſting his preſence, and communing with Moſes, in the ſight of the people; and their worſhip, v. 7—11. 3d. Moſes obtaining by earneſt ſupplication a promiſe of the Lord's preſence with the people, and of his ſhewing him his glory, v. 12—23.

AND the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Depart, *and* go up hence, thou and the people which thou haſt brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I ſware unto Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob, ſaying, Unto thy ſeed will I give it:

2 And

ſuch abſence, they will in great meaſure be anſwerable for all the conſequences. They have evidently profited very little by all, that they have hitherto been taught, who are ſo ſoon weary of waiting upon God, as to be eager to return to their worldly intereſts, and pleaſures. And as the people ruſhed into wickedneſs, becauſe they expected not the return of Moſes, ſo unbelief reſpecting Chriſt's future coming to judge the world lies at the root of the ungodlineſs of multitudes: (2 *Peter*, c. 3. v. 4. *Matt.* c. 24. v. 48—50.) High affections, urgent terrors, confident profeſſions, and tranſient comforts are not ſufficient evidences of true grace; for they not ſeldom go off, and leave the heart more hard, and the conſcience more callous than before: nor can any external means, mercies, or judgments change the heart, or, for any long time win, or awe men, even into exterior good behaviour.—The ſervants of God ſhould not expect much gratitude or reſpect from thoſe, who are ungrateful to, rebellious againſt, and deſpiſers of their maſter: and after being favoured with much ſweet fellowſhip with him, they muſt return to witneſs, to mourn over, and to bear teſtimony againſt the wickedneſs, which prevails on earth.—No unhumbled carnal heart can long endure the humbling truths, the holy precepts, and the ſpiritual worſhip of God: and as ſuch perſons inwardly hate his perfect character, ſo they muſt diſlike his image, in his faithful people.—But a god, a prieſt, a worſhip, a doctrine, and a ſacrifice ſuited to their carnal mind will ever meet with abundance of devotees: nay, the very Goſpel itſelf may be ſo *ſophiſticated*, as to ſuit their taſte; and it's hearers having offered their ſacrifice, "will ſit down "to eat, and drink, and riſe up to play:" and whilſt they can render religion, and the ſpirit of ſelfiſhneſs, ſelf-gratification, and diſſipation conſiſtent, by *their* views of the Goſpel, they will cry them up as loudly, and zealouſly, as Iſrael did the golden calf, and call the whole "a feaſt unto the Lord." Yea their example, influence, perſuaſion, and diſcourſes, will draw in ſome ill-judging, compliant Aarons to ſanction, and give credit thereto; though the whole be as contrary to the true Goſpel of Chriſt, as the works of the fleſh, are contrary to the fruits of the Spirit. (*Gal.* c. 5. v. 16—24.) We have the more need to be upon our guard againſt ſuch deluſions, when we conſider how deceitful, and how deſperately wicked the human heart is; and how eaſily Satan can blind the underſtanding, pervert the judgment, and miſlead the conſcience of the beſt of men, if they are left to themſelves: ſoon do we, when in this caſe, forget the terrors of mount Sinai, and the more affecting ſcenes, which Gethſemane, and Golgotha exhibit; yea all our ſweet experience of the love of Chriſt: whilſt ſome golden, or gilded idol uſurps his throne, and his worſhip; and we are eaſily induced to diſgrace his Goſpel, and gratify his enemies.—Well is it for us, that the Prophet like unto Moſes, but infinitely more powerful, and merciful, once veiled his majeſty, made atonement for our ſouls, and intereſted the glory of the Father in our ſalvation; and now effectually intercedes in our behalf; elſe we ſhould in a moment be conſumed by his hot diſpleaſure.—Let us rejoice in his interceſſion, and grace: and as the law is now written in the hearts of the true Iſrael of God; who are thereby diſpoſed to love, and obey it's precepts, and deeply to repent whenever they break them; let us enquire whether we have the good evidence of our ſins being pardoned, and of this everlaſting covenant's being ratified with us: for otherwiſe ſin hath made us naked to our ſhame, hath left us without protection in the hands of our enemies, yea expoſed us to the wrath of God himſelf: and however ſinners may *now* rejoice in iniquity, when Chriſt returns to judgment, the ſtouteſt heart will fail, and their mirth will then be turned into weeping, wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.—Then every vain excuſe will be ſilenced, every one's ſin will find him out; conſent in wickedneſs will iſſue in mutual recriminations; and the tempters, and the tempted will be involved in one common, though not equal condemnation.—Let us now therefore caſt ourſelves humbly upon the divine mercy, and thankfully accept of the chaſtiſement of our ſins, and ſeek with all earneſtneſs deliverance from the wrath to come; and as a pledge of it, for deliverance from the power, and love of ſin in this world. Of all the crimes which we have committed, none are ſo injurious to man, as thoſe which tempt, or encourage others to ſin: and if we would ſhew ourſelves decidedly on the Lord's part in this rebellious world, we muſt not ſtinch from any ſervice however difficult, dangerous, or contrary to our natural feelings: nor muſt we in that caſe know any man according to the fleſh: yet have we cauſe for thankfulneſs, that our teſtimony againſt ſin, and our ſervice for God are not now of that bloody nature, which were frequently required in former ages.—But though God's judgments are now more ſpiritual, let preſumptuous ſinners remember that they will at length be on that very account the more dreadful. Our abhorrence of, and indignation againſt ſin are never too ſtrong, if we are able, in the midſt of our hot diſpleaſure, to pray earneſtly for ſinners, and

labour

2 And I will ſend an Angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebuſite:

3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midſt of thee, for thou *art* a ſtiff-necked people: leſt I conſume thee in the way.

4 And when the people heard theſe evil tidings they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.

5 For the LORD had ſaid unto Moſes, Say unto the children of Iſrael, Ye *are* a ſtiff-necked people: I will come up into the midſt of thee in a moment, and conſume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

6 And the children of Iſrael ſtript themſelves of their ornaments, by the mount Horeb.

7 And Moſes took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to paſs, *that* every one which ſought the LORD, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which *was* without the camp.

8 And

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labour diſintereſtedly to do them good: and if the glory of God may be pleaded with him as a good argument, why he ſhould not deſtroy his people; may it not be pleaded with them as a cogent argument, why they ſhould not ſin againſt him, and cauſe his holy name and religion to be thereby blaſphemed? God will ſurely honour thoſe, who are preſerved free from, and boldly proteſt againſt prevailing ſins; and retirement, and communion with God are happy means of keeping us out of the way of temptation.—But if we have been thus preſerved we muſt give God the glory; and become ſupplicants in behalf of others; for the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth ſometimes to the ſaving of a nation: but alas! the moſt zealous may be oft aſhamed when they compare the aſſiduity, liberality, and earneſtneſs of theſe idolatrous worſhippers, and of the idolatrous devotees of worldly intereſts, pleaſures, and preferments, with their own ſupineneſs, luke-warmneſs, and want of generoſity in the ſervice of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII.] V. 1. *Depart, and go up hence*, &c.] Moſes had pleaded the Lord's promiſe, and oath to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; and intereſted his glory in the preſervation of Iſrael, and in putting them in poſſeſſion of Canaan: the Lord therefore commands Moſes to lead them directly thither, without any further mention of erecting the tabernacle, or eſtabliſhing the worſhip of God amongſt them. As if he had ſaid, "Let "them then have the land flowing with milk and honey; "and an angel ſhall go before them, and put them in "poſſeſſion of it: but let them have it without any "bleſſing, without oracles, covenant, ordinances, &c. "amongſt them, to diſtinguiſh them from the idolatrous "nations around them."—It is obſervable that, when Moſes had ſeen their wickedneſs, he doth not directly call them the Lord's people; but ſays, "Oh, this people," &c.; for he could not but acknowledge that their idolatry was an entire infraction of the covenant; and that God might juſtly diſown thoſe, who had ſo ſhamefully diſowned him. And in like manner the Lord calls them "the people, whom thou haſt brought," &c. as though he diſdained to have any more to do with them: but Moſes, having thus far prevailed by importunity, was encouraged ſtill further to urge his ſuit.

V. 3. *For I will not go*, &c.] Such declarations rather expreſs what God juſtly might do, what it would become him to do, and what he would do, were it not for ſome intervening conſideration, than his *irreverſible* purpoſe: and always imply a reſerved exception, in caſe the party offending were truly penitent: of this we ſhall find many inſtances, (*Jonah*, 3. and 4. chap. *Ez.* c. 3. v. 18—21.) The Lord intimates, that he will not erect his tabernacle amongſt them, nor eſtabliſh his worſhip; for that would only increaſe their guilt, and provoke his jealouſy, to their deſtruction: nor would he afford them the ſenſible tokens of his preſence, which they were diſpoſed to treat with ſuch inſufferable contempt.

V. 4—6.] To make the golden calf, they had parted with ſome of their ornaments: and being required to mourn for, and repent of that their wickedneſs; they were proved, whether they would as readily at God's command lay aſide the reſt. As they readily complied, and ſeemed more grieved becauſe the Lord refuſed to go with them, than on account of the terrible execution, recorded in the foregoing chapter, we are led to hope that ſeveral of them were truly humbled; the others, as Ahab, (1 *Kings*, c. 21. v. 27—29.) by an external humiliation, gave external glory to God, which was a motive with him to avert the national judgment.

V. 7. *Took the tabernacle*, &c.] This ſeems to have been a temporary building, erected for the purpoſe of their ſolemn worſhip, and as the ſymbol of the divine preſence, until that preſcribed in the mount was prepared: above which, perhaps, the pillar of fire and cloud reſted; where Moſes had hitherto enquired of the Lord, and at which he had adminiſtered juſtice to the people. The removal of this to a diſtance from the camp was another evidence of the Lord's heavy diſpleaſure, in that he refuſed any longer to dwell amongſt them. It was the tabernacle of the congregation, where the "*congregation of the Lord*" aſſembled to worſhip; but the bulk of the nation were no longer worthy of that title: and if any individuals were deſirous of ſeeking, and humbling themſelves before the Lord, they were required to ſhew their abhorrence of Iſrael's idolatry, by ſeparating from among

8 And it came to pass when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent-door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and *the* LORD talked with Moses.

10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle-door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent-door.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp; but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation *is* thy people.

14 And he said, My presence shall go *with thee*, and I will give thee rest.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not *with me*, carry us not up hence.

16 For wherein shall it be known here, that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? *Is it* not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And

among them, and following the tabernacle out of the camp.

V. 8—10.] Whilst the people were in expectation of the event, this signal discovery before their eyes of the Lord's favour to Moses, by leaving them, and meeting him at a distance from the camp, fully ratified all that he had done; and wrought such a conviction upon their consciences, as produced this general worship of the Lord, towards the symbol of his presence.

V. 11. *Face to face*, &c.] That is, in the most familiar manner, and with an audible voice. There does not seem sufficient ground to conclude, that there was any visible *human* appearance: the voice probably came out of the cloud, as in Christ's transfiguration.

V. 12. *And thou hast not let me know whom*, &c.] Moses feared, lest they should be left under the conduct of a created angel, the minister of God's providence: without his gracious presence, as an object of accepted worship: as one therefore, whom the Lord knew by name, (*i. e.* had specially chosen, and delegated to this service) he prays to know who this angel was. (See ch. 23. v. 20, 21.)

V. 13. *Shew me now thy way*, &c.] As "known of the "Lord," Moses desires to know more of the Lord, (*Gal.* c. 4. v. 9.) and to have increasing evidences of his grace; and therefore he begs to be under his immediate guidance and instruction.

And consider, &c.] Moses would put the Lord in remembrance, that Israel was the only people upon earth, that professed themselves to be his worshippers. He especially deprecated the Lord's departure from them; and pleaded with him that he would, notwithstanding this breach, continue his presence, and establish his worship amongst them.

V. 14—17.] Thus in answer to Moses' intercession, and for his sake, (who was in this a remarkable type of Christ) the Lord consented to accompany the people, the breach was made up, and matters reverted to their old channel: accordingly in the following chapters we have an account of the tabernacle being erected, and those ordinances appointed, by which Israel was to be distinguished, and separated from other nations. And though Moses never entered the rest of Canaan, he found rest to his soul in the Lord's ways, and in the comfort of his presence: and an entrance into the rest, which remaineth for the people of God.

V. 18. *I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.*] As a pledge of his special favour, and of the accomplishment of the promise, which he had just given him.

V. 19. *All my goodness*, &c.] The goodness of God, in it's manifold, and unfathomable exercises towards sinners, and in it's harmony with his justice, and holiness through Jesus Christ, forms the grand display of his glory, and that especially, which in this life we are most capable of beholding. How this was manifested to Moses will be seen in the ensuing chapter.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 And the LORD said, Behold, *there is* a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock.

22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock; and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by.

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back-parts: but my face shall not be seen.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st. Moses commanded to hew two tables of stone, and with them to re-ascend mount Sinai alone: and his obedience, v. 1—4. 2d. The Lord proclaiming his name, and Moses worshipping, v. 5—9. 3d. The Lord renewing his covenant with, giving promises to, and enacting laws for Israel, v. 10—27. 4th. Moses, after forty days fasting, returning with the tables of the law in his hand, and with his face shining; which he covered, before the people, with a vail, v. 28—35.

AND the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon *these* tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest.

2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me, in the top of the mount.

3 And

And will be gracious, &c.] As if the Lord had said, "I will pardon what sinners I please; nor shall any degree of guilt bar the exercise of my mercy, when I "please to shew it." Thus, whilst some, whose crimes appear of inferior malignity, are left to hardness of heart, and suffer the *deserved punishment of their evil deeds*; in other instances, "where sin has abounded, grace much "more abounds." (*Rom.* c. 9. v. 15—18.)

V. 20—23.] The full display of the divine glory would overwhelm the feeble frame of mortal sinful man: that condescending display thereof, in mild lustre, which is made in the face of Jesus Christ, is the only one that is tolerable to us: as the sun, seen through a mist, having his brightness softened, becomes more distinctly visible to the human eye. This seems to be here represented. The rock, on which Moses was to stand, and in the clift of which he was to be hid, might be the same rock, from which the waters flowed; and we may safely say of it, as Paul, "that rock was Christ." From thence he was to be favoured with such a view, as he was able to bear. The Lord's face, the direct display of his essential glory, he could not see, and live; (for this is reserved for the beatific vision) but his back parts he should behold, that is, such discoveries as are made of his glory in the works, which he hath wrought, especially in the work of redemption. Whether any external appearance attended this display, or what it was, I cannot determine.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Outward prosperity is often conferred by an *angry* God, which men take as their portion, and look no further. Though multitudes of professing Israelites perish in their apostacy; yet God can secure the honour of his faithfulness and love. Whilst the conscience remains unseared, the removal of God's ordinances, and being left to prosperous ungodliness, will be dreaded as the most heavy judgments. Every commandment of God to sinners implies some encouragement: and when he calls to weeping, and mourning, those enjoyments, and ornaments, which at another time are allowable, will be neglected by the broken-hearted penitent: and indeed it would be shameful for idolaters freely to give up their adornings for the sake of their idols; and for Christians to refuse to part with their's, when decency, modesty, charity, and perhaps justice require it. When the Lord appears about to leave a degenerate church or people, we must be decided in protesting against prevailing iniquities; in withdrawing from obstinate offenders; and in following the word, and ordinances of God, whithersoever they go, and let who will stay behind: and when young persons love not only to go to, but abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, it promises an useful, and honourable old age. (*Psalm* 92. v. 12—14.) God will shew such tokens of his favour to his approved servants, as shall be evident to all their opposers; and in communion with himself will make them rich amends for all their troubles. Whatever interest we have at a throne of grace should be improved in behalf of others; remembering that the Lord delights in, and honours importunity: and we should take encouragement from our success in prayer, to request still more, and more. If we have any useful knowledge of God, it springs from our being first noticed by him with distinguishing regard: and it will lead us to desire to know more of him, and of his ways, and of his special grace, day by day: and we shall therefore in every undertaking, and in all our removals, urgently desire to be under his guidance; and earnestly pray, "that unless his presence "go with us, he will not carry us up thence:" and therefore we shall be careful that covetousness, or conveniency, do not draw us from our proper place, or to a distance from his ordinances. Nor shall we forget, that as the Lord's people are distinguished, and separated by peculiar privileges from others; so they are called to separate themselves, that they may "be unto him a peculiar people "zealous of good works:" which is both the effect of divine teaching, the evidence of divine Grace, the present rest of the soul, and the earnest of everlasting rest.—They, who have been favoured with a glimpse of the Lord's

3 And no man ſhall come up with thee, neither let any man be ſeen throughout all the mount: neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

4 And he hewed two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt; and Moſes roſe up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of ſtone.

5 And the LORD deſcended in the cloud, and ſtood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thouſands; forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion and ſin, and that will by no means clear *the guilty*; viſiting the iniquity

Lord's glory, and a taſte of his goodneſs, will be athirſt for more full diſcoveries, and communications: and as here "they ſee through a glaſs darkly," they will by that thirſt be rendered willing to depart hence, that they may "ſee him face to face." In the mean time they will thankfully, as ſheltered in the rock of ſalvation, from the conſuming fire of his holineſs, and juſtice, contemplate his footſteps, and the diſcoveries made of his glorious perfections, in all his works, but eſpecially in the work of redemption. And if he cauſe all his goodneſs to paſs before us, and make us acquainted with his NAME, as a God of grace and mercy; whilſt we acknowledge our obligations to our heavenly Advocate, who by his prevailing interceſſion hath completely repaired the breach, which ſin had made; we may well be willing to wait for further diſcoveries, till we depart hence to be with him. And finally, let not ſinners forget, that "he, "who is gracious, to whom he will be gracious, and "has mercy, on whom he will have mercy," hath alſo aſſured us, that "him, who cometh unto him, he will "in no wiſe caſt out."

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 1. *Hew thee*, &c.] Moſes having prevailed by his interceſſion; the Lord gives orders for renewing the covenant, and for giving the people the moral law upon tables of ſtone: but to remind them of the ſin, through which the former tables had been broken, he will not prepare theſe himſelf, but Moſes ſhall hew them fit for the writing; which it ſeems was not a work of much labour, or exactneſs; for it was ſpeedily performed. When God made man in his own image, the moral law was written in his heart by the finger of God, without any external created concurrence: but ſince the covenant then made with him was broken, both in the writing of the law in the Scriptures, and in writing it in the heart, he hath uſed the miniſtry of men. Our hearts alſo need preparation, before the law of God can there be written; and conviction of ſin, which is by the law given by Moſes, as the miniſtration of condemnation, forms the chief preparation: but though men may be inſtrumental in this work, the whole writing is the Lord's: He alone can teach us to love and delight in obeying his holy law.

V. 3. *No man*, &c.] The people were thus to be tried forty days more, whether they would wait for Moſes' return, though they knew not what was become of him: as well as to be impreſſed with an awful ſenſe of the divine purity, their own unworthineſs, and the Lord's eſpecial regard for Moſes.

V. 6. *And proclaimed*, &c.] According to the promiſe made in the preceding chapter, the Lord met Moſes in a cloud, and thence proclaimed his NAME: that is thoſe perfections, and that character, which are denoted by the name JEHOVAH. This was proclaimed in an audible voice, that Moſes, and by him Iſrael, and all the earth might know that God, with whom they have to do; not only that there is a God, but what his moral perfections are; conſequently what he muſt require of them, and what they may expect from him. When the Lord made himſelf known to Moſes by the name, I AM, THAT I AM, he declared unto him, (as in this paſſage by the words, The LORD, the LORD GOD) his ſelf-exiſtence, unchangeableneſs, eternity, omnipotence, omniſcience, omnipreſence, with his authority, as everlaſting, abſolute, and univerſal ſovereign, lawgiver, and judge: who being the creator, upholder, and preſerver of, and provider for the whole world, demands all love, worſhip, and obedience from all his rational creatures. But here the Lord eſpecially makes known his moral perfections. In this proclamation of his name, he firſt, in a variety of expreſſions, declares his mercy, and grace; with which ſinners in general are, and the Iſraelites in particular were moſt concerned to be acquainted; that they may both be certified, that there is hope for them; and know from whence that hope ariſes. "The LORD "GOD is merciful, and gracious," that is, condeſcending, compaſſionate, ready to forgive the ſinner, to relieve the indigent, and to reſcue the miſerable: "he is long-ſuffering," that is, ſlow to anger, patiently bearing the multiplied provocations of his rebellious creatures, affording them ſpace for repentance, and not delighting in their miſery; but only puniſhing when the honour of his name, and of his law, and the welfare of his univerſal, and everlaſting kingdom require it. He "is abundant in goodneſs and truth;" that is, the riches of his liberality, and bounty are infinite; the whole creation is replete with them; all creatures are ſupplied by them; even ſinners abundantly receive, though they abuſe them, and are ungrateful for them: and all he reveals is infallible truth, all he propoſes is abſolute ſincerity, and all that he promiſes is in perfect faithfulneſs: whilſt he hath revealed, propoſed, and promiſed, even to us ſinners, ſuch abundant goodneſs, as can neither be expreſſed, nor conceived.

V. 7. *Keeping mercy*, &c.] That is continually ſhewing mercy, in all it's various exerciſes to thouſands of ſinners,

iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth *generation*.

8 And Moſes made haſte, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worſhipped.

9 And he ſaid, If now I have found grace in thy ſight, O LORD, let my Lord, I pray thee, go amongſt us, (for it *is* a ſtiff-necked people) and pardon our iniquity and our ſin, and take us for thine inheritance.

10 And he ſaid, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, ſuch as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people amongſt which thou *art*, ſhall ſee the work of the LORD: for it *is* a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

11 Obſerve thou that which I command thee this day: Behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebuſite.

12 Take heed to thyſelf, leſt thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, whither thou goeſt, leſt it be for a ſnare in the midſt of thee.

13 But ye ſhall deſtroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves.

14 For thou ſhalt worſhip no other god: for the LORD, whoſe name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God:

15 Leſt thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do ſacrifice unto their gods, and *one* call thee, and thou eat of his ſacrifice,

16 And thou take of their daughters unto thy ſons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy ſons go a whoring after their gods.

17 Thou ſhalt make thee no molten gods.

18 The feaſt of unleavened bread ſhalt thou keep: Seven days ſhalt thou eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou cameſt out from Egypt.

19 All that openeth the matrix *is* mine: and

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ners, and having inexhauſtible treaſures for thouſands more; yea for increaſing numbers till the end of time: doing all good to thoſe who truſt in his mercy at preſent, and reſerving good for them in future; yea to everlaſting: and not for them only, but for their children's children: "for his mercy endureth for ever." "Forgiving iniquity, &c." all which mercy, and goodneſs either makes way for, conſiſts in, or reſults from the full, and free, and everlaſting forgiveneſs of every kind, and degree of ſin, which can be ſpecified. "And that "will by no means clear the guilty:" For all this mercy and grace conſiſt with the moſt entire hatred of all moral evil, and the moſt abſolute determination to puniſh it: yea the holineſs, and juſtice of God are a part of his goodneſs, and love, conſidered in their exerciſe towards all his rational creatures, throughout univerſal ſpace, and everlaſting duration. Mercy and forgiveneſs are never exerciſed by our holy and righteous God, but through the atonement of the death of Chriſt, and to thoſe who believe in his name; in whoſe ſufferings his holineſs, and juſtice have their grand diſplay; and the evil of ſin is moſt fully manifeſted. None are pardoned but they, who repent of, and condemn themſelves, and forſake the allowed practice of every ſin; for God's forgiving mercy is always attended by his converting, ſanctifying grace. Nay even they, for whoſe ſins the blood of Chriſt hath fully atoned, are ſeverely chaſtiſed in this world, for thoſe failures, into which, through the remaining ſinfulneſs of the heart, and the power of temptation, they are betrayed. But that ſinner, who remains guilty, having not in the exerciſe of true repentance and faith transferred his guilt to the great Sacrifice for ſin, ſhall by no means be acquitted or eſcape: nor any that abuſe, neglect, or deſpiſe ſuch great ſalvation, in impenitence and unbelief. The ſevereſt vengeance of God ſhall fall upon the heads of ſuch perſons; and the very mercy, which they have abuſed into an encouragement to ſin, ſhall occaſion their deeper condemnation: and if Iſrael, or any other nation, dare to abuſe ſuch a proclamation of the name of a merciful God, national judgments upon them, and upon their poſterity, ſhall vindicate the honour of his inſulted juſtice and holineſs.

V. 8, 9. *And Moſes made haſte*, &c.] This proclamation of the name of God, had it's proper effect upon Moſes, who immediately bowed down in reverential worſhip; and ſeized the encouraging words from the mouth of the Lord; and pleaded the mercy of God, as an argument with him to forgive Iſrael, to continue his guidance, and to take them for his inheritance, "though a ſtiff-"necked people." Or, if we preſerve our tranſlation, he makes even that circumſtance, an additional reaſon; as they being a ſtiff-necked people needed the conduct of ſuch a merciful and gracious God, could no otherwiſe be done any good to, and would afford him an opportunity of glorifying his mercy and grace.

V. 10. *I will do marvels.*] If the people were obedient, theſe marvels would be wrought in their behalf, but if they were diſobedient, for their puniſhment.

V. 11—17.] The covenant made with Iſrael was a marriage covenant; idolatry was conſidered as adultery; the name of God is JEALOUS, every approach therefore to

and every firſtling among thy cattle, *whether* ox or ſheep, *that is male*.

20 But the firſtling of an aſs thou ſhalt redeem with a lamb: and if thou redeem *him* not, then ſhalt thou break his neck. All the firſt-born of thy ſons thou ſhalt redeem: and none ſhall appear before me empty.

21 Six days thou ſhalt work, but on the ſeventh day thou ſhalt reſt: in earing-time and in harveſt thou ſhalt reſt.

22 And thou ſhalt obſerve the feaſt of weeks, of the firſt-fruits of wheat-harveſt, and the feaſt of in-gathering at the year's end.

23 Thrice in the year ſhall all your men-children appear before the LORD GOD, the God of Iſrael.

24 For I will caſt out the nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders: neither ſhall any man deſire thy land, when thou ſhalt go up to appear before the LORD thy God, thrice in the year.

25 Thou ſhalt not offer the blood of my ſacrifice with leaven, neither ſhall the ſacrifice of the feaſt of paſſover be left unto the morning.

26 The firſt of the firſt-fruits of thy land thou ſhalt bring unto the houſe of the LORD thy God. Thou ſhalt not ſeethe a kid in his mother's milk.

27 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Write thou theſe words: for after the tenour of theſe words I have made a covenant with thee and with Iſrael.

28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water: and he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments.

29 And it came to paſs when Moſes came down from mount Sinai (with the two tables of teſtimony in Moſes' hand, when he came down from the mount) that Moſes wiſt not that the ſkin of his face ſhone, while he talked with him.

30 And when Aaron and all the children of Iſrael ſaw Moſes, behold, the ſkin of his face ſhone, and they were afraid to come nigh him,

31 And Moſes called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him: and Moſes talked with them.

32 And afterward all the children of Iſrael came nigh: and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had ſpoken with him in mount Sinai.

33 And *till* Moſes had done ſpeaking with them, he put a vail on his face.

34 But when Moſes went in before the LORD to ſpeak with him, he took the vail off, until he came out. And he came out and ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, *that* which he was commanded.

35 And the children of Iſrael ſaw the face of Moſes, that the ſkin of Moſes' face ſhone: and

to that ſin, would provoke him to jealouſy. They are commanded therefore to deſtroy every monument of idolatry, though curious and coſtly; to reject all treaties of alliance, friendſhip, or marriage, however advantageous, with idolaters; and to refuſe all invitations to their idolatrous feaſts: and were eſpecially reminded not to repeat their old crime of making a graven image of God.

V. 24. *Neither ſhall any man*, &c.] This remarkable promiſe would form, whilſt they continued to obſerve their ſolemn feaſts, a full demonſtration of the divine original of their religion: three times in the year they would put this matter to a new proof. Nor do we ever hear them complain through their whole hiſtory, that their land was invaded on theſe occaſions. No falſe prophet would have inſerted ſuch an engagement in his writings, by which his own impoſture would always have been liable to detection.

V. 29. *Moſes wiſt not that the ſkin*, &c.] As the light of the ſun cauſes even opaque bodies, on which it ſhines, to appear luminous: thus long contemplation of the divine glory, cauſed an irradiation of the ſoul of Moſes; which was repreſented to the people by this external brightneſs of his countenance: but he himſelf was not conſcious of it; for true holineſs is always *clothed* with humility.

V. 35. *Moſes put the vail*, &c.] This vail marked the obſcurity of that diſpenſation, compared with that of the New Teſtament: it was alſo an emblem of that natural vail which pride, and carnal mindedneſs have put upon the hearts of men, reſpecting ſpiritual things: and alſo it repreſented the vail, that was and is upon the minds of ſuch multitudes of the nation of Iſrael, reſpecting the true meaning of the Scriptures of the Old Teſtament; which can only be taken away by the Spirit of the Lord, ſhewing to them "Chriſt as the end of the law for righteouſneſs to "every one, that believeth." (2 *Cor.* c. 3. v. 13—16. *Rom.* c. 10. v. 4.) The conduct alſo of Moſes ſhews us that eminent perſons ſhould avoid oſtentation, and rather conceal, than make boaſt of their peculiar attain-

and Moſes put the vail upon his face again until he went in to ſpeak with him.

CHAP. XXXV.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes reporting to the people the divine directions concerning the ſabbath; their voluntary offering; and the tabernacle, and it's furniture, v. 1—19. *2d. The people's liberal contributions, and aſſiſtance, v.* 20—29. *3d. Bezaleel, and Aholiab, appointed to, and qualified for their work, v.* 30—35.

AND Moſes gathered all the congregation of the children of Iſrael together, and ſaid unto them, Theſe *are* the words which the LORD hath commanded that ye ſhould do them.

2 Six days ſhall work be done, but on the ſeventh day there ſhall be to you an holy-day, a ſabbath of reſt to the LORD: whoſoever doeth work therein, ſhall be put to death.

ments and endowments; and ſhould accommodate themſelves to the capacities of their weaker brethren; and thus endeavour to abate envy by condeſcenſion: and to be content with that honour, which cometh from God only. And that before God every vail is laid aſide; and that we appear in his preſence juſt as we are, whether better, or worſe than our fellow creatures think of us.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The giving of the law to ſinful man, though ſalvation be not thereby, is an indication that the Lord has purpoſes of mercy to him: and the writing of it in our hearts is the only ſure evidence, that our ſins are forgiven, that God hath taken us into covenant with himſelf, and that we are become his people: ſo that he, who can *truly* ſay, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," notwithſtanding the infirmities, conflicts, and remaining ſinfulneſs, which cauſe him to groan being burdened, is certainly a true believer; for this hath God wrought in conſequence, and in evidence of reconciliation through Jeſus Chriſt. When, without delay, and implicitly we obey the Lord's commands, and reſort to thoſe places, and ordinances, which he hath appointed, he will certainly condeſcend to meet us, and fulfil his kindeſt promiſes. But the NAME of the Lord as proclaimed unto Moſes, as a juſt God, and a Saviour, can alone give relief to a burdened conſcience, or encourage the prayers of an humbled ſinner. Let no enquiring ſoul overlook this name of the Lord: much of the great myſtery of godlineſs is involved in it, or connected with it: let no diſcouraged ſinner deſpond with ſuch words of grace, and truth ſounding in his ears: yet let none abuſe ſuch mercy; for God knows how to puniſh, as well as pardon; to puniſh conſiſtent with the glory of his mercy, as well as to pardon conſiſtent with his juſtice, and holineſs: As thoſe guilty wretches will one day know, who "ſin on that grace may abound." A true diſcovery of the Lord's glory will unite filial confidence with profound reverence; and put life, and vigour into fervent prayers, and ſupplications; and every perfection of the name of God, will furniſh an argument, in the mouth of an experienced believer, which he may plead with him, for the forgiveneſs of his ſins, the ſanctification of his heart, or the enlargement of the Redeemer's kingdom. Whilſt we liſten to the promiſes of God's word, we muſt obſerve alſo to do his commandments; elſe every external advantage will only increaſe our condemnation: and in ſeeking aſſurance that the Lord hath made with us an everlaſting covenant of peace, we muſt break every covenant with ſin, renounce all needleſs connexion with ſinners, ſhun every ſnare and temptation, avoid all appearance of evil, and not ſpare, or covet any object, which tends thereto: for our God is jealous, and will endure no rival in our affections. Nor is any thing more enſnaring to ſouls, or more deſtructive to religion, than the marriages of God's people with thoſe of no religion, or of a falſe religion. Such is our forgetfulneſs in the concerns of our ſouls, that we need, not only to have the ſame things repeated in our ears, but to have them committed to writing, that we may have them ever before our eyes. (2 *Pet.* c. 1. v. 12—15.) Whilſt we devote ourſelves to the Lord's ſervice, and attend with delight on his worſhip, we may entruſt ourſelves and our poſſeſſions to his keeping, with confidence that none can do us any real hurt: and when a part of our time, and ſubſtance are conſecrated to him, we ſhall thereby ſecure a ſanctified, and comfortable enjoyment of the remainder. Who would not willingly forego all ſenſual pleaſures, to enjoy with Moſes the ſacred pleaſure of the holy mount? But though it is good to be there: yet alas! how backward are we to enter upon, and how apt to grow weary of this ſweet employment! In heaven it ſhall be otherwiſe: no leiſure for, no thought of, no deſire after ſuch things, as here occupy our time, and engroſs our hearts! But the more we now ſet our affections on things above, ſeek communion with the Lord, and enjoy the contemplation of his glory in the Goſpel by faith, and ſerious meditation; the more ſhall we be "changed into his image from glory to glory by the "Spirit of the Lord:" (2 *Cor.* c. 3. v. 18.) and when we come forth from our devotions, ſhall ſhine in our holy converſation before men, and ſhew by our good works, that we have been with God in the mount. But it is well when others behold it, and glorify God on our behalf; and we are not ourſelves conſcious of it, being "clothed with humility." And indeed, whilſt we are in this world we muſt accommodate ourſelves to our ſituation, and to what thoſe around us are able to bear; and not only muſt humbly avoid oſtentation, in reſpect of our religious experiences, and the eſpecial favours, which the Lord hath vouchſafed us: but muſt prudently avoid ſpeaking of them, leſt we throw our pearls before ſwine, which "may trample them under foot, and turn again and rent "us:" and be content to rejoice in them, and be thankful before God in ſecret; for it is "a joy, which a ſtranger "intermeddleth not with."

3 Ye ſhall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the ſabbath-day.

4 And Moſes ſpake unto all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, ſaying, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded, ſaying,

5 Take ye from amongſt you an offering unto the LORD: Whoſoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the LORD; gold, and ſilver, and braſs,

6 And blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen, and goats *hair*,

7 And rams ſkins died red, and badgers ſkins, and ſhittim-wood,

8 And oil for the light, and ſpices for anointing oil, and for the ſweet incenſe,

9 And onyx-ſtones, and ſtones to be ſet for the ephod, and for the breaſt-plate.

10 And every wiſe-hearted among you, ſhall come and make all that the LORD hath commanded;

11 The tabernacle, his tent, and his covering, his taches, and his boards, his bars, his pillars, and his ſockets,

12 The ark and the ſtaves thereof, *with* the mercy-ſeat, and the vail of the covering,

13 The table and his ſtaves, and all his veſſels, and the ſhew-bread,

14 The candleſtick alſo for the light, and his furniture, and his lamps, with the oil for the light,

15 And the incenſe-altar, and his ſtaves, and the anointing oil, and the ſweet incenſe, and the hanging for the door at the entering in of the tabernacle,

16 The altar of burnt-offering with his brazen grate, his ſtaves, and all his veſſels, the laver and his foot,

17 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and their ſockets, and the hanging for the door of the court,

18 The pins of the tabernacle, and the pins of the court, and their cords,

19 The clothes of ſervice, to do ſervice in the holy *place*, the holy garments for Aaron the prieſt, and the garments of his ſons to miniſter in the prieſt's office.

20 And all the congregation of the children of Iſrael departed from the preſence of Moſes.

21 And they came, every one whoſe heart ſtirred him up, and every one whom his ſpirit made willing, *and* they brought the LORD's offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his ſervice, and for the holy garments.

22 And they came both men and women, as many as were willing-hearted, *and* brought bracelets, and ear-rings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered, *offered* an offering of gold unto the LORD.

23 And every man with whom was found blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen, and goats *hair*, and red ſkins of rams, and badgers ſkins, brought *them*.

24 Every one that did offer an offering of ſilver and braſs, brought the LORD's offering: and every man with whom was found ſhittim-wood for any work of the ſervice, brought *it*.

25 And all the women that were wiſe-hearted, did ſpin with their hands, and brought that which they had ſpun, *both* of blue, and of purple, *and* of ſcarlet, and of fine linen.

26 And all the women whoſe heart ſtirred them up in wiſdom, ſpun goats *hair*.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV.] V. 3. *Ye ſhall kindle no fire.*] In thoſe warm climates, this would be no wiſe inconvenient; but though we allow that the *letter* of this belongs to the ſtrictneſs of the Jewiſh ſabbath; yet the works of neceſſity, and of mercy, which Chriſt allows, do not imply a permiſſion to make proviſion for the fleſh, to fulfil the luſt thereof.

V. 22. *Were willing-hearted, brought,* &c.] Some it ſeems were not willing to part with their gold, and ſilver, eſpecially that of which their ornaments were made: but they, who were zealous for the worſhip of Jehovah, would not be outdone by thoſe, who had given their ear-rings to make the golden calf; and were willing to lack their *newly-acquired* adorning, that the ſanctuary of God might want no part of it's beauty. A rare example!

27 And the rulers brought onyx-ſtones, and ſtones to be ſet for the ephod, and for the breaſt-plate:

28 And ſpice, and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the ſweet incenſe.

29 The children of Iſrael brought a willing offering unto the LORD, every man and woman whoſe heart made them willing to bring for all manner of work, which the LORD had commanded to be made, by the hand of Moſes.

30 And Moſes ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, See, the LORD hath called by name Bezaleel the ſon of Uri, the ſon of Hur, of the tribe of Judah:

31 And he hath filled him with the ſpirit of God, in wiſdom, in underſtanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanſhip;

32 And to deviſe curious works, to work in gold, and in ſilver, and in braſs,

33 And in the cutting of ſtones to ſet *them*, and in carving of wood to make any manner of cunning work.

34 And he hath put in his heart that he may teach, *both* he and Aholiab the ſon of Ahiſamach of the tribe of Dan.

35 Them hath he filled with wiſdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in ſcarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, *even* of them that do any work, and of thoſe that deviſe cunning work.

CHAP.* XXXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Bezaleel and Aholiab proceeding to work, and ſtill receiving contributions: till, having more than enough, the people were ſtayed, v. 1—7. 2d. The making of the ſeveral parts of the ſanctuary, (See ch. 26.) v. 8—38.

THEN wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wiſe-hearted man, in whom the LORD put wiſdom and underſtanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the ſervice of the ſanctuary, according to all that the LORD had commanded.

2 And Moſes called Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wiſe-hearted man, in whoſe heart the LORD had put wiſdom, *even* every one whoſe heart ſtirred him up to come unto the work to do it.

3 And they received of Moſes all the offering which the children of Iſrael had brought, for the work of the ſervice of the ſanctuary, to make it *withal*. And they

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V. 30—35.] The ſupernatural qualifications of theſe two perſons proved their divine appointment: yet they had alſo an expreſs nomination to their work. Others, who were ſkilful, might aſſiſt them, but they were to direct and ſuperintend. Chriſt alone "builds the Temple "of the Lord, and bears the glory." (*Zech.* c. 6. v. 12, 13.) But miniſters and private Chriſtians under his direction, and by his grace, may be fellow workers together with him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is enough to refer to thoſe obſervations, which have been already made upon the typical meaning of thoſe things, which are mentioned in this, and the following chapters: as they contain only an hiſtory of the execution of the directions before given to Moſes. But let us obſerve, and imitate his faithfulneſs, in every thing entruſted to us; and through him look unto Jeſus, who was "faithful as a Son over his own houſe." (*Heb.* c. 3. v. 1—6.) Without a willing mind the moſt coſtly offerings would be abhorred, but with it the meaneſt will meet with a gracious acceptance: and then may our hearts be ſaid to be willing, when we chearfully contribute and aſſiſt, according to our ability, in promoting the cauſe of God, and his truth: but as even this willingneſs is the gift, and work of God, we ſhould beſeech him daily to increaſe in us a willing mind, to abound unto every good work. They, who in mean employments are diligent, and humbly contented, are as accepted of God, as thoſe, who are engaged in more ſplendid ſervices. The women, who ſpun the goat's hair, *were wiſe-hearted*, as well as the perſons, who preſided over the work of the tabernacle; or as Aaron, who burnt incenſe therein; becauſe they did it heartily to the Lord: thus the labourer, mechanic, or menial ſervant, who conſcientiouſly attends to the work of his ſituation, in the faith and fear of God, may be as wiſe, and is as accepted of God, as the moſt uſeful miniſter. In ſhort, our wiſdom and duty conſiſt in giving God the glory, and the uſe of our talents, be they more or leſs, neither abuſing, nor burying them, but occupying therewith till our Lord come: being ſatisfied that it is better to be a door-keeper in his ſervice, than the moſt mighty, and renowned of the ungodly.

brought

brought yet unto him free offerings every morning.

4 And all the wise men that wrought all the work of the sanctuary, came every man from his work which they made.

5 And they spake unto Moses, saying, The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded to make.

6 And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing.

7 For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much.

8 And every wise-hearted man, among them that wrought the work of the tabernacle, made ten curtains *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet: with cherubims of cunning work made he them.

9 The length of one curtain *was* twenty and eight cubits, and the breadth of one curtain four cubits: the curtains *were* all of one size.

10 And he coupled the five curtains one unto another: and *the other* five curtains he coupled one unto another.

11 And he made loops of blue on the edge of one curtain, from the selvedge in the coupling: likewise he made in the uttermost side of *another* curtain, in the coupling of the second.

12 Fifty loops made he in one curtain, and fifty loops made he in the edge of the curtain which *was* in the coupling of the second: the loops held one *curtain* to another.

13 And he made fifty taches of gold, and coupled the curtains one unto another with the taches. So it became one tabernacle.

14 And he made curtains *of* goats *hair*, for the tent over the tabernacle: eleven curtains he made them.

15 The length of one curtain *was* thirty cubits, and four cubits *was* the breadth of one curtain: the eleven curtains *were* of one size.

16 And he coupled five curtains by themselves, and six curtains by themselves.

17 And he made fifty loops upon the uttermost edge of the curtain in the coupling, and fifty loops made he upon the edge of the curtain, which coupleth the second.

18 And he made fifty taches *of* brass to couple the tent together, that it might be one.

19 And he made a covering for the tent, *of* rams skins dyed red, and a covering *of* badgers skins above *that*.

20 And he made boards for the tabernacle, *of* shittim-wood, standing up.

21 The length of a board *was* ten cubits, and the breadth of a board one cubit and a half.

22 One board had two tenons, equally distant one from another: thus did he make for all the boards of the tabernacle.

23 And he made boards for the tabernacle: twenty boards for the south side southward.

24 And forty sockets of silver he made under the twenty boards: two sockets under one board for his two tenons, and two sockets under another board for his two tenons.

25 And for the other side of the tabernacle *which is* toward the north corner, he made twenty boards,

26 And their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under one board, and two sockets under another board.

27 And for the sides of the tabernacle westward, he made six boards.

28 And two boards made he for the corners of the tabernacle in the two sides.

29 And they were coupled beneath, and coupled together at the head thereof, to one ring: thus he did to both of them in both the corners.

30 And there were eight boards, and their sockets *were* sixteen sockets of silver, under every board two sockets.

31 And he made bars *of* shittim-wood: five for the boards of the one side of the tabernacle,

32 And five bars for the boards of the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for

the boards of the tabernacle for the ſides weſtward.

33 And he made the middle bar to ſhoot through the boards from the one end to the other.

34 And he overlaid the boards with gold, and made their rings *of* gold *to be* places for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35 And he made a vail *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen: *with* cherubims made he it of cunning work.

36 And he made thereunto four pillars of ſhittim-*wood*, and overlaid them with gold: their hooks *were of* gold, and he caſt for them four ſockets of ſilver.

37 And he made an hanging for the tabernacle-door, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen, of needle-work,

38 And the five pillars of it with their hooks: and he overlaid their chapiters, and their fillets with gold: but their five ſockets *were of* braſs.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Contains the making, 1ſt. Of the furniture for the ſanctuary, v. 1—28. 2d. Of the anointing oil, and incenſe, v. 29.

AND Bezaleel made the ark *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits and a half *was* the length of it, and a cubit and a half the breadth of it, and a cubit and a half the height of it.

2 And he overlaid it with pure gold within and without, and made a crown of gold to it round about.

3 And he caſt for it four rings of gold, *to be ſet* by the four corners of it: even two rings upon the one ſide of it, and two rings upon the other ſide of it.

4 And he made ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold.

5 And he put the ſtaves into the rings, by the ſides of the ark, to bear the ark.

6 And he made the mercy-ſeat *of* pure gold: two cubits and an half *was* the length thereof, and one cubit and an half the breadth thereof.

7 And he made two cherubims *of* gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-ſeat.

8 One cherub on the end on this ſide, and another cherub on the *other* end on that ſide: out of the mercy-ſeat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof.

9 And the cherubims ſpread out *their* wings on high, *and* covered with their wings over the mercy-ſeat, with their faces one to another; *even* to the mercy-ſeat-ward were the faces of the cherubims.

10 And he made the table *of* ſhittim-wood: two cubits *was* the length thereof, and a cubit the breadth thereof, and a cubit and a half the height thereof.

11 And he overlaid it with pure gold,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXVI.] We have here only to add, that the promptitude, and alacrity, with which theſe builders ſet about their work; the exactneſs, with which they performed it; and the diſintereſted fidelity, with which they objected to the people's bringing any more contributions, are well worthy of our imitation. Thus ſhould we ſerve God; yea, and our earthly ſuperiors too, for his ſake, in all things lawful: and thus ſhould all, who are employed in public truſts, abhor filthy lucre, be ſuperior to covetouſneſs, and avoid all occaſions, and temptations to it, or appearances of it: for robbing the public is robbing many, which is worſe than private theft; as murdering a multitude is worſe than killing an individual.—Nor is the people's liberality leſs worthy of commendation: much more reputable for them, and much more honourable to God, was this proclamation to reſtrain their bounty; than one would have been, which had required an addition to their too ſcanty contributions. But it would be wrong not to obſerve, that though the rich never can devote their ſubſtance too entirely to the ſervice of God; yet they may exceed in the particular application of it: and there have been ages of the church, (and there may ſtill be inſtances) in which an ill-judged liberality has introduced pride, indolence, and luxury, where there ſhould be bright examples of humility, diligence, and ſelf-denial. But this is not the general fault of the age, in which we live; and though ſome few individuals may err on this hand; yet the circumſtances of too many, of every denomination, who labour in the word, and doctrine, as well as the appearances of many places of public worſhip, evidently prove, that moſt men, in our days, are ſufficiently careful not *thus* to injure the cauſe of godlineſs. However wiſdom is profitable to direct: and when God puts wiſdom and grace into the heart, the hands will be diligently employed in, or chearfully ſtretched out for every good work.

and

and made thereunto a crown of gold round about.

12 Alſo he made thereunto a border of an hand-breadth round about: and made a crown of gold for the border thereof round about.

13 And he caſt for it four rings of gold, and put the rings upon the four corners, that *were* in the four feet thereof.

14 Over againſt the border were the rings, the places for the ſtaves, to bear the table.

15 And he made the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold, to bear the table.

16 And he made the veſſels which *were* upon the table, his diſhes, and his ſpoons, and his bowls, and his covers to cover withal, *of* pure gold.

17 And he made the candleſtick *of* pure gold: *of* beaten work made he the candleſtick, his ſhaft and his branch, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers were of the ſame.

18 And ſix branches going out of the ſides thereof: three branches of the candleſtick out of the one ſide thereof, and three branches of the candleſtick out of the other ſide thereof.

19 Three bowls made after the faſhion of almonds, in one branch, a knop and a flower; and three bowls made like almonds, in another branch, a knop and a flower: ſo throughout the ſix branches, going out of the candleſtick.

20 And in the candleſtick *were* four bowls made like almonds, his knops and his flowers.

21 And a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, and a knop under two branches of the ſame, according to the ſix branches going out of it.

22 Their knops and their branches were of the ſame: all of it *was* one beaten work *of* pure gold.

23 And he made his ſeven lamps, and his ſnuffers, and his ſnuff-diſhes, *of* pure gold.

24 *Of* a talent of pure gold made he it, and all the veſſels thereof.

25 And he made the incenſe altar *of* ſhittim-wood: the length of it *was* a cubit, and the breadth of it a cubit (*it was* four-ſquare) and two cubits *was* the height of it; the horns thereof were of the ſame.

26 And he overlaid it with pure gold, *both* the top of it, and the ſides thereof round about, and the horns of it: alſo he made unto it a crown of gold round about.

27 And he made two rings of gold for it under the crown thereof, by the two corners of it, upon the two ſides thereof, to be places for the ſtaves to bear it withal.

28 And he made the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with gold.

29 And he made the holy anointing oil, and the pure incenſe of ſweet ſpices, according to the work of the apothecary.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Contains the making, 1ſt. Of the altar of burnt-offering, and of the laver, v. 1—8. *2d. Of the pillars, and hangings for the court, v.* 9—20. *3d. The money collected, and the uſe made of it, v.* 21—31.

AND he made the altar of burnt-offering *of* ſhittim-wood: five cubits *was* the length thereof, and five cubits the breadth thereof (*it was* four-ſquare) and three cubits the height thereof.

2 And he made the horns thereof on the four corners of it: the horns thereof were of the ſame, and he overlaid it with braſs.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXVII.] After what hath been already ſpoken, we need only obſerve, that ſuch repetitions were uſeful to the Old Teſtament Church, as in theſe types they chiefly had their Goſpel: thus in the New Teſtament we have the ſame things related in two, or three places, with little variation; yet not without uſefulneſs. The exactneſs of the workmen to their rule is worthy of our imitation: and it is never unſeaſonable to obſerve, that, through the great Antitype, the ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows, our way being opened to the mercy-ſeat, we ſhould continually draw near in faith; feeding daily upon him, and his fulneſs, as the nouriſhment of ſouls; walking through this dark world by, and according to the light of his word; and ſeeking for renewed and enlarged anointings of his holy Spirit; that here we may rejoice in and glorify him, and at length be for ever with him.

3 And he made all the veſſels of the altar, the pots, and the ſhovels, and the baſons, *and* the fleſh-hooks, and the fire-pans: all the veſſels thereof made he *of* braſs.

4 And he made for the altar a brazen grate of net-work, under the compaſs thereof, beneath unto the midſt of it.

5 And he caſt four rings for the four ends of the grate of braſs, *to be* places for the ſtaves.

6 And he made the ſtaves *of* ſhittim-wood, and overlaid them with braſs.

7 And he put the ſtaves into the rings on the ſides of the altar, to bear it withal; he made the altar hollow with boards.

8 And he made the laver *of* braſs, and the foot of it *of* braſs, of the looking-glaſſes of *the women* aſſembling, which aſſembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

9 And he made the court: on the ſouth-ſide ſouthward, the hangings of the court *were* of fine twined linen, an hundred cubits.

10 Their pillars *were* twenty, and their braſen ſockets twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *were of* ſilver.

11 And for the north-ſide, *the hangings were* an hundred cubits, their pillars *were* twenty, and their ſockets of braſs twenty: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

12 And for the weſt ſide *were* hangings of fifty cubits, their pillars ten, and their ſockets ten: the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

13 And for the eaſt ſide eaſtward fifty cubits.

14 The hangings of the one ſide *of the gate were* fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

15 And for the other ſide of the court-gate, on this hand and that hand, *were* hangings of fifteen cubits, their pillars three, and their ſockets three.

16 All the hangings of the court round about *were* of twined linen.

17 And the ſockets for the pillars *were of* braſs; the hooks of the pillars, and their fillets, *of* ſilver: and the overlaying of their chapiters, *of* ſilver; and all the pillars of the court *were* filleted with ſilver.

18 And the hanging for the gate of the court *was* needle-work, *of* blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine twined linen: and twenty cubits *was* the length, and the height in the breadth *was* five cubits, anſwerable to the hangings of the court.

19 And their pillars *were* four, and their ſockets *of* braſs four, their hooks *of* ſilver, and the overlaying of their chapiters, and their fillets *of* ſilver.

20 And all the pins of the tabernacle, and of the court round about, *were of* braſs.

21 This is the ſum of the tabernacle, *even* of the tabernacle of teſtimony, as it was counted according to the commandment of Moſes, *for* the ſervice of the Levites, by the hand of Ithamar, ſon to Aaron the prieſt.

22 And Bezaleel the ſon of Uri, the ſon of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD commanded Moſes.

23 And with him *was* Aholiab, ſon of Ahiſamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver, and a cunning workman, and an embroiderer in blue, and in purple, and in ſcarlet, and fine linen.

24 All the gold that was occupied for the work, in all the work of the holy *place*, even the gold of the offering, was twenty and nine talents, and ſeven hundred and thirty ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVIII.] V. 8. *Of the looking-glaſſes*, &c.] Theſe are ſuppoſed to have been plates of braſs highly poliſhed, which, before the invention of glaſs, ſerved the purpoſe of mirrours. Some women peculiarly devoted to God, and zealous for the eſtabliſhment of his worſhip, at a time when much braſs was wanted, and perhaps no great quantity in the camp, expreſſed their zeal by parting with their mirrours: which are generally deemed *neceſſary*, and may be always allowed very *convenient*. Of theſe were formed the brazen laver; which circumſtance might be an inſtructive emblem to the prieſts in their ablutions, and may be the ſame to us: for in the glaſs of God's law ſhould we daily look, that we may know what manner of perſons we are; (*James*, c. 1. v. 23—25.) and ſo diſcover our need of daily repentance, and of waſhing in the blood of Chriſt.

25 And

25 And the silver of them that were numbered of the congregation, *was* an hundred talents, and a thousand seven hundred and threescore and fifteen shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

26 A bekah for every man, *that is* half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for every one that went to be numbered, from twenty years old and upward, for six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty *men*.

27 And of the hundred talents of silver, were cast the sockets of the sanctuary, and the sockets of the vail; an hundred sockets of the hundred talents, a talent for a socket.

28 And of the thousand seven hundred seventy and five *shekels*, he made hooks for the pillars, and overlaid their chapiters, and filleted them.

29 And the brass of the offering *was* seventy talents, and two thousand and four hundred shekels.

30 And therewith he made the sockets to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the brazen altar, and the brazen grate for it, and all the vessels of the altar,

31 And the sockets of the court round about, and the sockets of the court-gate, and all the pins of the tabernacle, and all the pins of the court round about.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Contains, 1st. The making of the priests garments, as before directed, (c. 28.) v. 1—31. 2d. The whole work finished, reviewed, and approved by Moses, who blessed the workmen, v. 32—43.

AND of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made clothes of service, to do service in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses.

2 And he made the ephod *of* gold, blue and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

3 And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut *it into* wires; to work *it* in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, *with* cunning work.

4 They made shoulder-pieces for it, to couple *it* together: by the two edges was it coupled together.

5 And the curious girdle of his ephod that *was* upon it, *was* of the same, according to the work thereof: *of* gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses.

6 And they wrought onyx-stones inclosed in ouches of gold, graven as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel.

7 And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, *that they should be* stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

8 And he made the breast-plate *of* cunning work, like the work of the ephod; *of* gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

9 It was four-square, they made the breast-plate double: a span *was* the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, *being* doubled.

V. 26.] A shekel is generally allowed to be *about* half an ounce troy weight. At half a shekel each, 6000 persons collected a talent of silver: consequently a talent consisted of about 125 pound troy weight; or somewhat above an hundred weight. This seems to have been nearly the general *weight* of a talent of whatever metal: and they who are disposed, may easily compute, how much it would be worth of current coin. Exactness in, or room occupied about a subject, of more curiosity than use, would not answer the intention of this publication. This silver, called "the ransom of their souls," (c. 30. v. 12.) was raised as a tax, which each must pay; the rest was all voluntary.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In all ages of the Church there has been some persons more devoted to God, more constant in their attendance upon his ordinances, and more willing to part with lawful things for his sake, than others. These are never censured, but always commended, and honoured in God's word: for when relative duties, and social obligations are not neglected, or violated; we cannot too much renounce the world, deny ourselves, and devote our all to, and seek our whole happiness, from the Lord. It may also be added, that the inclosure of this court, being only of curtains, might intimate, that it should in due time be removed: and so we may take occasion to bless God for the enlargement of his Church, by the calling of *us* Gentiles into it; and to pray that, all remaining boundaries may be removed, and the whole earth filled with the knowledge of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: to whom be glory for ever, Amen.

10 And they set in it four rows of stones: *the first* row *was* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this *was* the first row.

11 And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

12 And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

13 And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: *they were* inclosed in ouches of gold in their inclosings.

14 And the stones *were* according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve according to their names, like the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes.

15 And they made upon the breast-plate chains, at the ends, *of* wreathen work *of* pure gold.

16 And they made two ouches *of* gold, and two gold rings: and put the two rings in the two ends of the breast-plate.

17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breast-plate.

18 And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, before it.

19 And they made two rings of gold, and put *them* on the two ends of the breast-plate upon the border of it, which *was* on the side of the ephod inward.

20 And they made two *other* golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

21 And they did bind the breast-plate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod, with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breast-plate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 And he made the robe of the ephod *of* woven work, all *of* blue.

23 And *there was* a hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, *with* a band round about the hole, that it should not rent.

24 And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates *of* blue, and purple, and scarlet, *and* twined *linen*.

25 And they made bells *of* pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates, upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates.

26 A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister *in*; as the LORD commanded Moses.

27 And they made coats *of* fine linen, *of* woven work, for Aaron and for his sons,

28 And a mitre *of* fine linen, and goodly bonnets *of* fine linen, and linen breeches *of* fine twined linen,

29 And a girdle *of* fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, *of* needle-work; as the LORD commanded Moses.

30 And they made the plate of the holy crown, *of* pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, *like to* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

31 And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten *it* on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

33 And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets,

34 And the covering of rams skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers skins, and the vail of the covering,

35 The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy-seat,

36 The table, *and* all the vessels thereof, and the shew-bread,

37 The pure candlestick, *with* the lamps thereof, *even with* the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light,

38 And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle-door.

39 The

39 The brazen altar, and his grate of braſs, his ſtaves, and all his veſſels, the laver and his foot,

40 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his ſockets, and the hanging for the court-gate, his cords and his pins, and all the veſſels of the ſervice of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation,

41 The clothes of ſervice to do ſervice in the holy *place*, and the holy garments for Aaron the prieſt, and his ſons garments to miniſter in the prieſt's office.

42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo the children of Iſrael made all the work.

43 And Moſes did look upon all the work, and behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even ſo had they done it: and Moſes bleſſed them.

CHAP. XL.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes, at God's command, ſetting up the tabernacle, and conſecrating it, with its furniture, v. 1—33. 2d. The Lord by the cloud and glory taking poſſeſſion of the tabernacle, and guiding, and protecting Iſrael, v. 34—38.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 On the firſt day of the firſt month ſhalt thou ſet up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation:

3 And thou ſhalt put therein the ark of the teſtimony, and cover the ark with the vail.

4 And thou ſhalt bring in the table, and ſet in order the things that are to be ſet in order upon it, and thou ſhalt bring in the candleſtick, and light the lamps thereof.

5 And thou ſhalt ſet the altar of gold for the incenſe before the ark of the teſtimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

6 And thou ſhalt ſet the altar of the burnt-offering, before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

7 And thou ſhalt ſet the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and ſhalt put water therein.

8 And thou ſhalt ſet up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court-gate.

9 And thou ſhalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* therein, and ſhalt hallow it, and all the veſſels thereof: and it ſhall be holy.

10 And thou ſhalt anoint the altar of the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXIX.] When unanimity, diligence, and zeal animate the hearts of numbers in a good cauſe, much may be done in a ſhort time: and when the commandment of God is continually attended to, as the rule of working, all will be done well.—We ought indeed daily to prove our own work: to take the counſel, and to regard the judgment of others; and to preſent all we do, before the Lord, and beg to be taught how far he approves, or diſapproves it: but the grand trial of our ſervices will be at the concluſion of them. We ought therefore not *raſhly* to judge others, or their works, before the time: nor to be lifted up with man's applauſe, nor caſt down by man's reproach, which are oft alike ignorant, and unmerited: but we ſhould exerciſe ourſelves to keep a conſcience void of offence, be content with it's teſtimony, and wait that day, when "the Lord ſhall come, and "bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and make "manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, and then ſhall "every man have praiſe of God." (1 *Cor.* c. 4. v. 5.) For though the glory of all the good we do belongs to him, and our beſt needs much forgiveneſs: yet, if by his grace our hearts are humbly upright, and willing; and we work by his rule, for his glory, and in dependance on his teaching, and aſſiſtance; he will graciouſly applaud us, and ſay, "well done, good and faithful ſervant:" and his bleſſing will then abundantly repay our labour, which indeed is even here it's own reward.—After his example therefore, as well as that of Moſes, parents, maſters, miniſters, magiſtrates, and others ſhould learn not to be always finding fault; but to ſhew themſelves pleaſed with, and to commend the honeſt endeavours of others to do well.—And they, who do good to the cauſe of true religion have a claim to our prayers for them, even as if they were our own benefactors.

NOTES.

CHAP. XL.] V. 2. *On the firſt day*, &c.] On the fifteenth day of the firſt month the Iſraelites came out of Egypt; on the fiftieth day after the law was given; with ſeveral intervening delays, Moſes ſpent at leaſt eighty days upon the mount: half of the year muſt therefore be expired, or perhaps more, before they began to work upon the tabernacle: and in half a year, or ſomewhat leſs, the whole was completed.

burnt-offering, and all his veſſels, and ſanctify the altar: and it ſhall be an altar moſt holy.

11 And thou ſhalt anoint the laver and his foot, and ſanctify it.

12 And thou ſhalt bring Aaron and his ſons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and waſh them with water.

13 And thou ſhalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and ſanctify him; that he may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office.

14 And thou ſhalt bring his ſons, and clothe them with coats:

15 And thou ſhalt anoint them, as thou didſt anoint their father, that they may miniſter unto me in the prieſt's office: for their anointing ſhall ſurely be an everlaſting prieſthood, throughout their generations.

16 Thus did Moſes: according to all that the LORD commanded him, ſo did he.

17 And it came to paſs, in the firſt month in the ſecond year, on the firſt *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was reared up.

18 And Moſes reared up the tabernacle, and faſtened his ſockets, and ſet up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

19 And he ſpread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

20 And he took and put the teſtimony into the ark, and ſet the ſtaves on the ark, and put the mercy-ſeat above upon the ark.

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and ſet up the vail of the covering, and covered the ark of the teſtimony; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the ſide of the tabernacle northward without the vail.

23 And he ſet the bread in order upon it, before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moſes.

24 And he put the candleſtick in the tent of the congregation, over againſt the table, on the ſide of the tabernacle ſouthward.

25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation, before the vail.

27 And he burnt ſweet incenſe thereon, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

28 And he ſet up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle.

29 And he put the altar of burnt-offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

30 And he ſet the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to waſh *withal*.

31 And Moſes, and Aaron and his ſons, waſhed their hands and their feet thereat.

32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they waſhed; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and ſet up the hanging of the court-gate: ſo Moſes finiſhed the work.

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

35 And Moſes was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, becauſe the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

36 And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the children of Iſrael went onward in all their journeys:

37 But

V. 15. *Everlaſting prieſthood*, &c.] It endured in the family of Aaron till Chriſt came; and in him, the ſubſtance of all theſe ſhadows, it reſts for ever.

V. 27. *He burnt ſweet incenſe*, &c.] Moſes acted as high prieſt, till the order of Aaron was fully appointed, that he might more entirely reſemble Him, who unites in himſelf the offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King. (*Deut.* c. 18. v. 15—19.)

V. 34. *Then the cloud*, &c.] Thus the Lord teſtified his acceptance of their ſervice, his entire reconciliation to them as a nation, and his gracious reſidence amongſt them. The cloud reſted above the tabernacle; a more reſplendent glory filled it, which Moſes himſelf could not enter within, for a time: but probably it afterwards was confined to the holy of holies, above the mercy-ſeat, between the cherubims.

V. 36

37 But if the cloud were not taken up, then they journeyed not, till the day that it was taken up.

38 For the cloud of the LORD *was* upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

V. 36—38.] (See Note, *Ex.* c. 13. v. 21, 22. *Isaiah*, c. 4. v. 5, 6.) In allusion to this special guidance of Israel, many pious persons make use of the expression, "the moving of the cloud," as denoting the providential and gracious direction, which God now affords his people: and doubtless it is very allowable thus to accommodate and apply these *typical* passages to our own circumstances, as Christians; provided it be done with sobriety, judgment, and caution. But we should be careful not to introduce a new rule of duty, or give occasion to uncertainty, error, or enthusiasm, by a vague, and indeterminate use of such allusions. We are not under the same evident infallible guidance, that Israel was: the word of God soberly explained is our only, and our sufficient rule of duty: in understanding it, and in applying general precepts to particular circumstances, good counsel, fervent prayer, and a careful observance of Providence should be employed. Some things are always our duty, when we have opportunity, and ability; and these need no other direction: other things are lawful in themselves; but it may be doubtful, whether in our case, and situation, they are advisable; that is, whether they are likely, all things considered, to conduce to the glory of God, and our own real good. When after mature consultation, and fervent prayer, such matters *still remain doubtful*; the events of Providence, yea perhaps a strong inward impulse, may be of weight in the decision. But when any undertaking is evidently wrong, or doubtfully right, or plainly inexpedient, or unadviseable in the opinion of impartial judges; and yet the inclination leans that way: in this case, what men call the "moving of the "cloud," or the opening of Providence, is generally no more than a temptation, which Satan is permitted to propose; and the suggestions of that enemy are oft mistaken for divine impressions; and men fancy they are following the Lord, when they are following their own wayward inclinations. Upon the whole, in all doubtful matters, "to the law, and to the testimony:" plain precepts, and maxims of wisdom are surer rules, than the most ingenious allusions: and the book of Providence, as well as the supposed guidance of the Spirit, must be interpreted by, and brought to the test of the plain rules of the written word, "which are the light of our feet, and the "lanthorn of our paths."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The several parts of divine revelation, the several offices of Jesus Christ, and the various graces of the Christian's character, are never seen in their glory, and beauty, till they are viewed, as united in one harmonious whole: which whole the believer values, desires, and seeks to call his own. The periodical return of the seasons should remind us of our work for God, and for our souls: and we may hope for a good year, month, week, or day, when we begin them with serious attention to the worship of God, and solemn dedication of ourselves to him. But when we remember that within this very year, which was entered upon so hopefully, the Lord was not well pleased with the most of these Israelites, and doomed "their "carcases to fall in the wilderness;" we may justly fear, lest we should amuse, and deceive ourselves with a form of godliness: and the consideration, how few of them entered Canaan, should warn young people not to postpone the care of their souls, till they are settled in life, lest that should prove too late. Happy they, who like Moses receive repeated testimony from God, that they do his will, and keep his commandments. But through him, let us look unto Jesus Christ, who collects his people from all nations and ages, and according to the will of the Father, having washed them in his blood, and anointed them with the unction of his grace, forms them into one holy temple, an habitation of God through the Spirit: wherein he dwells to illuminate, to purify, to guide, and defend them through life; and in which he will dwell for ever. Being then led by the Spirit into imitation of, as well as dependance on Christ; into a devout attendance on his ordinances, and obedience to his precepts, we shall be preserved from losing our way, and be "led in the "midst of the paths of judgment, unto the habitation of "his holiness in heaven."

THE THIRD BOOK OF MOSES, CALLED LEVITICUS.

This Book, which the Greek Tranſlators have called LEVITICUS, *from it's relation to the Levitical prieſthood, tribe and ceremonies, conſiſts almoſt entirely of Laws, delivered to Moſes from above the Mercy-ſeat; during the firſt month, after the Tabernacle was erected. It contains ſcarce any hiſtory, except that of the Conſecration of Aaron, and his Sons, with the awful death of Nadab and Abihu, which accompanied it. Though moral Precepts are in ſome places intermixed, and towards the cloſe are many gracious Promiſes, and terrible Threatenings; yet almoſt the whole Book conſiſts of Ritual Appointments. Much of* their *Goſpel, under that inſtitution, was contained in theſe antiquated Laws; the particular, and exact knowledge whereof, would be uſeful, nay, neceſſary to them. The enlightened Believer will ſee in them all the myſteries of Redeeming Love, and the peculiarities of the Goſpel Revelation. But, as they are not now obligatory as Precepts, or Ordinances; and, bleſſed be God, we are favoured with clearer light in the New Teſtament: it will not therefore be neceſſary to attend* very minutely *to the* Expoſition *of this part of Scripture; but we may confine ourſelves almoſt entirely to thoſe enquiries, which are more immediately connected with our Edification.*

Before Chriſt 1490.] [*Before Chriſt* 1490.

CHAP. I.

Contains the law of the burnt-offering; 1ſt. Of a bullock, v. 1—9. *2d. Of a ſheep, or goat, v.* 10—13. *3d. Of fowls, v.* 14—17.

AND the LORD called unto Moſes, and ſpake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye ſhall bring your offering of the cattle, *even* of the herd, and of the flock.

3 If his offering *be* a burnt-ſacrifice of the herd,

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 2. *An offering*, &c.] The offering of ſacrifices was evidently an ordinance of true religion, from the fall of man, until the coming of Chriſt; and from thence was by tradition derived into the ſeveral ſpecies of falſe religion, which have prevailed. But until this period no very particular regulations ſeem to have been appointed. The ſacrifices were always offered of thoſe animals, which were called clean; the blood was ſhed, and the whole, or part of the body was burnt with fire, and the reſt ſeems to have been regulated at the diſcretion of the ſacrificer; and in *moſt caſes* the head of a family, or even the perſon, who preſented the ſacrifice, officiated as prieſt in ſhedding it's blood, and burning it's fleſh. But under the Moſaic diſpenſation very particular laws were given upon this ſubject; connected with the ſeparation of the tribe of Levi, and the appointment of Aaron's family excluſively to the prieſthood. The general intention of theſe laws is very evident: the exact meaning of every one in particular is often very obſcure to us; though it might be more plain, and very uſeful to them; eſpecially in diſtinguiſhing, and ſeparating them from their heathen neighbours. In general we may obſerve, that the ſeveral ſacrifices not only in divers ways typified Chriſt; but alſo ſhadowed out the believer's duty, character, privilege, and communion with God. And indeed, if we except the divine Perſon, the miracles, and the meritorious mediation, in all it's parts, of the Lord Jeſus, there is ſcarce any thing in the whole Scripture ſpoken of him, which is ſo *appropriate* to him, as not to have alſo a ſubordinate

herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD.

4 And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering: and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.

5 And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar, that *is* by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

6 And he shall flay the burnt-offering, and cut it into his pieces.

7 And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar, and lay the wood in order upon the fire.

8 And the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat, in order upon the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar.

9 But his inwards and his legs shall he wash in water: and the priest shall burn all on the altar, *to be* a burnt-sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

10 And if his offering *be* of the flocks, *namely* of the sheep, or of the goats, for a burnt-sacrifice; he shall bring it a male without blemish.

11 And he shall kill it on the side of the

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subordinate meaning, which respects his people. Nor are we therefore to hesitate at applying the same types, both to Christ, and to Christians, in different respects. Having premised this, I would proceed with all possible brevity to comment on these various kinds of sacrifice; and in general, without endeavouring further to explain the RITUAL of them, than the text does, (as it is not necessary we should understand the exact process of the priest in offering the sacrifice,) I would only point out what I can discern, which relates to Christ, and Christians therein.

Of the herd, and of the flock.] Such animals only were to be offered in sacrifice, as are useful, and valuable to man; and which he is able to possess as property, and whose increase he promotes. And not all those; but such only as are most domestic, harmless, patient, cleanly; and whose flesh is commonly used for food: not filthy swine, not devouring lions, not the warlike horse, not the subtle fox, not the voracious dog, or any creature, which subsists on animal food; nor yet the timorous hare, or deer, who flee from the intercourse of man. Such animals alone were sacrificed, as best represented what Christ was, and what his people ought to be: as the laborious patient ox, the gentle, harmless, and cleanly sheep, and the tender, loving dove, &c.

V. 3. *A burnt-sacrifice.*] The burnt-sacrifices were wholly consumed upon the altar; and typified Christ, in the intenseness of his sufferings, both of body and soul, when he gave himself for us a sacrifice for our sins, and when, at the same time that man shed his blood, it pleased THE LORD to bruise him, and to put him to grief. They also represented the perfection of that zeal, and love, with which he voluntarily went through his sufferings for us. They moreover denoted the believer's solemn dedication of himself without reserve, body and soul, to the service, and glory of God; whether by doing, or suffering his will; whether by life or death. (*Rom.* c. 12. v. 1. *Phil.* c. 1. v. 20.)

A male, without blemish.] That is the most complete of the kind. Thus was Christ without spot, or blemish: thus his people must serve him with their best in every thing: and are themselves the excellent of the earth. (*Psalm* 16. v. 3.)

Of his own voluntary will.] The general sacrifices of the congregation daily, weekly, monthly, and annually, as well as those for the great feasts, were prescribed by express laws: so were the sin, and trespass-offerings, which were to be offered on particular occasions: but the burnt-offerings here spoken of were voluntary, and seem to have been intended as a voluntary confession of sin, (as consciously guilty before God, though none were chargeable upon the offerer by man, which could exclude him from the congregation,) and as a voluntary expression of repentance, of faith, and of devotedness to God. Thus Christ willingly offered himself for us, and we by his grace must freely confess our unworthiness, our dependance on him, and obligations to him, and willingly devote ourselves to God through him.

V. 4. *And he shall put*, &c.] This implied an acknowledgment that he, who brought the sacrifice, was deserving of the wrath of God, and of that destruction of body and soul, which is connected with it: but that he desired, and hoped that the sacrifice, which he thus offered to the Lord, might be substituted in his stead; and that it's death, and it's being burnt upon the altar might be accepted as a typical atonement for his sin. All this prefigured Christ *bearing our sins* in his own body on the tree; and the humble believing application of his atonement to the heart, and conscience of the broken-hearted penitent, for his acceptance with God.

V. 5. *Sprinkle the blood*, &c.] Denoting that the efficacy of Christ's death renders all our religious services accepted, if we truly believe in him; which otherwise would not be deemed worthy of any favourable notice from a holy God, being all defiled with sin. This also shewed them that ordinarily sacrifices were to be offered no where, but at the door of the tabernacle.

V. 9. *His inwards, and his legs*, &c.] This may denote the inward purity of heart, and outward holiness of life, which were perfect in Christ; and are in a measure to be found in his truly devoted disciples.

altar

altar northward before the LORD: and the prieſts, Aaron's ſons, ſhall ſprinkle his blood round about upon the altar.

12 And he ſhall cut it into his pieces, with his head and his fat: and the prieſt ſhall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire which *is* upon the altar.

13 But he ſhall waſh the inwards and the legs with water: and the prieſt ſhall bring *it* all, and burn *it* upon the altar: it *is* a burnt-ſacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

14 And if the burnt-ſacrifice for his offering to the LORD *be* of fowls, then he ſhall bring his offering of turtle doves, or of young pigeons.

15 And the prieſt ſhall bring it unto the altar, and wring off his head, and burn *it* on the altar: and the blood thereof ſhall be wrung out at the ſide of the altar.

16 And he ſhall pluck away his crop with his feathers, and caſt it beſide the altar on the eaſt part, by the place of the aſhes.

17 And he ſhall cleave it, with the wings thereof, *but* ſhall not divide *it* aſunder: and the prieſt ſhall burn it upon the altar, upon the wood that *is* upon the fire: it *is* a burnt-ſacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

V. 14—18.] This was the ſacrifice of the poor, and was as aptly typical of Chriſt's atonement, and would as fully expreſs the offerer's repentance, faith, and devotedneſs to God, as the more coſtly ſacrifices; provided poverty, not covetouſneſs, induced the offerer to bring it. The prieſts would need as much care in offering this ſacrifice, as any of the others; though it were neither ſo ſplendid in itſelf, nor attended with any perquiſites to them: which was to teach them, and us, that the ſouls of the poor are to be as carefully watched over, as thoſe of the wealthy; though in *a ſecular ſenſe* it may not be either ſo honourable, or ſo advantageous to thoſe, who have the overſight of them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It might have been ſaid of all theſe ſacrifices, "to "what purpoſe is this waſte?" (*Matt.* c. 26. v. 8.) All theſe bulls and goats might have been ſold for very much, and given to the poor; and would have ſupported very many indigent families: why then burn all this fleſh, &c. upon the altar? yet were they appointed of God himſelf, and were "a ſweet ſavour" unto him; becauſe they both typified the ſatisfactory ſufferings of Chriſt; and were apt expreſſions of the humble faith and love of thoſe, who preſented them. That can never be waſted which is ſpent acceptably to the Lord, and honourably to his name: be our obedience ever ſo expenſive, we can be no loſers in the iſſue by ſuch ſervices: and he can both ſupply our wants, repay our loſſes, and furniſh us with a ſufficiency to give to the poor alſo, whom we have always with us. But if an Iſraelite might not grudge the expence, labour, and inconvenience of his religion; how inexcuſable are we, if we ungratefully refuſe the eaſy, pleaſant, and reaſonable ſervice, which is required of us under the Chriſtian diſpenſation! Indeed the Lord always prevents us with his goodneſs; and we can no more offer the ſacrifice of a broken heart, or of praiſe and thankſgiving; than an Iſraelite could offer a bullock, or a goat, except as he hath firſt given unto us. Of his own we preſent unto him; and the more we do in the Lord's ſervice, the greater are our obligations to him; both for the will, the ability, and the opportunity. Though the Lord in many things leave us to preſcribe to ourſelves the proportion, which ſhall be immediately ſpent in his ſervice, whether of our time, or of our ſubſtance: and though two doves, or two mites may in ſome caſes be more acceptable, than thouſands of bulls, and goats, or of gold and ſilver in others: yet where God's providence hath put more into a man's power, ſuch ſcanty oblations will not be accepted; becauſe no proper expreſſions of a willing mind. But this I ſay, "he which "ſoweth ſparingly, ſhall reap alſo ſparingly: and he "which ſoweth bountifully, ſhall reap alſo bountifully," &c. (2 *Cor.* c. 9. v. 6—8.) Whilſt we, in all theſe ſacrifices, have our *own* ſinfulneſs, and Chriſt's ſufferings brought to our remembrance, we ſhould call upon ourſelves to renew our repentance; to exerciſe faith in, and love to the Saviour; to reflect deeply upon the freeneſs, and vaſtneſs of *his* love to us, and the immenſe price our ſalvation coſt him; that ſo we may deduce from them arguments, and motives to encreaſe our abhorrence of, and determination of heart againſt all ſin; and our devotedneſs in body and ſoul to his ſervice, whatſoever he may call us to renounce, venture, do, or ſuffer for his ſake. Nor let us forget, that though our bodies are to be *living* ſacrifices unto God: yet the body of ſin muſt be deſtroyed; the fleſh with its luſts crucified; the deeds of the body mortified, and the ſoul baptized with the Holy Ghoſt, and with fire, conſuming all its droſs, and kindling all holy affections therein. Nay *poſſibly* we may not only be called to other ſuffering, ſelf-denying ſervices, but even to lay down our lives for him, who was a ſacrifice for our ſins. In the mean time, in contemplating thoſe animals, which were appointed as emblems of the Saviour's purity, patience, meekneſs, uſefulneſs, &c. let us endeavour, and pray to be enabled to tranſcribe every amiable and heavenly line in his perfect character, into our own temper and converſation; that we may be conformed to his image, and walk in his ſteps, as an evidence that we are waſhed in his blood, and ſtand accepted in his righteouſneſs, "in whom the Father was well pleaſed."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Contains the law of the meat-offering, and of the voluntary offering of first-fruits, v. 1—16.

AND when any will offer a meat-offering unto the LORD, his offering shall be *of* fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon.

2 And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, *to be* an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

3 And the remnant of the meat-offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons: *it is* a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

4 And if thou bring an oblation of a meat-offering baken in the oven, *it shall be* unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil.

5 And if thy oblation *be* a meat-offering *baken* in a pan, it shall be *of* fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil.

6 Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it *is* a meat-offering.

7 And if thy oblation *be* a meat-offering *baken* in the frying-pan, it shall be made *of* fine flour with oil.

8 And thou shalt bring the meat-offering that is made of these things, unto the LORD: and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar.

9 And the priest shall take from the meat-offering a memorial thereof, and shall burn *it* upon the altar: *it is* an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

10 And that which is left of the meat-offering, *shall be* Aaron's and his sons: *it is* a thing most holy, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.

11 No meat-offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire.

12 As for the oblation of the first-fruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour.

13 And every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *A meat-offering*, &c.] Meat-offerings were appointed to be offered with other sacrifices; (*Numb.* c. 15;) but these, which are regulated in this chapter, were offered alone as a voluntary oblation. They may typify Christ as presented to God for us, and as being the bread of life to our souls: but they rather seem to denote that acknowledgment of our obligation to God for providential blessings; and those good works, which are acceptable to God, when presented and performed in the proper manner. These meat-offerings therefore are mentioned after the burnt-offerings; for without an interest in the sacrifice of Christ, and devotedness of heart to God, such services cannot be accepted. They were to be of fine flour, one of the most useful of the productions of the earth: oil was to be poured thereon, which was used, as butter is with us; and was therefore proper for an oblation, which was food for the priests; and might also denote the necessity of the influences of the holy Spirit to render our works GOOD in the sight of God. And frankincense also was to be added, which might represent the intercession of Christ, that renders them accepted.

V. 2. *The memorial of it*, &c.] All the frankincense, and part of the oil, and flour being burnt upon the altar of burnt-offering, might remind them, that their best services must be offered through the atonement of the Saviour; that the whole must be presented unto God through him, and done for his sake; and that, as their good works would in this way be accepted of God; and would come up as a memorial before him; (*Acts*, c. 10. v. 4. 31.) so, in their own nature they were fitted to be serviceable to men.

V. 11. *Leaven, nor any honey*, &c.] Leaven is the emblem of pride, malice, and hypocrisy; honey, of sensual pleasure. The former are directly opposite to those graces of humility, love, and sincerity, which God approves; and the latter takes men off from the exercises of devotion, and the practice of good works: and probably both had been much used in idolatrous worship. Christ was in his character and sacrifice perfectly free from the things denoted by leaven, and his suffering life and agonizing death were the very reverse of the pleasure, which the honey represented: and his people are called to follow, and to be conformed to him.

V. 12. *As for the oblation*, &c.] As these first-fruits were not to be burnt upon the altar, but to be eaten by the priests, honey and leaven being good for food, as God's creatures, might be presented with them.

V. 13. *Salt of the covenant*, &c.] Covenants were generally ratified at an amicable feast, at which salt was always used: hence it became an emblem of friendship.

shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat-offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.

14 And if thou offer a meat-offering of thy first-fruits unto the LORD, thou shalt offer for the meat-offering of thy first-fruits, green ears of corn dried by the fire, *even* corn beaten out of full ears.

15 And thou shalt put oil upon it, and lay frankincense thereon: it *is* a meat-offering.

16 And the priest shall burn the memorial of it, *part* of the beaten corn thereof, and *part* of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof: *it is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

Many Scriptures represent the blessings of reconciliation to, and communion with God through Christ, as a feast, which the Lord has prepared for us, to which he invites us, where he meets us, and at which he ratifies his covenant with us. Salt is also an emblem of incorruption, and represents the perpetuity, yea eternity of the covenant, which is made with true Christians: it also represents sincerity and true grace, without which we cannot have this covenant ratified to us, nor offer any acceptable services. This is indeed incorruptible seed, and ensures perseverance in the possessor, and is instrumental to prevent the total corruption and destruction of the world, through the believer's example, influence, and prayers. (*Matt.* c. 5. v. 13. *Mark*, c. 9. v. 49—50. *Col.* c. 4. v. 6.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There is that excellency in Christ, and in his mediatory work, that no types and shadows, however varied and multiplied, can adequately represent: and our dependance thereon is so entire, that we must never lose sight of it, in any thing we do, if we would be accepted of God, and glorify him: even our sacrifices of praise, and thanksgiving, our works of mercy and charity, and righteousness, yea every good work, must spring from his grace and his love produced in our hearts; rise up, as it were, with his sacrifice from the altar of burnt-offering; and be presented through his intercession: "that whatsoever we do in word, and in deed, we may do all in "the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, "and the Father by him." (*Col.* c. 3. v. 17.) Thus presented, our acknowledgments of common mercies, and our most ordinary actions of justice, and benevolence to men; and especially of kindness to the poor, and to his servants, will be "a sweet savour unto the Lord." (*Phil.* c. 4. v. 18. *Heb.* c. 6. v. 10. c. 13. v. 15, 16.) But let us take care, that we leaven not our works with pride, and ostentation, hypocrisy or malice; or spoil them with indulging fleshly lusts, which war against the soul: but instead thereof, that they be seasoned with the salt of true grace, that they may be persevering in themselves, comfortable to us, honourable to God, and instrumental to the good of others. In all this we must look unto Jesus, and follow his example, devoting our first and best in every thing to the service of God through him.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. The law of the peace-offerings, v. 1—16.
2d. A prohibition to eat the fat, or the blood, v. 17.

AND if his oblation *be* a sacrifice of peace-offering, if he offer *it* of the herd, whether *it be* a male or female; he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD.

2 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar round about.

3 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *A sacrifice of peace-offering*, &c.] The peace-offerings were voluntary oblations either in performance of a vow, in acknowledgment of favours received, in seeking some special blessing from God; or in expressing zeal and love for his worship, and a disposition to have social, and pious fellowship with friends, with the priests, and Levites, or with the poor Israelites.—They particularly represented the application of the purchased salvation of Christ to the heart, and conscience; the communications of peace and comfort through him to the believer's soul: and the sweet communion, which his reconciled people hold with him, and with each other, in his ordinances, a feast upon a sacrifice, whilst "his flesh is meat indeed, "and his blood is drink indeed" to their souls; and whilst they are enabled to exercise faith in, and love, and gratitude to him, and love to each other for his sake; with enlarged hearts rejoicing in each other's comfort, and communicating to each other's necessities.—They also intimated that all the blessings, which sinners enjoy, must be sought for, and acknowledged as coming through his sacrifice: that spiritual consolations are only to be found in communion with him: and that the greatest sweetness of temporal mercies arises from receiving and enjoying them, as the fruit of his atonement, and as the pledges of his love; and from sharing them with his people; by which they are rendered pure, and sanctified in the possession, and enjoyment.

V. 2—5.] The laying on of the hand upon the head represented, as before, confession of sin, faith in a vicarious sacrifice, and the devoting of the animal to God, as a typical atonement, to suffer the punishment which the offerer had merited. The burning of the fat of the inwards might intimate, that we must be inward, and hearty in all

the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

5 And Aaron's sons shall burn it on the altar upon the burnt-sacrifice, which *is* upon the wood that *is* on the fire: *it is* an offering made by fire of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

6 And if his offering for a sacrifice of peace-offering unto the LORD, be *of* the flock, male or female; he shall offer it without blemish.

7 If he offer a lamb for his offering, then shall he offer it before the LORD.

8 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle the blood thereof round about upon the altar.

9 And he shall offer of the sacrifice of the peace-offering, an offering made by fire unto the LORD: the fat thereof *and* the whole rump, it shall he take off hard by the back-bone: and the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

10 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

11 And the priest shall burn it upon the altar: *it is* the food of the offering made by fire unto the LORD.

12 And if his offering *be* a goat, then he shall offer it before the LORD.

13 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of it, and kill it before the tabernacle of the congregation: and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle the blood thereof upon the altar round about.

14 And he shall offer thereof his offering, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

15 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away,

16 And the priest shall burn them upon the altar: *it is* the food of the offering made by fire, for a sweet savour. All the fat *is* the LORD's.

17 *It shall be* a perpetual statute for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood.

CHAP.

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all our services, calling "upon our souls, and all that is within us" to exercise repentance, faith, love, gratitude, &c.; and giving our hearts unto the Lord.—Or it may imply that our inward lusts must be mortified and destroyed, if we would have peace, and communion with God: especially that the insensibility, and obduracy of the heart and conscience must be removed; for *fatness of heart* is a scriptural representation of this insensibility; as the fat of a living animal is supposed to be destitute of feeling.—This was to be burnt upon the sacrifice of burnt-offering; for no self-denial, mortification of the flesh, or devotedness to God, however earnestly attempted, can either be successful, or meet acceptance, but through the sacrifice of Christ, and by the supply of his Spirit; which, as fire, consumes our lusts, and purifies our hearts.—After this, the priests had a portion of the peace-offering assigned them, (c. 7. v. 11—15.) and then the offerer, and his friends religiously feasted upon the remainder.

V. 9. *The whole rump*, &c.] This was frequently very large, and fat, in those countries; and therefore in these lesser sacrifices was joined to the inward fat to be burned upon the altar.

V. 11. *It is the food of the offering*, &c.] That is, that part of the offering, which fed the sacred fire, which was emblematical of the divine justice; and thus was typified the satisfaction for sin, which was actually made by the death of Christ.—What with the daily sacrifices, the occasional burnt-offerings, the fat of the peace-offerings, &c. the fire upon the altar would generally be thus supplied.

V. 17. *That ye eat neither fat nor blood.*] That is neither the blood, which is contained in the veins, and arteries; nor the suet, or the fat, which is within the animal: for the blood which assumes the form of gravy, and the fat, which is intermixed with the other flesh might be eaten. This law not only related to their sacrifices, but to all the cattle, that they slaughtered for food: which might teach them self-denial.—But especially it taught them to observe the distinction between common, and sacred things, it preserved them uninfected with the superstitions, and separate from the company of idolaters: and would tend to impress them more deeply with the idea of some important mystery, in the shedding of the blood, and the burning of the fat of their solemn sacrifices.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Penitent confessions, and a believing dependance on Christ must accompany all our thanksgivings, praises, and prayers; and even all our undertakings, or enjoyments, if we would prosper, and be comfortable.—This Prince of Peace,

CHAP. IV.

Contains the law of the sin-offering, 1st. For a priest, or for the congregation, v. 1—21. *2d. For a ruler, v.* 22—26. *3d. For a private person, v.* 27—35.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD *(concerning things* which ought not to be done) and shall do against any of them:

3 If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people: then let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish, unto the LORD for a sin-offering.

4 And he shall bring the bullock unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD; and shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the LORD.

5 And the priest that is anointed shall take of the bullock's blood, and bring it to the tabernacle of the congregation.

6 And the priest shall dip his finger in the blood, and sprinkle of the blood seven times before the LORD, before the vail of the sanctuary.

7 And the priest shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation; and shall pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering, which *is* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And he shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin-offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that *is* upon the inwards.

9 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* upon them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

10 As it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt-offering.

11 And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung,

12 Even the whole bullock shall he carry forth

Peace, having made *our peace* with the blood of his cross, now preaches peace to sinners, who are far off; through him as OUR PEACE, the believer has peace with God, and with his conscience; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keepeth his heart and mind; and ruling there, disposeth him to follow peace with all men.—Peace is the legacy, which the Christian inherits according to the Saviour's Testament; peace is his privilege, peace is his employment; to be peaceable, and to be a peace-maker, are his distinguishing characteristics.—Feeding in his heart upon Christ by faith with thanksgiving, he enjoys sweet communion with God, and his saints; becomes lively and zealous in religious exercises; learns to treat divine things, and especially the blood of atonement, with sacred reverence; grows gradually more and more dead to, and indifferent about sensual indulgences; yet has double relish for common mercies; is liberal and zealous, and ready to communicate, and increases his social enjoyments, by sharing his blessings with others around him, and by avoiding selfishness, pride, and contention, which are the bane of our real happiness.—Thus amiable, useful, and happy, are consistent Christians: may the Lord multiply grace, mercy, and peace to all, who have attained to, or are aspiring after such privileges, and who would bear such a character: and may he fill all the nations of the earth with these sons of peace and love. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *If a soul sin*, &c.] That is, if any person sin; for the soul is indeed the agent, the body only the instrument in committing any sin. However, we must allow that this exact precision is not observed in the language of the Scriptures. The sin-offering seems to have been appointed only for such sins, when ignorantly committed, as when done presumptuously were punishable with death.

V. 3. *If the priest that is anointed*, &c.] This is generally understood of the high priest, who was most solemnly anointed: but as there is no mention of the ordinary priests separately in the law of the sin-offering, who were equally liable to sin with the high priest, I am inclined to think, that they were also included with him in this first regulation, *(Ex.* c. 40. v. 13.)

V. 6, 7.] These ceremonies implied that his sin, though it were committed ignorantly, had yet polluted all his services; nor could any thing which he did be any more profitable to himself, or the people, except that were expiated by the blood of the sin-offering.

V. 11. *The skin*, &c.] The skin, and the flesh of the sin-offerings were the priest's perquisite; but when he offered the sin-offering for himself, or for the congregation, the whole was to be burnt; as a more effectual expression of the heinousness of the offence, and the abhorrence in which he held it.

forth without the camp, unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out, shall he be burnt.

13 And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *somewhat against* any of the commandments of the LORD, *concerning things* which should not be done, and are guilty:

14 When the sin which they have sinned against it is known, then the congregation shall offer a young bullock for the sin, and bring him before the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the LORD: and the bullock shall be killed before the LORD.

16 And the priest that is anointed, shall bring of the bullock's blood to the tabernacle of the congregation.

17 And the priest shall dip his finger *in some* of the blood, and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, *even* before the vail.

18 And he shall put *some* of the blood upon the horns of the altar, which *is* before the LORD, that *is* in the tabernacle of the congregation, and shall pour out all the blood at the bottom of the altar of the burnt-offering, which *is* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

19 And he shall take all his fat from him, and burn *it* upon the altar.

20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin-offering, so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

21 And he shall carry forth the bullock without the camp, and burn him as he burned the first bullock: it *is* a sin-offering for the congregation.

22 when a ruler hath sinned, and done *somewhat* through ignorance *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God, *concerning things* which should not be done, and is guilty;

23 Or if his sin, wherein he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a male without blemish.

24 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the goat, and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt-offering before the LORD: it *is* a sin-offering.

25 And the priest shall take of the blood of the sin-offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out his blood at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering.

26 And he shall burn all his fat upon the altar, as the fat of the sacrifice of peace-offerings: and the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

27 And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doth *somewhat against* any of the commandments of the LORD, *concerning things* which ought not to be done, and be guilty;

28 Or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned.

29 And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering.

30 And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

31 And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offerings; and the priest shall

V. 12. *Without the camp*, &c.] As if they were thus to convey the guilt clean away from the whole congregation, who were otherwise liable to suffer for it. Thus Christ, who was made sin, *or a sin-offering* for us, suffered without the gate of Jerusalem, as bearing away the sin of his people, that when it is sought for, it might no where be found. This was also expressive of the nature of true repentance, which turns sin as it were out of doors, out of the camp; and refuses to have any thing more to do with it.

burn *it* upon the altar, for a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

32 And if he bring a lamb for a ſin-offering, he ſhall bring it a female without blemiſh.

33 And he ſhall lay his hand upon the head of the ſin-offering, and ſlay it for a ſin-offering, in the place where they kill the burnt-offering.

34 And the prieſt ſhall take of the blood of the ſin-offering with his finger, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar of burnt-offering, and ſhall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar.

35 And he ſhall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat of the lamb is taken away from the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings: and the prieſt ſhall burn them upon the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for his ſin that he hath committed, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

CHAP. V.

Contains the law of the treſpaſs-offering, 1ſt. In ordinary caſes, v. 1—13. 2d. In things ſacred, v. 14—19.

AND if a ſoul ſin, and hear the voice of ſwearing, and *is* a witneſs, whether he hath ſeen or known *of it;* if he do not utter *it,* then he ſhall bear his iniquity.

2 Or if a ſoul touch any unclean thing, whether *it be* a carcaſe of an unclean beaſt, or a carcaſe of unclean cattle, or the carcaſe of unclean creeping things, and *if* it be hidden from him; he alſo ſhall be unclean, and guilty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is evident that God hath never had any infallible vicegerent in his Church on earth: when even the high prieſt appointed of himſelf with Urim and Thummim, who had acceſs to his oracle in the holy place, to enquire of him; and the whole Church of God under that diſpenſation, were ſuppoſed liable to fall into ſins *of ignorance;* and to ſanction by their authority, example, and general uſage, ſuch practices, as were directly contrary to the commandments of God. All pretenſions therefore to infallibility, whether in an individual, or in a multitude, are preſumptuous uſurpations, claims of arrogance, and ſure marks of Antichriſt. However, though we are all liable to err, and ignorance is an alleviation of our guilt, it is not a ſufficient excuſe: with the Bible in our hands, it is generally the effect of pride, ſloth, and inattention, and would be avoided, were we duly anxious to know the truth, and will of God: and our conſequent tranſgreſſions ariſe from want of circumſpection. We have need therefore to uſe frequent ſelf-examination joined with ſerious peruſal of the Scriptures, and earneſt prayers for the convincing influences of the Spirit of God, that we may detect our ſins of ignorance; in order that we may be humbled for them, and confeſs, repent of, and forſake them, and ſo obtain forgiveneſs through the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. But let us beware of preſumptuous ſins; for though they alſo may be forgiven through his all-ſufficient ſacrifice, yet when they gain the dominion, they oft provoke God to leave a poor wretch to final impenitence, and unbelief. They, who ſuſtain public characters, much more diſhonour God, and injure others by their ſins, than other perſons: they have therefore double need for circumſpection, watchfulneſs, and earneſt prayer for the divine teaching and aſſiſtance: and alſo have a peculiar right to expect a place in the prayers of others, who are all intereſted in their conduct. This is eſpecially the caſe of miniſters of the Goſpel, in whom ignorance of God's commandments is peculiarly ſhameful; and to whoſe ſacred character every ſin is a direct contradiction; and whoſe evil examples will operate as a fatal, and ſwift-ſpreading infection. In all caſes public ſcandals require public acknowledgments, however contrary that may be to the pride of our hearts. And nations, in their political capacity, by their rulers, have need to prevent, to puniſh, and to purge out national ſins, if they would eſcape national calamities. And as none are ſo highly advanced in rank, or ſo ſacred by their office, as to be excuſed from exerciſing repentance and humiliation before God, or to have no occaſion for, or no benefit from the atonement of Chriſt: ſo none are ſo low, and inconſiderable, as either to be exempted from the ſame duties, or excluded from the ſame advantages. Let us then learn in the exerciſe of daily ſelf-examination, repentance, and faith, to put away both the guilt, and the love and practice of ſin: and let us pray with David, that the Lord would cleanſe us from our ſecret ſins, and keep us from preſumptuous ſins, leſt they get the dominion over us: and that the words of our mouths, and the meditation of our hearts, may be always acceptable in the ſight of the Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer, (*Pſalm* 19. v. 12. 14.)

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Hear the voice of ſwearing,* &c.] That is, if a man be adjured, and required upon oath to bear teſtimony in a court of juſtice, and doth not declare the whole; though he do not bear poſitive falſe witneſs, yet he ſhould conſider himſelf as burdened with the guilt of a great ſin.

V. 2. *If it be hidden,* &c.] When a man had contracted ceremonial uncleanneſs, and had, without the appointed purification, inadvertently, or ignorantly attended upon ſacred things, he, by his careleſſneſs, contracted guilt before God.

3 Or if he touch the uncleanneſs of man, whatſoever uncleanneſs *it be* that a man ſhall be defiled withal, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth *of it*, then he ſhall be guilty.

4 Or if a ſoul ſwear, pronouncing with *his* lips to do evil, or to do good, whatſoever *it be* that a man ſhall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth *of it*, then he ſhall be guilty in one of theſe.

5 And it ſhall be when he ſhall be guilty in one of theſe *things*, that he ſhall confeſs that he hath ſinned in that *thing*.

6 And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the LORD for his ſin which he hath ſinned, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats, for a ſin-offering: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him concerning his ſin.

7 And if he be not able to bring a lamb, then he ſhall bring for his treſpaſs which he hath committed, two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, unto the LORD; one for a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering.

8 And he ſhall bring them unto the prieſt, who ſhall offer *that* which *is* for the ſin-offering firſt, and wring off his head from his neck, but ſhall not divide *it* aſunder.

9 And he ſhall ſprinkle of the blood of the ſin-offering upon the ſide of the altar; and the reſt of the blood ſhall be wrung out at the bottom of the altar: it *is* a ſin-offering.

10 And he ſhall offer the ſecond *for* a burnt-offering, according to the manner: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, for his ſin which he hath ſinned, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

11 But if he be not able to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; then he that ſinned, ſhall bring for his offering the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a ſin-offering: he ſhall put no oil upon it, neither ſhall he put *any* frankincenſe thereon: for it *is* a ſin-offering.

12 Then ſhall he bring it to the prieſt, and the prieſt ſhall take his handful of it, *even* a memorial thereof, and burn *it* on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a ſin-offering.

13 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, as touching his ſin that he hath ſinned in one of theſe, and it ſhall be forgiven him, and *the remnant* ſhall be the prieſt's, as a meat-offering.

14 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

15 If a ſoul commit a treſpaſs, and ſin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he ſhall bring for his treſpaſs unto the LORD, a ram without blemiſh out of the flocks, with thy eſtimation by ſhekels of ſilver, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, for a treſpaſs-offering.

16 And he ſhall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and ſhall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the prieſt: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him with the ram of the treſpaſs-offering, and it ſhall be forgiven him.

17 And if a ſoul ſin, and commit any of theſe things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD; though he wiſt *it* not, yet is he guilty, and ſhall bear his iniquity.

18 And he ſhall bring a ram without ble-

V. 4. *If it be hid from him*, &c.] Having either ſworn raſhly at firſt, or through forgetfulneſs failed of performing his oath.

V. 6. *Treſpaſs-offering.*] Theſe ſacrifices ſeem to have been much of the ſame nature with the ſin-offerings; only to have been upon leſſer occaſions; and more entirely a matter of conſcience before God, without regard to any temporal puniſhment denounced.

V. 11. *No oil thereon, or frankincenſe*, &c.] Theſe additions, that accompanied the voluntary meat-offerings, and ſeem to repreſent the comfortable influences of the Holy Spirit, and the interceſſion of Chriſt, which render the religious exerciſes, and willing ſervices of the true believer joyful to himſelf; were in this treſpaſs-offering to be omitted: as it expreſſed the ſorrow of the offender, and the ſufferings of Chriſt for ſin.

V. 15—16. *In the holy things*, &c.] When any one had failed of paying the full of his tythes, firſt-fruits, &c. and had unwittingly kept back any part of the portion, which the Lord demanded; he was not only to make reſtitution in ſtandard money, adding a fifth part thereto; but alſo to offer a ram for a treſpaſs-offering, as ſoon as he diſcovered his defraud.

miſh

miſh out of the flock, with thy eſtimation, for a treſpaſs-offering unto the prieſt: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred, and wiſt *it* not; and it ſhall be forgiven him.

19 It *is* a treſpaſs-offering: he hath certainly treſpaſſed againſt the LORD.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. An additional law concerning the treſpaſs-offering, v. 1—7. 2d. Rules for the prieſt reſpecting the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering, v. 8—18. 3d. The high prieſt's meat-offering, v. 19—23. 4th. Rules reſpecting the ſin-offering, v. 24—30.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 If a ſoul ſin, and commit a treſpaſs againſt the LORD, and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowſhip, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour;

3 Or have found that which was loſt, and lieth concerning it, and ſweareth falſely; in any of all theſe that a man doeth, ſinning therein:

4 Then it ſhall be, becauſe he hath ſinned and is guilty, that he ſhall reſtore that which he took violently away, or the thing which he hath deceitfully gotten, or that which was delivered him to keep, or the loſt thing which he found,

5 Or all that about which he hath ſworn falſely; he ſhall even reſtore it in the principal, and ſhall add the fifth part more thereto, *and* give it unto him to whom it appertaineth in the day of his treſpaſs-offering.

6 And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the LORD, a ram without blemiſh out of the flock, with thy eſtimation for a treſpaſs-offering, unto the prieſt.

7 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it ſhall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he hath done, in treſpaſſing therein.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

9 Command Aaron and his ſons, ſaying, This *is* the law of the burnt-offering: (it *is* the burnt-offering, becauſe of the burning upon the altar all night unto the morning, and the fire of the altar ſhall be burning in it)

10 And the prieſt ſhall put on his linen

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The law of God is ſo exceeding broad, the occaſions of ſin in this wicked world are ſo numerous, and we are ſo propenſe to evil; that we have need to fear always, and to pray always, that we may be preſerved; to look before us every ſtep, in ſuch a perilous path; and to keep a guard on all our ſenſes, members and faculties, eſpecially on our tongues, which are ſo unruly and miſchievous, and the occaſions of ſo much iniquity. With a tender conſcience, and "the heart of fleſh," we ſhall ſeldom ſo tranſact buſineſs, form engagements, ſpend time in company, or even alone, or in God's ordinances, without finding ſomewhat upon recollection, which will grieve and humble us: and the true Chriſtian is daily pleading guilty before God, and ſeeking forgiveneſs through the blood of Chriſt, on the account of much better ſervices, than others boaſt of, and truſt in as meritorious. In infinite condeſcenſion the Goſpel ſalvation is ſo free, that the pooreſt penitent is not excluded; and ſo full, that the moſt burdened conſcience finds complete relief from it: yet therein is the evil of ſin ſo diſplayed, as to fill every pardoned ſinner with abhorrence and dread of it; ſeeing that not the leaſt tranſgreſſion can be forgiven, but through the agonizing death of the great Emmanuel. Such perſons will therefore walk circumſpectly, and be frequently examining their hearts, and lives; and when they but ſuſpect evil, they will have recourſe to the one great atonement: they will be careful to bear no falſe witneſs, nor withhold any required information; to avoid raſh oaths, and careleſſneſs in performance; and to render to God, to the king, and to every one their due: and ſhould they after all diſcover that they have failed, they will ſcrupulouſly make ample reſtitution to their utmoſt ability, acknowledge their fault without extenuation, and ſeek forgiveneſs both of God, and of the injured party.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2—6.] This law relates to ſuch perſons, as had been guilty of diſhoneſty, and had not been detected, but were impelled by their own conſciences to acknowledge their guilt, to make reſtitution, and to ſeek forgiveneſs from God, and from the injured party. In this caſe the prieſt was to eſtimate the amount of the injury, and to proportion the reſtitution accordingly: and beſides the reparation to man, a treſpaſs-offering was to be offered to the Lord; to teach them that the malignity even of thoſe crimes, which are injurious to man, chiefly conſiſts in the rebellion againſt God, therein contained: and that repentance, and works meet for repentance, though needful in order to forgiveneſs, could not atone for ſin, which can only be expiated by the blood of Chriſt, and pardoned through faith in his name.

garment,

garment, and his linen breeches ſhall he put upon his fleſh, and take up the aſhes which the fire hath conſumed with the burnt-offering on the altar, and he ſhall put them beſides the altar.

11 And he ſhall put off his garments, and put on other garments, and carry forth the aſhes without the camp, unto a clean place.

12 And the fire upon the altar ſhall be burning in it, it ſhall not be put out: and the prieſt ſhall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt-offering in order upon it, and he ſhall burn thereon the fat of the peace-offerings.

13 The fire ſhall ever be burning upon the altar: it ſhall never go out.

14 And this *is* the law of the meat-offering: the ſons of Aaron ſhall offer it before the LORD, before the altar.

15 And he ſhall take of it his handful, of the flour of the meat-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincenſe which *is* upon the meat-offering, and ſhall burn *it* upon the altar, *for* a ſweet ſavour, *even* the memorial of it unto the LORD.

16 And the remainder thereof ſhall Aaron and his ſons eat: with unleavened bread ſhall it be eaten in the holy place: in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation they ſhall eat it.

17 It ſhall not be baken with leaven: I have given it *unto them for* their portion of my offerings made by fire: it *is* moſt holy, as *is* the ſin-offering, and as the treſpaſs-offering.

18 All the males among the children of Aaron ſhall eat of it: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever in your generations concerning the offerings of the LORD made by fire: Every one that toucheth them ſhall be holy.

19 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

20 This *is* the offering of Aaron, and of his ſons, which they ſhall offer unto the LORD, in the day when he is anointed; the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour for a meat-offering perpetual, half of it in the morning, and half thereof at night.

21 In a pan it ſhall be made with oil, *and when it is* baken, thou ſhalt bring it in: *and* the baken pieces of the meat-offering ſhalt thou offer *for* a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

22 And the prieſt of his ſons that is anointed in his ſtead, ſhall offer it: *It is* a ſtatute for ever unto the LORD, it ſhall be wholly burnt.

23 For every meat-offering for the prieſt ſhall be wholly burnt: it ſhall not be eaten.

24 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

25 Speak unto Aaron and to his ſons, ſaying, This *is* the law of the ſin-offering: In the place where the burnt-offering is killed, ſhall the ſin-offering be killed before the LORD: it *is* moſt holy.

26 The prieſt that offereth it for ſin, ſhall eat it: in the holy place ſhall it be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

27 What-

V. 19—23.] The high prieſt was to offer this meat-offering every morning and evening perpetually; the whole of which was burnt upon the altar of burnt-offering, and none of it eaten by him, or by any of the other prieſts. The prieſts were all types of Chriſt, and it is generally ſuppoſed that their eating the ſin-offering, &c. referred to this their typical character, and denoted their bearing and expiating the ſins of the people: but this they could only do *typically*; and therefore in reſpect of their own ſacrifices and ſome others, they were to eat none of them, but to burn all; which was a tranſlation of the whole guilt of themſelves and of the people to Chriſt, and his ſacrifice, who actually bore, and expiated the whole. This meat-offering might alſo repreſent, that the beſt duties, and ſervices, even of the high prieſt himſelf, could only be accepted through the ſacrifice of Chriſt; ſo far would they be from *actually* taking away the ſins of others: and that he and his brethren muſt nevertheleſs daily abound in good works, and in perſonal religion in the moſt devoted and diſintereſted manner.

V. 25—30. *It is moſt holy*, &c.] That is entirely ſeparated from common uſes, and devoted to God, as a typical ſatisfaction for ſin. All theſe regulations were calculated to expreſs the polluting nature of ſin, and the tranſlation of guilt from the ſinner, to the ſacrifice: yet ſo, that it was not actually taken away, but in ſome ſenſe adhered thereto; and they denoted that ſomewhat more effectual was repreſented thereby.—They might alſo intimate that none muſt pretend to any ſhare with Chriſt in atoning for ſin; that none but the *ſpiritual* prieſthood, which is ſeparated from the world, and ſin, and truly devoted to God, have any real benefit from the ſacrifice of

27 Whatſoever ſhall touch the fleſh thereof ſhall be holy: and when there is ſprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou ſhalt waſh that whereon it was ſprinkled, in the holy place.

28 But the earthen veſſel wherein it is ſodden, ſhall be broken: and if it be ſodden in a brazen pot, it ſhall be both ſcoured and rinſed in water.

29 All the males among the prieſts ſhall eat thereof: it *is* moſt holy.

30 And no ſin-offering, whereof *any* of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile *withal* in the holy *place*, ſhall be eaten: it ſhall be burnt in the fire.

CHAP. VII.

Contains the law of the prieſts, 1ſt. Concerning the treſpaſs-offerings, v. 1—10. 2d. Concerning the peace-offerings, v. 11—34. 3d. The whole ſummed up in the cloſe, v. 35—38.

LIKEWISE this *is* the law of the treſpaſs-offering: it *is* moſt holy.

2 In the place where they kill the burnt-offering,

Chriſt, or truly feed upon him in their hearts: but that his atonement becomes to many others an occaſion of additional guilt, and deeper condemnation, in their contempt, neglect or abuſe of it.—Theſe holy things were only to be eaten in the court of the tabernacle, by the prieſts, or their ſons, who by birth were heirs to the prieſthood, though by being under age, or through ſome infirmity, they were debarred from officiating; for the youngeſt Chriſtian or the moſt infirm believer, being truly ſuch, is as much intereſted in the ſacrifice of Chriſt, and as certainly has the benefit of it, as the oldeſt and ſtrongeſt, though he may not be honoured with ſuch uſefulneſs. The other oblations were for proviſion for their families, in their own houſes.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is almoſt impoſſible to enumerate the various methods, by which covetouſneſs hath contrived to violate the law of love, in reſpect of our neighbour's property. Human laws muſt indeed diſcriminate in their puniſhments with reference to the welfare of the community: but all theſe methods of injuſtice are *alike* a violation of the divine law (not excepting the caſe of keeping what is found, when the owner can be aſcertained); and they are generally accompanied with lies, and oft with perjury.—Would the offender, therefore, eſcape the vengeance of God, (though he be not expoſed to puniſhment from man) he muſt both make ample reſtitution, if in his power, and ſeek forgiveneſs by faith in that one Offering, which taketh away the ſin of the world. Confeſſion of ſin makes no ſatisfaction to juſtice; and our municipal laws, therefore, do not require the offender to plead guilty, or to criminate himſelf, nor will it avail for the mitigation of his ſentence.—But before the mercy-ſeat of God the caſe is ſomewhat different: he, who ingenuouſly confeſſes his ſin, who pleads guilty, and condemns himſelf, is the only perſon who obtains the benefit of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, the free forgiveneſs of all ſin, and the full comfort of it. Our God approves of ſuch a diſpoſition and conduct as right, and reaſonable in a ſinner: and no one, who is *unfeignedly* of this contrite ſpirit, will either abuſe, or depend on any thing for forgiveneſs, but free mercy, and the blood of the great Sacrifice for ſin; nor will any ſuch perſon, wilfully continue in ſin, or fail to bring forth the fruits meet for repentance.

The efficacy of the prieſthood, and mediation of Chriſt are perpetual, and we can never approach to God in his name by day, or by night unſeaſonably: thus ſhould the fire of our holy affections, the exerciſe of our faith and love, of prayer and praiſe be conſtant, and without ceaſing alſo; and we ſhould be watchful, and unwearied in well-doing.—Eſpecially ſhould the true miniſters of Chriſt ever have the fire of their zeal burning, and their ſpiritual ſacrifices aſcending; being inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon in their important work; without ſloth, wearineſs, or diſſipation; with all reverence, and exactneſs; and not deeming the meaneſt ſervice beneath them, or admitting of a careleſs performance.—Such miniſters, though they can do nothing to atone for the ſin of the people, nay, need continual forgiveneſs themſelves, yet, as inſtruments, will be very uſeful to the bringing men to repent, to ſeek and find forgiveneſs, and to become zealous of good works; and they *only* have a well-grounded claim, to be maintained from the ſanctuary. But they will alſo be the laſt perſons to be peremptory in their demands of this nature, to be diſcontented with their proviſion, or attentive to their own intereſt, or indulgence.—Rather will they make it their ſtudy to convince the people that they ſeek not *theirs* but *them*; that they had rather promote their ſanctification, than profit by their ſins; and that they deſire themſelves to be examples to the flock, in practiſing what they preach, in foregoing their juſt claims, and in ſeeking the glory of God, and the good of ſouls, even where their diligence meets with no recompence, or a very ungrateful return from man.—Above all they will teach the people both by word, and deed to ſhun the defilement of ſin; to treat ſacred things with ſerious regard; to reverence the atoning blood of Chriſt, and in an holy manner to apply it's benefits, not thence taking encouragement to ſin, but thence deducing powerful motives for devoted obedience unto God. May the Lord ſend forth many ſuch labourers into his harveſt, for the honour of Jeſus the great Head of the Church. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—10.] In the caſe of the ſin-offering, and of the treſpaſs-offering, the whole ſacrifice was divided betwixt the altar and the prieſt, and the offerer had no ſhare in it; as he had in the peace-offerings.

The

offering, shall they kill the trespass-offering: and the blood thereof shall he sprinkle round about upon the altar.

3 And he shall offer of it, all the fat thereof; the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards,

4 And the two kidneys, and the fat that *is* on them, which *is* by the flanks, and the caul *that is* above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away.

5 And the priest shall burn them upon the altar, *for* an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a trespass-offering.

6 Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: it *is* most holy.

7 As the sin-offering *is*, so *is* the trespass-offering: *there is* one law for them: the priest that maketh atonement therewith, shall have *it*.

8 And the priest that offereth any man's burnt-offering, *even* the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt-offering which he hath offered.

9 And all the meat-offering that is baken in the oven, and all that is dressed in the frying-pan, and in the pan, shall be the priest's that offereth it.

10 And every meat-offering mingled with oil, and dry, shall all the sons of Aaron have, one *as much* as another.

11 And this *is* the law of the sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he shall offer unto the LORD.

12 If he offer it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer with the sacrifice of thanksgiving unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil, of fine flour, fryed.

13 Besides the cakes, he shall offer *for* his offering leavened bread, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace-offerings.

14 And of it he shall offer one out of the whole oblation, *for* an heave-offering unto the LORD, *and* it shall be the priest's that sprinkleth the blood of the peace-offerings.

15 And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving, shall be eaten the same day that it is offered: he shall not leave any of it until the morning.

16 But if the sacrifice of his offering *be* a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offereth his sacrifice: and on the morrow also the remainder of it shall be eaten.

17 But the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice, on the third day, shall be burnt with fire.

18 And if *any* of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings be eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, neither shall it be imputed unto him that offereth it: it shall be an abomination, and the soul that eateth of it, shall bear his iniquity.

19 And the flesh that toucheth any unclean *thing*, shall not be eaten, it shall be burnt with fire: and as for the flesh, all that be clean shall eat thereof.

The former was an expression of repentance, and of sorrow for sin, and was therefore more properly accompanied by fasting, than by feasting: which yet was very suitable to the occasions of the peace-offerings, which denoted communion with a reconciled God in Christ, the joy and gratitude of a pardoned sinner, and the privileges, and chearful services of a believer. Nor is the remembrance of sin ever pleasant to a true Christian, though the remembrance of God's former kindness, and the expectation of, and application for future benefits always are. The priest, who offered the sacrifice, was in some cases to have all, that was not burnt, for his own perquisite, which would encourage, and recompence their constant attendance. In other cases they were all to share alike, which might forward friendly intercourse, and fellowship with each other. The skin belonged to the priest, who offered the sacrifice, that is, say the Jewish writers with considerable probability, the skins of sacrifices brought by individuals; whilst those of the public sacrifices were sold, to defray the expences of repairing the tabernacle.

V. 15—18.] Perhaps in the prohibition of any part of the sacrifice being kept unto the third day, when it would probably begin to putrify, there may be a reference to Christ, who rose again in about the same time, and saw no corruption. But more evidently the Israelites were hereby cautioned against procrastination in rendering thanks, in paying their vows, or in seeking spiritual blessings; against superstition; and against distrust, and covetousness: and were taught to use hospitality to their friends, and to the poor without grudging: for if they spared, they only spared for the fire; except they would by disobedience prevent the acceptance of their sacrifice, and render it an abomination.

20 But

20 But the ſoul that eateth *of* the fleſh of the ſacrifice of peace-offerings, that *pertain* unto the LORD, having his uncleanneſs upon him, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.

21 Moreover, the ſoul that ſhall touch any unclean *thing*, *as* the uncleanneſs of man, or *any* unclean beaſt, or any abominable unclean thing, and eat of the fleſh of the ſacrifice of peace-offerings, which *pertain* unto the LORD, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.

22 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

23 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Ye ſhall eat no manner of fat, of ox, or of ſheep, or of goat.

24 And the fat of the beaſt that dieth of itſelf, and the fat of that which is torn with beaſts, may be uſed in any other uſe: but ye ſhall in no wiſe eat of it.

25 For whoſoever eateth the fat of the beaſt, of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, even the ſoul that eateth *it* ſhall be cut off from his people.

26 Moreover, ye ſhall eat no manner of blood, *whether it be* of fowl or of beaſt, in any of your dwellings.

27 Whatſoever ſoul *it be* that eateth any manner of blood, even that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people.

28 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

29 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, He that offereth the ſacrifice of his peace-offerings unto the LORD, ſhall bring his oblation unto the LORD of the ſacrifice of his peace-offerings.

30 His own hands ſhall bring the offerings of the LORD made by fire, the fat with the breaſt, it ſhall he bring, that the breaſt may be waved *for* a wave-offering before the LORD.

31 And the prieſt ſhall burn the fat upon the altar: but the breaſt ſhall be Aaron's and his ſons.

32 And the right ſhoulder ſhall ye give unto the prieſt *for* an heave-offering, of the ſacrifices of your peace-offerings.

33 He among the ſons of Aaron that offereth the blood of the peace-offerings, and the fat, ſhall have the right ſhoulder for *his* part.

34 For the wave-breaſt and the heave-ſhoulder have I taken of the children of Iſrael, from off the ſacrifices of their peace-offerings, and have given them unto Aaron the prieſt, and unto his ſons, by a ſtatute for ever, from among the children of Iſrael.

35 This *is the portion* of the anointing of Aaron, and of the anointing of his ſons, out of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, in the day *when* he preſented them to miniſter unto the LORD in the prieſt's office:

36 Which the LORD commanded to be given them of the children of Iſrael, in the day that he anointed them, *by* a ſtatute for ever, throughout their generations.

37 This *is* the law of the burnt-offering, of the meat-offering, and of the ſin-offering, and of the treſpaſs-offering, and of the conſecrations, and of the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings:

38 Which the LORD commanded Moſes in mount Sinai, in the day that he commanded the children of Iſrael to offer their oblations unto the LORD, in the wilderneſs of Sinai.

CHAP.

V. 20. *Cut off from his people.*] We do not find any rule, or example, which may induce us to ſuppoſe that this was a law, which the prieſt, or the civil magiſtrate were empowered to execute, either by ſolemn excommunication, or by death. It ſeems rather to have been an awful denunciation of divine vengeance: ſuch would deſerve, and might expect to be cut off by ſome immediate judgment of God.

V. 30—34.] The offerer was with his own hands to bring theſe parts of the ſacrifice to the prieſt, that the oblation of them might appear his own voluntary action. The wave-breaſt, and heave-ſhoulder, were ſolemnly preſented, lifted up, and waved before the altar, and then given to the prieſt as his portion. Which might intimate, that as Chriſt with his whole heart, and all his power, ſerves the intereſts of his Church; ſo ought the prieſt to ſerve God, and the congregation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As it hath been obſerved that true miniſters will readily forego their own intereſt, or indulgence, for the glory of God, and the good of ſouls: ſo it muſt now be noticed, what

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. The preparation at God's command for the consecration of Aaron, and his sons, v. 1—5. 2d. Their being washed, arrayed, and anointed, together with the altar, laver, &c. v. 6—13. 3d. The sacrifices offered for them, with the prescribed ceremonies, v. 14—32. 4th. Their consecration continued for seven days, v. 33—36.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments, and the anointing oil, and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread.

3 And gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 And Moses did as the LORD commanded him; and the assembly was gathered together unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

5 And Moses said unto the congregation, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded to be done.

6 And Moses brought Aaron and his sons, and washed them with water.

7 And he put upon him the coat, and girded him with the girdle, and clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod upon him, and he girded him with the curious girdle of the ephod, and bound *it* unto him therewith.

8 And he put the breast-plate upon him: also he put in the breast-plate the Urim and Thummim.

9 And he put the mitre upon his head; also upon the mitre, *even* upon his forefront

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what ample provision God himself made for them; and that in proportion to their diligent attendance upon his courts: nor have we any reason to judge from the New Testament, that he would now have them doomed to indigence; or that they do their duty, who themselves live in plenty, and permit them to continue in perplexing straits: and the more willing any minister is "to suffer "all things, lest he should hinder the Gospel of Christ," the more inexcusable they are, who allow him to be a loser by such disinterestedness. (1 *Cor.* c. 9. v. 11—15.)

Every thing is beautiful in it's season: there is a time, when the Lord calls to weeping, and fasting; and a time, when thankful joy admits of festivity: and godly sorrow for sin, and believing meditation upon the Saviour's bitter sufferings, prepare for feasting upon his spiritual provisions, and rejoicing in his holy comfort. The infinite sufficiency, which is in Christ, furnishes a plenteous feast for all, even the vilest sinners, who accept of his gracious invitations: therefore the true believer longs for all around him, yea for all the world to share with him in his felicity: and the same principle, counteracting the natural selfishness, covetousness, and distrust of his heart; and inspiring gratitude to, and confidence in God, as well as good-will to man, will enlarge his heart to liberality in temporal things, and render him willing to communicate, and ready to distribute. Nor is any one a loser by so doing: rather they are losers *indeed*, who are of a contrary spirit; as they lose the blessing of God upon their substance, and the comfortable enjoyment of it; together with the acceptance, and benefit of their religious services: for, whatever professions may be made of repentance, faith, love, or holy joy; if the heart be leavened with allowed covetousness, or malice, or absorbed in selfishness, every religious performance will be deemed an abomination; and the self-deceived wretch, who thus presents it, will be exposed to the awful woe of bearing his own iniquity. Delays oft cause good purposes and holy affections to evaporate without effect; and we often lose the benefit of divine ordinances, by improperly conducting ourselves after them. To approach the throne of grace, or the Lord's table *unclean* through unrepented sin; or in proud contempt, and careless neglect of the cleansing blood of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of his Spirit, is an awful presumption, and will be terribly punished, except it be repented of: yet on *such services* do multitudes depend to atone for their sins, and to merit everlasting life! and indeed any presumptuous sin cuts a man off from every *well-grounded* expectation of divine favour, and exposes him to awful vengeance. "Let us therefore have "grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with re- "verence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming "fire." (*Heb.* c. 12. v. 29, 30.) For the honour of God, and for an example to others, we should, in some cases, be as explicit as possible in our profession of faith, and in dedicating ourselves, and all we have to the Lord: and should in all cases do his will, seek his glory, and serve his people, after the example of Christ, with our whole heart and soul. Thus performing the work that he assigns us, we may thankfully receive the portion which he allots us; and be satisfied that, whatever treatment we meet with from man, he will both graciously supply our wants, and accept of our endeavours; and may with joyful hope look forward to the period, when he will present us faultless before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1.] This consecration of Aaron, and his sons was prescribed some time before; but had been delayed until the tabernacle had been prepared, and the laws of the several sacrifices given. For many things, which are here not commented on, the reader may refer to the notes on *Ex.* c. 29.

did he put the golden plate, the holy crown; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

10 And Moſes took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* therein, and ſanctified them.

11 And he ſprinkled thereof upon the altar ſeven times, and anointed the altar, and all his veſſels, both the laver and his foot, to ſanctify them.

12 And he poured of the anointing oil upon Aaron's head, and anointed him to ſanctify him.

13 And Moſes brought Aaron's ſons, and put coats upon them, and girded them with girdles, and put bonnets upon them; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

14 And he brought the bullock for the ſin-offering: and Aaron and his ſons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the ſin-offering.

15 And he ſlew *it*, and Moſes took the blood, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about with his finger, and purified the altar; and poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and ſanctified it, to make reconciliation upon it.

16 And he took all the fat that *was* upon the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and Moſes burnt *it* upon the altar.

17 But the bullock and his hide, his fleſh and his dung, he burnt with fire without the camp; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

18 And he brought the ram for the burnt-offering: and Aaron and his ſons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.

19 And he killed *it*, and Moſes ſprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.

20 And he cut the ram into pieces, and Moſes burnt the head, and the pieces, and the fat.

21 And he waſhed the inwards and the legs in water; and Moſes burnt the whole ram upon the altar: it *was* a burnt-ſacrifice for a ſweet ſavour, *and* an offering made by fire unto the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

22 And he brought the other ram, the ram of conſecration: and Aaron and his ſons laid their hands upon the head of the ram.

23 And he ſlew *it*, and Moſes took of the blood of it, and put *it* upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

24 And he brought Aaron's ſons, and Moſes put of the blood upon the tip of their right ear, and upon the thumbs of their right hands, and upon the great toes of their right feet: and Moſes ſprinkled the blood upon the altar round about.

25 And he took the fat, and the rump, and all the fat that *was* upon the inwards, and the caul *above* the liver, and the two kidneys, and their fat, and the right ſhoulder.

26 And out of the baſket of unleavened bread, that *was* before the LORD, he took one unleavened cake, and a cake of oiled bread, and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat, and upon the right ſhoulder.

27 And he put all upon Aaron's hands, and upon his ſons hands, and waved them *for* a wave-offering before the LORD.

V. 22. *The ram of conſecration.*] The ſin-offering ſhewed that Aaron, and his ſons deſerved to have their blood ſhed; and after death to have their ſouls baniſhed from the gracious preſence of the Lord, and to be made a ſacrifice to his offended juſtice: inſtead of their being able to bear in their perſons, or atone by their ſacred ſervices for the ſins of the people: and inſtead of being honoured as *typical* repreſentatives of the Lord to the people, and intercеſſors for the people with him: and that they could only be pardoned, and accepted through him, who in due time, was, without the camp, to be made a ſin-offering for the people. The burnt-offering denoted that, through the atonement of Chriſt, they willingly and thankfully dedicated themſelves without reſerve, to be conſecrated unto God, for this ſacred miniſtry. The ram of conſecration was their peace-offering; and repreſented that being now reconciled unto God, they had fellowſhip with him, and delighted in his ſervice, and in being wholly employed therein: that God would now accept, and honour their ſervices, and miniſtrations: and that they were thankful for paſt and preſent benefits, and confided in, and ſought to him for future ſufficiency and acceptance. Accordingly the ſeveral laws preſcribed in the foregoing chapters were obſerved herein by Moſes, the officiating prieſt; with only ſuch additions, as had a peculiar reference to their entire ſeparation to God for the work of the prieſthood.

28 And

28 And Moſes took them from off their hands, and burnt *them* on the altar, upon the burnt-offering: they *were* conſecrations for a ſweet ſavour: it *is* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

29 And Moſes took the breaſt, and waved it *for* a wave-offering before the LORD: *for* of the ram of conſecration it was Moſes' part; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

30 And Moſes took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which *was* upon the altar, and ſprinkled *it* upon Aaron, *and* upon his garments, and upon his ſons, and upon his ſons garments with him: and ſanctified Aaron *and* his garments, and his ſons, and his ſons garments with him.

31 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, and to his ſons, Boil the fleſh at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and there eat it with the bread that *is* in the baſket of conſecrations, as I commanded, ſaying, Aaron and his ſons ſhall eat it.

32 And that which remaineth of the fleſh and of the bread, ſhall ye burn with fire.

33 And ye ſhall not go out of the door of the tabernacle of the congregation *in* ſeven days, until the days of your conſecration be at an end: for ſeven days ſhall he conſecrate you.

34 As he hath done this day, *ſo* the LORD hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you.

35 Therefore ſhall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night ſeven days, and keep the charge of the LORD, that ye die not: for ſo I am commanded.

36 So Aaron and his ſons did all things which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes.

CHAP.

V. 29—32.] Moſes as the prieſt had the breaſt and ſhoulder, and Aaron and his ſons the remainder: and what they did not eat, was burnt with fire according to the law of the peace-offerings.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In theſe types we ſee our great High Prieſt, as ſolemnly appointed to, anointed for, and inveſted in his ſacred office; and by his own blood, and the influences of his holy Spirit, ſanctifying the ordinances of religion, to the benefit of his people, and to the honour of God the Father; who accepts for his ſake of our worſhip, though we are ſinners, and it is *polluted with ſin*. We may alſo rejoice that, though free from ſin himſelf, yet having ſuffered being tempted, he is a merciful and faithful High Prieſt, full of tender compaſſion to the feeble minded, and tempeſt-toſſed ſoul: and that having finiſhed his conſecration, and ſacrifices upon earth, as our *perfected* High Prieſt, he for ever appears in the preſence of God for us. But when theſe heavenly things were ſhadowed forth in the perſons, and prieſthood of men; what care is taken to ſhew that they were not appointed for any worthineſs of ſuch an honour, or capacity for ſuch a ſervice in themſelves! how evidently doth all this manifeſt that they could neither actually benefit the people, nor ſave themſelves! that they could not eſcape the wrath of God, be accepted of him, or appear before him, except through the ſhedding of the blood, and the burning of the bodies of ſo many innocent, uſeful animals! Through repeated waſhings, ſprinklings, and anointings, together with change of garments; and every obſervance, which could mark them in themſelves to be guilty, and polluted in the ſight of God; and ſhew that they defiled all they touched! Surely all this was intended to lead the people to expect a nobler prieſthood, better ſacrifices, and a more effectual atonement, and interceſſion: and we muſt be blind indeed, yea willingly ignorant, if we do not ſee, that it teaches us, that nothing can atone for ſin, or render a ſinner accepted of God, but the righteouſneſs, blood and interceſſion of the holy Jeſus, our great High Prieſt; which are always accompanied with his ſanctifying grace poured into every believer's heart. Doubtleſs when Aaron offered his ſin-offering, he would remember, with mixed humiliation, admiration, and gratitude, his recent tranſgreſſion in making the golden calf, and the Lord's forgiveneſs of it: and would acknowledge that he deſerved himſelf to have been made a ſacrifice to offended juſtice, with thoſe who periſhed, inſtead of being appointed to ſuch an honour. This would teach him lowlineſs of mind, and compaſſion and tenderneſs to other poor ſinners, ſeeing he himſelf was ſo compaſſed with infirmity; and effectually prevent his fancying that there was any excellency in him, for which he was thus diſtinguiſhed; or any merit in his ſervices; or any ground of preferring of himſelf to others. Thus was boaſting excluded, the whole glory given to God, and a preparation made for Aaron's properly bearing the honour, and performing the duties of the prieſthood. In like manner doth God prepare his *true miniſters* for their office: he teaches them the knowledge of him, and of *themſelves*, and convinces them of their guilt, and ſinfulneſs; and brings them to a ſimple dependance on the Saviour for every thing needful for their own ſalvation. Thus they learn to conſider themſelves, as no better than the vileſt ſinners: except as the Lord hath made them to differ; by intereſting them in the Redeemer's ſacrifice, waſhing them in his blood, arraying their ſouls in his righteouſneſs, and anointing them with his grace. Whilſt they feed upon his ſpiritual proviſion, and are happy in communion with him; and whilſt their hearts are fraught with love to Chriſt, and compaſſion for poor ſinners, they are pre-

pared,

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1st. The newly consecrated priests at Moses' command entering upon their office, and by his orders offering sacrifices for themselves, and for the people, v. 1—21. *2d. Moses, and Aaron blessing the people, the glory of the Lord appearing, fire from before him consuming the sacrifices, with the people's surprise, and reverence, v.* 22—24.

AND it came to pass on the eighth day, *that* Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel;

2 And he said unto Aaron, Take thee a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the LORD.

3 And unto the children of Israel thou shalt speak, saying, Take ye a kid of the goats, for a sin-offering; and a calf, and a lamb, *both* of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt-offering;

4 Also a bullock and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD; and a meat-offering mingled with oil: for to-day the LORD will appear unto you.

5 And they brought *that* which Moses commanded, before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD.

6 And Moses said, This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you.

7 And Moses said unto Aaron, Go unto the altar, and offer thy sin-offering, and thy burnt-offering, and make an atonement for thyself, and for the people, and offer the offering of the people, and make an atonement for them; as the LORD commanded.

8 Aaron therefore went unto the altar, and slew the calf of the sin-offering, which *was* for himself.

9 And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him: and he dipped his finger in the blood, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar, and poured out the blood at the bottom of the altar.

10 But the fat and the kidneys, and the caul *above* the liver of the sin-offering he burnt upon the altar; as the LORD commanded Moses.

11 And the flesh and the hide he burnt with fire, without the camp.

12 And he slew the burnt-offering; and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood, which he sprinkled round about upon the altar.

13 And they presented the burnt-offering unto him, with the pieces thereof, and the head: and he burnt *them* upon the altar.

14 And he did wash the inwards and the legs, and burnt *them* upon the burnt-offering on the altar.

15 And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat which *was* the sin-offering for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first.

16 And he brought the burnt-offering, and offered it according to the manner.

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pared, when properly called in his providence, and qualified for the work, to give themselves wholly thereunto; and to be constant, persevering, tender, and affectionate therein: and are made willing to forego all personal considerations, that they may point out the Saviour to perishing sinners, and assist the spiritual sacrifices of believers, and be their helpers to the glory of God, and to the salvation of souls. But indeed all *true* Christians are consecrated to be spiritual priests: and we should seriously ask ourselves, whether we are conscious of such a solemn consecration, as bought with a price to glorify God, in body and spirit, which are his? whether we are partakers of this washing, anointing, and arraying in the robes of righteousness, and salvation? whether in our daily walk we study to maintain the honour of the priestly character? and whether we abound in spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ? If so, we know that boasting is excluded: let us not then despise, or disdain, despair of, or be harsh towards our fellow-sinners; but remembering what we have done, and how we are saved, let us seek, and pray for their salvation too. But indeed our whole life, after our conversion, is only a week of consecration as God's priests to offer up spiritual sacrifices in his courts above, through the eternal sabbath. Let us then improve our present opportunity, wait with patience and perseverance, and chearfully expect this high, and everlasting honour.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 2.—5.] Thus Aaron, after his consecration must offer first for his own sins, and afterwards for those of his people: (*Heb.* c. 7. v. 27.) But, as no particular transgression was herein to be expiated; only the defilement which cleaves to man's best performances was to be remembered, a kid, and not a bullock, was appointed to be the sin offering.

17 And

17 And he brought the meat-offering, and took an handful thereof, and burnt *it* upon the altar, beside the burnt-sacrifice of the morning.

18 He slew also the bullock and the ram, *for* a sacrifice of peace-offerings which *was* for the people: and Aaron's sons presented unto him the blood (which he sprinkled upon the altar round about)

19 And the fat of the bullock, and of the ram the rump, and that which covereth *the inwards*, and the kidneys, and the caul *above* the liver.

20 And they put the fat upon the breasts, and he burnt the fat upon the altar:

21 And the breasts and the right shoulder Aaron waved *for* a wave-offering, before the LORD; as Moses commanded.

22 And Aaron lifted up his hand towards the people, and blessed them; and came down from offering of the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and peace-offerings.

23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.

24 And there came a fire out from before the LORD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering, and the fat: *which* when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. The sin, and death of Nadab, and Abihu, with Moses' observation thereon, Aaron's silence, and their burial, v. 1—5. 2d. Aaron, and his sons forbidden to shew signs of mourning on this occasion; or to drink wine, or other strong drink, when officiating as priests, v. 6—11. 3d. Moses requiring them to proceed with their sacrifices: a mistake discovered about the sin-offering; Moses' reproof, Aaron's excuse, and Moses satisfied with it, v. 12—20.

AND Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and

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V. 23. *Went into the tabernacle*, &c.] Probably Moses there gave him directions about officiating within, as before he had without, the tabernacle.

Blessed the people, &c.] That is prayed for them, assured them of the divine acceptance of their services, and pronounced a blessing upon them from God.

V. 24. *There came a fire*, &c.] From the visible glory before mentioned: probably the former sacrifices had been consumed with common fire: and these had been placed upon the altar; and whilst the fire was kindling under them, this supernatural fire rapidly consumed the whole: and this fire was afterwards long preserved upon the altar, as is generally supposed.—Thus the Lord signified his acceptance of the vicarious atonement, as the fire, which represented his righteous vengeance, consumed the sacrifice, and spared the sinners. Thus our sins being laid upon Christ, and divine Justice having been satisfied by his atonement, God's mercy is extended to every true believer.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

After the example of Aaron and his sons, and of him, whom Aaron typified, the ministers of Christ must consider their ordination as "the filling of their hands," and without delay must enter upon their important business; for he that properly desires that office, desires not honour, profit, ease, or pleasure, but "A GOOD WORK:" and, without waiting to receive even the congratulations of his friends, should set about it; and not deem any thing which is honourable to God, or useful to the Church, or to one individual, too laborious, too mean, or too disgusting. Such a minister must also *first* take heed to himself; and take care that his public ministrations do not interrupt his personal religion, and the care of his own soul.—And all persons should remember, that the exercise of repentance, of faith, of devotedness to, and communion with God in his ordinances, is not merely the work of a few days, at the commencement of a religious profession; but the daily business of the believer's whole life. Words can never express the energy, with which these multiplied sacrifices, all at once superseded by the death of Christ, mark the insufficiency of all other atonements, and the efficacy of his own offering of himself; and teach us that our best services need washing in his blood; and that the guilt of our best sacrifices needs expiating by one more pure, and more noble than they. Let us then be thankful that we have such an High Priest over the house of God, who hath no sin of his own to atone for, and by his own oblation of himself once offered, hath fully atoned for the sins of all his people: who having offered his sacrifice, and being taken down from the cross, and risen from the dead, blessed his Church before he entered the holy place, to appear in the presence of God, to make intercession for us: and who will shortly come again, and with the full consent of prophets, apostles, saints, and angels, will make good his benediction in the everlasting felicity of every true Israelite. In the mean time, he will manifest himself, and shew the glory of the Father to those, who wait upon him, though not to the world.—Let us however remember with holy awe, that the same agonies of the beloved Son of God, which assure the humble penitent of exemption from the deserved fiery vengeance of divine justice; loudly proclaim

and put fire therein, and put incenſe thereon, and offered ſtrange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

2 And there went out fire from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

3 Then Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD ſpake, ſaying, I will be ſanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

4 And Moſes called Miſhael and Elzaphan, the ſons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and ſaid unto them, Come near, carry your brethren from before the ſanctuary out of the camp.

5 So they went near, and carried them in their coats out of the camp, as Moſes had ſaid.

6 And Moſes ſaid unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar his ſons, Uncover not your heads, neither rend your clothes; leſt you die, and leſt wrath come upon all the people: but let your brethren, the whole houſe of Iſrael, bewail the burning, which the LORD hath kindled.

7 And ye ſhall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, leſt you

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the danger, and inevitable deſtruction of ſuch as proudly, and impenitently neglect, or hypocritically abuſe ſuch great ſalvation: he, who in awful juſtice ſpared not his own Son, will not ſpare them. Finally, let us attend on the means of grace; and, as it were, lay the wood in order, and prepare the ſacrifice, and wait and pray 'till the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt, and of fire burn up our corrupt affections, kindle the flame of true devotion, and enable us to offer ſpiritual ſacrifices, acceptable to God through Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1, 2. *And Nadab, and Abihu*, &c.] The golden calf had occaſioned a ſad delay in erecting the tabernacle: and now the ſin of Nadab and Abihu cauſes an awful interruption of the opening of it's ſervice. Next to Moſes and Aaron none ſtood higher, or were more likely to be honourable in Iſrael, than theſe two young men. There is reaſon to think that they were elated with this diſtinction, and under the influence of pride, and oſtentation: they had alſo, it is probable, heated themſelves with wine. Being fully conſecrated, and conſidering the burning of incenſe, as the moſt honourable part of their office, they were impatient to enter upon it: and at the ſeaſon when the people were proſtrate before the Lord, adoring his manifeſted preſence and glory, they raſhly, and preſumptuouſly, without any orders, both at once, which was irregular, and with fire taken, not from the altar, but probably from under the peace-offerings, ruſhed into the tabernacle to burn incenſe before the Lord. This evidenced great irreverence, and diſobedience, and might have been a very bad precedent to their brethren, and their ſucceſſors: to prevent which, the Lord was pleaſed to make them an example to the Old Teſtament Church at it's firſt forming, by cauſing the fire from his preſence to ſlay them ſuddenly, without conſuming their bodies, or their clothes: as Ananias and Sapphira were ſtruck dead at the firſt eſtabliſhment of the New Teſtament Church.

V. 3. *I will be ſanctified*, &c.] This was the general tenor of all the divine revelations to them, and might be deduced from them. The way of a ſinner's acceſs to, and acceptance with a holy God, though full of encouragement, and though it be an eſpecial manifeſtation of the mercy, and love of God; yet as clearly reveals his awful juſtice, and holineſs; and ſolemnly, and loudly proclaims that he will be approached with reverence, in this only way, and in ſincere hatred and abhorrence of all ſin. Yet even under the clearer light of the New Teſtament diſpenſation, but few in compariſon properly underſtand, or are influenced by theſe things; and the Lord hath ſeen good under both diſpenſations to warn men from abuſing his mercy, by terrible threatenings, and awful judgments; and we have reaſon to think, that the death of Nadab, and Abihu, had a very ſalutary, and durable effect; eſpecially upon Aaron, and his ſons, and their ſucceſſors; for of them eſpecially would he be glorified, and had in honour before the people, that their example might duly influence the reſt.

V. 3. *Aaron held his peace.*] Though his heart muſt be filled with anguiſh, and diſmay; yet with ſilent ſubmiſſion he revered the juſtice of the ſtroke. Without doubt this would recal his ſin concerning the golden calf to his remembrance, both for his humiliation, and admiration of the Lord's patience with him.

V. 5—6.] In carrying the dead bodies out of the camp, they muſt paſs through the midſt of the tents of the people; and would preſent before their eyes an affecting, and inſtructive ſpectacle: whilſt they beheld thoſe now ſtruck dead by divine juſtice for their contempt, whom before they had known to be ſo peculiarly honoured of him: and they muſt conſider it as a ſolemn warning to them all.

V. 6. *Uncover not*, &c.] They were not allowed to expreſs their inward grief by any cuſtomary external tokens: not only leſt they ſhould ſeem to reflect upon the juſtice and goodneſs of God; not only to teach them to aſſert their authority over their ſtrongeſt paſſions: but becauſe, in compariſon of God, and where the love of him, and zeal for his glory is concerned, the neareſt relations are to be even deſpiſed, and, as it were, hated: nor were they, who had been ſo ſolemnly anointed to this high office, on any perſonal or relative conſideration, to permit their important ſervices to be interrupted; with which the honour of God, and the ſafety of the people were ſo intimately

you die: for the anointing oil of the LORD *is* upon you. And they did according to the word of Moſes.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Aaron, ſaying,

9 Do not drink wine nor ſtrong drink, thou, nor thy ſons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation; leſt ye die: *It ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations:

10 And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean:

11 And that ye may teach the children of Iſrael all the ſtatutes which the LORD hath ſpoken unto them by the hand of Moſes.

12 And Moſes ſpake unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar his ſons that were left, Take the meat-offering that remaineth of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and eat it without leaven beſide the altar: for it *is* moſt holy.

13 And ye ſhall eat it in the holy place, becauſe it *is* thy due and thy ſons due of the ſacrifices of the LORD made by fire: for ſo I am commanded.

14 And the wave-breaſt and heave-ſhoulder ſhall ye eat in a clean place; thou, and thy ſons, and thy daughters with thee: for *they be* thy due, and thy ſons due, *which* are given out of the ſacrifices of peace-offerings of the children of Iſrael.

15 The heave-ſhoulder, and the wave-breaſt ſhall they bring, with the offerings made by fire of the fat, to wave *it for* a wave-offering before the LORD, and it ſhall be thine, and thy ſons with thee, by a ſtatute for ever; as the LORD hath commanded.

16 And Moſes diligently ſought the goat of the ſin-offering, and behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the ſons of Aaron *which were* left *alive*, ſaying,

17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the ſin-offering in the holy place, ſeeing it *is* moſt holy, and *God* hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?

18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in, within the holy *place:* ye ſhould indeed have eaten it in the holy *place*, as I commanded.

19 And Aaron ſaid unto Moſes, Behold, this day have they offered their ſin-offering, and their burnt-offering before the LORD; and ſuch things have befallen me: and *if* I had eaten the ſin-offering to-day, ſhould it have been accepted in the ſight of the LORD?

20 And when Moſes heard *that*, he was content.

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intimately connected. Had they alſo by diſobedience provoked the Lord to ſlay them, the people would have been left without prieſt or ſacrifice: which is repreſented as equivalent to being left expoſed without remedy to the juſt wrath of God: yet neither on this occaſion, nor at any time afterwards, was another family appointed to ſucceed, in caſe Aaron's ſhould be extinct.

V. 8. *The Lord ſpake unto Aaron*, &c.] This command ſeems immediately to have been given to Aaron, to encourage him by this token of regard: and becauſe the Lord would not have it appear as if Moſes inſulted over his affliction, or inſinuated that he had been guilty of emperance.

V. 16—18. *The goat of the ſin-offering*, &c.] Though this were a ſin-offering for the congregation; yet as it was a goat, and not a bullock, (See ch. 4. v. 14.) by ſpecial direction, as is probable, the blood was not carried into the ſanctuary, to be put upon the altar of incenſe, or ſprinkled before the mercy-ſeat, before the vail: and therefore the fleſh was not to be burnt without the camp, or upon the altar, or as the fleſh of the ſacrifices was, which remained, when they had done eating: and whether this was done by inadvertency, or becauſe Aaron drew a wrong concluſion from the ſtate of his mind, does not appear.

Bear the iniquity, &c.] (See note, ch. 6. v. 19—23.) Sinners are ſaid "to eat of the fruit of their own ways, "and to be filled with their own devices," (*Prov.* c. 1. v. 31.) when they ſuffer the puniſhments, which their ſins deſerve. Thus the prieſts, by eating their ſin-offering, were repreſented as bearing the people's iniquity for them; but by burning without the camp their own ſin-offerings, and thoſe, whoſe blood was carried into the ſanctuary, it was ſhewn, that they were only types, and that both their own iniquity, and that of the people muſt be finally transferred to, and fully expiated by the great Antitype.

V. 19. *Should it have been accepted*, &c.?] Aaron intimates, that he could not have eaten this ſacred feaſt with proper calmneſs, and chearfulneſs, as his mind was agitated with ſuch conflicting paſſions: or that he was unworthy of, and could not hope for the divine acceptance therein, had he attempted to have done it.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. The distinction betwixt clean, and unclean animals, whether of beasts, fishes, fowls, or creeping things; with the laws respecting eating, or not eating them; together with rules respecting the uncleanness contracted by touching some of them, v. 1—43. *2d. The reason of these laws, &c. v.* 44—47.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, and to Aaron, saying unto them,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts, that *are* on the earth.

3 Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, *and* cheweth the cud among the beasts, that shall ye eat.

4 Nevertheless, these shall ye not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: *as* the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you.

5 And the coney, because he cheweth the cud,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ritual law, though a "shadow of good things "to come, made nothing perfect:" (*Heb.* c. 7. v. 19.) and to caution people not to mistake the shadow for the substance, these manifest, and repeated evidences of it's insufficiency to take away sin, or avert the wrath of God, were permitted: let us then look unto Jesus, who hath indeed borne our iniquity, and fully satisfied the justice of our offended God, for the sins of all his believing people. Such is the heart of man, that all honours, and distinctions are dangerous to the persons distinguished; because they naturally enkindle pride, and ostentation: and such is the holiness of God, that he cannot endure disobedience in any; and least of all in those, who approach the nearest unto him. We should then stand in awe, that we sin not: and guard against hypocrisy, presumption, and irreverent rashness in the service, and worship of God: and not only should we fear that unquenchable fire, which is reserved for the everlasting punishment of his enemies; but those awful rebukes, with which he corrects the contemptuous carelessness of his own people, and which sometimes follow them even to the grave. But, though all should read this example with solemn awe, the ministers of God should especially take heed to themselves, and keep close, both to their work, and to their instructions: and should not only fear the doom of the wicked, and slothful servant; but that of these priests, "who offered strange fire before the Lord;" if they seek their own honour, or interest; follow the imaginations of their own hearts; are influenced by an angry, and persecuting spirit, or treat sacred things with careless indifference: for though they escape punishment in this world, they will not, *thus living and dying*, escape the fire, which is never quenched. Above all men, they should take heed, that their hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness; they especially need clear heads, and sound judgments, as well as upright hearts; not only that "they themselves die not;" but that they "put a dif-"ference between holy and unholy," "and teach the "people all that the Lord hath spoken." And not only will they need to watch and be sober, but to be superior to their very natural affections, and not under the power of any passion: both that they may be examples to others of that supreme love of God, which subordinates all other regards; and also that the important work of their ministry be not interrupted, lest wrath also come upon the people. But indeed we all should learn to mourn and rejoice, as though we mourned and rejoiced not: for we may be assured, that all our comforts must be counterbalanced with trials; and all our honours, with some thorn in the flesh to humble us: and the remembrance of former sins may well stop our mouths, and produce silent submission under our bitterest sorrows: "for it is of the "Lord's mercy we are not consumed;" and we have still many unmerited comforts remaining, and encouraging prospects before us: and even if our inward anguish be great, we should learn to stifle the rising murmur, to keep our mouth with a bridle, and to be careful that we do not reflect upon God. As the Lord will be sanctified, and honoured by all, who approach him, we should be careful to profit by these examples of his severity, that we ourselves may not be made examples to others; and the good effect of such awful judgments, both at the time, and in after ages, discovers not only the wisdom, but the goodness of God in them. But though our improper attendance on religious ordinances may expose us to wrath, yet we must not therefore neglect them: and though we may well say, "who is able to stand be-"fore this holy Lord God?" yet this must only teach us more carefully to come according to his appointment, and explicitly in the name of our great Advocate. Thus, although some persons by unworthily receiving the Lord's supper, have provoked the Lord to plague them with divers diseases, and with sundry kinds of death; yet we must not, on this account, neglect that our bounden duty and service: "but let a man examine himself, and so let "him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Nor need a humble communicant, who comes "not trusting in "his own righteousness, but in the Lord's mercy," be discouraged; for he knows how to distinguish between presumptuous rashness, or contemptuous disobedience; and the involuntary infirmities, or unallowed mistakes of the conscientious. After his example also, though the Ministers of Christ must be careful that all be done in the prescribed manner, and must notice whatever is done amiss; and on some occasions must express an holy indignation, and rebuke with all authority: yet they must be careful not to confound inadvertencies with intended disobedience, or to grieve more those, whom the Lord has wounded:

cud, but divideth not the hoof: he *is* unclean unto you.

6 And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof: he *is* unclean unto you.

7 And the swine, though he divideth the hoof, and be cloven-footed; yet he cheweth not the cud: he *is* unclean to you.

8 Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch: they *are* unclean to you.

9 These shall ye eat, of all that *are* in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers; them shall ye eat.

10 And all that have not fins nor scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing, which *is* in the waters; they *shall be* an abomination unto you.

11 They shall be even an abomination unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, but you shall have their carcases in abomination.

12 Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that *shall be* an abomination unto you.

13 And these *are they which* ye shall have in abomination among the fowls, they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,

14 And the vulture, and the kite, after his kind:

15 Every raven after his kind:

16 And the owl, and the night-hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,

17 And the little owl, and the cormorant, and the great owl,

18 And

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wounded: but must be willing to make allowances, and to accept of excuses; and to restore those, who have been overtaken in a fault, with the spirit of meekness, "consi-"dering themselves, lest they also be tempted." (*Gal.* c. 6. v. 1.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 2. *These are the beasts*, &c.] The distinction betwixt clean, and unclean animals was known before the flood; though probably it had only respect to sacrifices: but at this time very particular laws were enacted respecting the people's diet; and the ceremonial uncleannesses contracted by touching the carcases of the unclean animals. These laws seem to have been intended, 1st. as a test of the people's obedience, like the prohibition to Adam of the tree of knowledge: and to teach them, to habituate themselves to self-denial, and the government of their appetites. 2d. To keep the Israelites distinct from other nations, both by throwing hindrances in the way of their social intercourse with them; and by teaching them the distinction betwixt clean, and unclean; which was applied to persons, as well as things: and when this distinction between Israel, and other nations, was no longer to be observed, Peter was instructed by a vision, which had relation to the distinction of meats, not to call any man common, or unclean. Many also of these forbidden animals were occasions of superstition, and idolatry to the Heathens. 3d. They were hereby taught to make distinctions between holy, and unholy in the choice of their companions, and in forming intimate connexions. And some suggest that in these laws, and in the propensities of these animals, they were taught, what manner of persons they themselves ought to be: and indeed, if the pure, useful, gentle, patient dispositions of the animals appointed for sacrifice, were emblematical of the Saviour's character: it is natural to conclude that the prescription of some animals for the diet of the Lord's people, to the exclusion of others, was significant of somewhat similar respecting their character. Some have even thought that the allowance of the slaughter of *innocent animals* for the *food of sinful man*, forms a continued type of the purchase, and application of the salvation of Christ, and of our transformation into his image, who is the food of our souls. But in all these remote allusions, we must be sparing, when we would descend to particulars; and I shall content myself with pointing out a few of the most obvious, and certain of them.

V. *Whatsoever parteth the hoof*, &c.] Parting the hoof may denote separation from sin, and from the world; "chewing the cud" aptly represents serious, pleasant, habitual meditation upon the truths, and precepts of the word of God. These are united in the experience, and character of the true Christian, (*Psalm* 1. v. 1, 2.) But hypocrites shew that they do neither truly, by evidently attempting to separate between profession, and practice; therefore they are as unclean, as the avowed infidel, or profligate. The fox, the dog, the lion, the wolf, &c. neither chew the cud, nor divide the hoof: the swine, the hare, the rabbit do only the one: therefore they too are unclean. The former are apt emblems of the crafty, the covetous, the cruel, and fierce; the latter of the lewd, the sensual, the fearful, and the carnal-minded professor, who stills burrows in the earth, Whilst the sheep, and ox, and other animals, which unite the two, aptly teach us what persons we ought to be; and with whom we should associate.

V. 9—12.] Such animals as eels, and frogs; those called amphibious, and many sea-monsters were prohibited; but the emblem, if there be any, is very obscure: and I shall only observe that several of them may represent such persons, as attempt tore concile in their conduct the service of God, and mammon.

V. 13—20.] Here the critics have abundance of work, and if this law were now in force, it would be necessary,

18 And the ſwan and the pelican, and the gier-eagle,

19 And the ſtork, the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

20 All fowls that creep, going upon *all* four, *ſhall be* an abomination unto you.

21 Yet theſe may ye eat of every flying creeping thing that goeth upon *all* four, which have legs above their feet, to leap withal upon the earth:

22 *Even* theſe of them ye may eat: the locuſt after his kind, and the bald locuſt after his kind, and the beetle after his kind, and the graſhopper after his kind.

23 But all *other* flying creeping things, which have four feet, *ſhall be* an abomination unto you.

24 And for theſe ye ſhall be unclean: whoſoever toucheth the carcaſe of them, ſhall be unclean until the even.

25 And whoſoever beareth *ought* of the carcaſe of them, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even.

26 *The carcaſes* of every beaſt which divideth the hoof, and *is* not cloven-footed, nor cheweth the cud, *are* unclean unto you: every one that toucheth them ſhall be unclean.

27 And whatſoever goeth upon his paws, among all manner of beaſts, that go on *all* four, thoſe *are* unclean unto you: whoſo toucheth their carcaſe, ſhall be unclean until the even.

28 And he that beareth the carcaſe of them, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even: they *are* unclean unto you.

29 Theſe alſo *ſhall be* unclean unto you among the creeping things that creep upon the earth: the weaſel, and the mouſe, and the tortoiſe after his kind,

30 And the ferret, and the chamelion, and the lizard, and the ſnail, and the mole.

31 Theſe *are* unclean to you among all that creep: whoſoever doth touch them, when they be dead, ſhall be unclean until the even.

32 And upon whatſoever *any* of them, when they are dead, doth fall, it ſhall be unclean; whether *it be* any veſſel of wood, or raiment, or ſkin, or ſack, whatſoever veſſel *it be*, wherein *any* work is done, it muſt be put into water, and it ſhall be unclean until the even; ſo it ſhall be cleanſed.

33 And every earthen veſſel whereinto *any* of them falleth, whatſoever *is* in it ſhall be unclean; and ye ſhall break it.

34 Of all meat which may be eaten, *that* on which *ſuch* water cometh, ſhall be unclean: and all drink that may be drunk in every *ſuch* veſſel, ſhall be unclean.

35 And every *thing*, whereupon *any part* of their carcaſe falleth, ſhall be unclean; *whether it be* oven, or ranges for pots, they ſhall be broken down: *for* they *are* unclean, and ſhall be unclean unto you.

36 Nevertheleſs, a fountain or pit, *wherein there is* plenty of water, ſhall be clean: but that which toucheth their carcaſe ſhall be unclean.

37 And if *any part* of their carcaſe fall upon any ſowing-ſeed which is to be ſown; it *ſhall be* clean.

38 But if *any* water be put upon the ſeed, and *any part* of their carcaſe fall thereon; it *ſhall be* unclean unto you.

39 And if any beaſt of which ye may eat,

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to decide upon the meaning of theſe obſcure appellatives: but as it is antiquated, it is not ſo much as uſeful. Many of theſe were birds of prey, and others fed very groſsly: ſuch were unclean. Whilſt the harmleſs loving dove, and ſuch as were of a cleanly nature were allowed for food. The emblem is eaſily applied.

V. 31. *Whoſoever doth touch them, when they be dead*, &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been the general rule: they did not render a perſon unclean, who touched them when alive; for many of them where uſeful animals, as the horſe, aſs, and camel; and many of them muſt be touched in order to be deſtroyed. Yet with this limitation the law would be to us extremely burdenſome: for inſtance, a dead mouſe, or other vermin falling upon their earthen veſſels, ovens, or ranges, would render it neceſſary to deſtroy them. The uncleanneſs contracted was only ceremonial; yet it would oft exclude them from the public ordinances, and occaſion much circumſpection in properly purifying themſelves, and their furniture; and a conſtant care and watchfulneſs to avoid contracting pollution. All this repreſented the neceſſity of the "ſanctification of the "Spirit unto obedience," the daily purſuit of true holineſs, in the exerciſe of "repentance to wards God, and faith "towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and habitual watchful-"neſs, and ſelf-examination."

die;

die; he that toucheth the carcaſe thereof, ſhall be unclean until the even.

40 And he that eateth of the carcaſe of it, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even: he alſo that beareth the carcaſe of it, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean until the even.

41 And every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth *ſhall be* an abomination: it ſhall not be eaten.

42 Whatſoever goeth upon the belly, and whatſoever goeth upon *all* four, or whatſoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth; them ſhall ye not eat, for they *are* an abomination.

43 Ye ſhall not make yourſelves abominable with any creeping thing that creepeth, neither ſhall ye make yourſelves unclean with them, that ye ſhould be defiled thereby.

44 For I *am* the LORD your God: ye ſhall therefore ſanctify yourſelves, and ye ſhall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither ſhall ye defile yourſelves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

45 For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye ſhall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

46 This *is* the law of the beaſts, and of the fowl, and of every living creature that moveth in the waters, and of every creature that creepeth upon the earth:

47 To make a difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beaſt that may be eaten, and the beaſt that may not be eaten.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1ſt. The law of a woman's uncleanneſs by child-birth, v. 1—5. 2d. The law of purification afterwards, v. 6—8.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, If a woman have conceived ſeed, and born a man-child: then ſhe ſhall be unclean ſeven days; according to the days of the ſeparation for her infirmity ſhall ſhe be unclean.

3 And in the eighth day, the fleſh of his foreſkin ſhall be circumciſed.

4 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we enjoy our Chriſtian liberty, and are exempted from ſuch burdenſome obſervances, and allowed the uſe of ſo many kinds of wholeſome, and palatable food, from which Iſrael was reſtricted; let us not forget to be thankful for ſuch indulgence; and let us conſider that we are bound to ſerve God with joyfulneſs of heart for this abundance of all things: but we muſt be careful not to abuſe our liberty, as an occaſion to the fleſh. Even to this day, to the unbelieving all things are unclean; and only clean to thoſe, who receive them with thankſgiving, and to whom they are ſanctified by the word of God, and prayer. Such perſons will not be ſlaves to their appetites; but both in the quality and quantity of what they eat and drink, will conſider what fits them for God's ſervice, and what ſuits their circumſtances, and conſiſts with temperance, juſtice and charity; that they may do all to the glory of God. The Lord hath redeemed, and called his people, that they may be holy even as he is holy: we muſt therefore come out, and be ſeparate from the world; we muſt renounce the company of the ungodly, and all intimate and needleſs connexions with thoſe, who are dead in ſin; we muſt be a peculiar people zealous of good works, devoted to, and followers of God as dear children; conformed to the image of his ſon, and aſſociating with his people: and if we would not commit wickedneſs, we muſt watch and pray againſt temptation. Let us alſo remember that in this ſinful world we are contracting, not ceremonial, but moral pollution every day; and except we are continually waſhing in the fountain opened for ſin, and for uncleanneſs, we can have no fellowſhip with an holy God on earth, or admiſſion into an holy heaven: and that this will be the caſe till the evening of death, when all, who have been thus waſhed ſhall be clean for ever; but they, that are found filthy, ſhall be filthy ſtill, and to eternity. We ſhould therefore ſpare no pains, nor think much of any expence, or ſelf-denial, which we may be called to, in the purſuit of holineſs: we ſhould walk very circumſpectly, and uſe much ſelf-examination, and be much more careful to diſcovery, or to avoid, and to waſh away the pollution of ſin; than the Iſraelite would be about his ceremonial uncleanneſs; and we ſhould wait with glad expectation our diſmiſſion from this ſinful world: for though death, being the wages of ſin, be in itſelf pollution, and iſſues in corruption: yet to the believer it's ſting is not only removed, but it's uncleanneſs deſtroyed; and as a deſirable meſſenger it conveys the child of God home to his Father's holy, and bliſsful habitation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII] V. 2—5.] For one week the mother of a male child, and for a fortnight the mother of a female were both ceremonially unclean themſelves, and rendered all

4 And ſhe ſhall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days: ſhe ſhall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the ſanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.

5 But if ſhe bear a maid-child, then ſhe ſhall be unclean two weeks, as in her ſeparation: and ſhe ſhall continue in the blood of her purifying threeſcore and ſix days.

6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a ſon, or for a daughter; ſhe ſhall bring a lamb of the firſt year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle-dove for a ſin-offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the prieſt:

7 Who ſhall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her, and ſhe ſhall be cleanſed from the iſſue of her blood. This *is* the law for her that hath born a male or a female.

8 And if ſhe be not able to bring a lamb, then ſhe ſhall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt-offering, and the other for a ſin-offering: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for her, and ſhe ſhall be clean.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains 1ſt. Rules for diſtinguiſhing the plague of leproſy, v. 1—44. 2d. The conduct preſcribed to lepers, v. 45, 46. 3d. The leproſy in garments v. 47—59.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and Aaron, ſaying,

2 When a man ſhall have in the ſkin of his

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all who touched them unclean alſo: during the remainder of the terms here preſcribed, the mother was ſecluded from eating the paſſover, peace-offerings, &c. and from going to the ſanctuary; but communicated no ſuch pollution to others. The time appointed for the female child was double; for by that ſex ſin firſt entered; but in Chriſt this ſtigma is removed. When the ſeven days were expired, and the touch of the mother no longer cauſed pollution, the male child was to be circumciſed.—The whole marked the ſinfulneſs of both root, and branch: for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? "Not one."

V. 6—8.] For the ſame reaſon the ſacrifices, appointed on this occaſion, were not peace-offerings, as betokening gratitude and joy; but a burnt-offering, and a ſin-offering to make atonement, and to bring ſin to remembrance, that it might be repented of, and expiated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

What could the infinite wiſe God intend by all theſe inſtitutions, but to bring a charge of guilt, and pollution againſt the whole human ſpecies? Doubtleſs this charge is well grounded; and the Lord knowing how prone men are to deny, or forget their real character, and ſituation, did thus deviſe to hold up the memorial of them continually before their eyes; and "by line upon line, and pre-"cept upon precept," to teach them this ſalutary leſſon; that man, from his conception in the womb, to his grave, is an unclean creature; that he contracts guilt, through this defilement, even in the moſt lawful, and neceſſary actions; and that he propagates the ſame depraved nature to his offſpring: inſomuch that, except ſo far as the atonement of Chriſt, and the ſanctification of the Spirit prevent; the original bleſſing, "increaſe and multi-"ply," is become to the fallen race a direful curſe, and only the communication of ſin, and miſery.—This may teach us habitual humiliation before God; and to rejoice in our domeſtic comforts with trembling; to walk watchfully; to ſearch out the evil, that cleaves to our ordinary actions; and to value, and give diligence to ſecure, the ſalvation of the Goſpel.—As we are ſo unworthy of every good, we have the greater reaſon to be thankful for all our mercies, and to unite the exerciſe of repentance and faith, with all our ſacrifices of praiſe, and thankſgiving. When, according to the promiſe, (1 *Tim.* c. 2. v. 15.) thoſe women, who profeſs godlineſs, have been preſerved in child-birth; though they are exempted from theſe burdenſome ceremonies, they ſhould deem themſelves doubly bound to take the earlieſt proper opportunity of rendering public unfeigned thanks to God for ſuch a mercy: they ſhould acknowledge the juſtice of God in all the pains, and perils, which through ſin have come upon the ſex; and join all with penitent confeſſions of guilt, renewed application to the blood of Chriſt for forgiveneſs, and dedication of themſelves unto God through him.—And whilſt theſe ſacrifices of praiſe, for mercies in ſome ſenſe common to both parents, are offered with united hearts by both: conſcious that their infant offſpring hath from them derived a depraved nature, and is come into an evil world, how proper is it that with harmonious conſent they devote their child unto the Lord; and take comfort from the aſſurance, that "the covenant is made with them, for their "good, and the good of their children after them!" for in Chriſt Jeſus there is neither male, nor female. Finally, let us bleſs God, that the Saviour "was made of a wo-"man, made under the law, that he might redeem them "that were under the law, that we might receive the "adoption of ſons:" and that alſo "for our ſakes he "became poor, that we through his poverty might be "made rich." (*Luke*, c. 2. v. 21—24.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 2. *The plague of leproſy*, &c.] Many things, at leaſt, reſpecting this diſeaſe, were peculiar

his fleſh, a riſing, a ſcab, or bright ſpot, and it be in the ſkin of his fleſh *like* the plague of leproſy; then he ſhall be brought unto Aaron the prieſt, or unto one of his ſons the prieſts.

3 And the prieſt ſhall look on the plague in the ſkin of the fleſh: and *when* the hair in the plague is turned white, and the plague in ſight *be* deeper than the ſkin of his fleſh; it *is* a plague of leproſy: and the prieſt ſhall look on him and pronounce him unclean.

4 If the bright ſpot *be* white in the ſkin of his fleſh, and in ſight *be* not deeper than the ſkin, and the hair thereof be not turned white; then the prieſt ſhall ſhut up *him that hath* the plague, ſeven days.

5 And the prieſt ſhall look on him the ſeventh day: and behold, *if* the plague in his ſight be at a ſtay, *and* the plague ſpread not in the ſkin; then the prieſt ſhall ſhut him up ſeven days more.

6 And the prieſt ſhall look on him again the ſeventh day: and behold, *if* the plague *be* ſomewhat dark, and the plague ſpread not in the ſkin; the prieſt ſhall pronounce him clean: it *is but* a ſcab: and he ſhall waſh his clothes, and be clean.

7 But if the ſcab ſpread much abroad in the ſkin, after that he hath been ſeen of the prieſt for his cleanſing; he ſhall be ſeen of the prieſt again.

8 And *if* the prieſt ſee, that behold, the ſcab ſpreadeth in the ſkin; then the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean: it *is* a leproſy.

9 When the plague of leproſy is in a man, then he ſhall be brought unto the prieſt:

10 And the prieſt ſhall ſee *him*: and behold, *if* the riſing *be* white in the ſkin, and it have turned the hair white, and *there be* quick raw fleſh in the riſing;

11 It *is* an old leproſy in the ſkin of his fleſh, and the prieſt ſhall pronounce him unclean, and ſhall not ſhut him up: for he *is* unclean.

12 And if a leproſy break out abroad in the ſkin, and the leproſy cover all the ſkin of *him that hath* the plague, from his head even to his foot, whereſoever the prieſt looketh:

13 Then the prieſt ſhall conſider: and behold, *if* the leproſy have covered all his fleſh, he ſhall pronounce *him* clean *that hath* the plague: it is all turned white: he *is* clean.

14 But when raw fleſh appeareth in him, he ſhall be unclean.

15 And the prieſt ſhall ſee the raw fleſh, and pronounce him to be unclean: *for* the raw fleſh *is* unclean: it *is* a leproſy.

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liar to the Iſraelites. The plague of leproſy was frequently inflicted by judgment from God (See *Num.* c. 12. v. 10. 2 *Kings*, c. 5. v. 27. 2 *Chron.* c. 26. v. 19—21.); and was always a token of his diſpleaſure: nor do we read of any cure for it, but by miracle, or by an immediate interpoſition of God. The prieſts were employed to judge when a man had it, and when he was cleanſed from it; and great care was to be uſed, and much exactneſs employed, in diſtinguiſhing between this plague, and ordinary diſeaſes; they, who were unclean through it, were excluded from the ſociety of the people, as well as from the courts of the Lord: and when the leproſy was cleanſed, the leper was not re-admitted, till after ſacrifices, and purifications, &c. All this ſeems to repreſent the ſtate of a ſinner, whoſe heart is entirely unſanctified, and in whom ſin has dominion: whatever his profeſſion may be, he has yet no benefit from the ſacrifice for ſin, nor is he meet for communion with God, or his people on earth, much leſs in heaven; until, or unleſs he be cleanſed. Much care muſt be taken by the miniſters of Chriſt to diſtinguiſh betwixt this perſon's caſe; and that of thoſe who, though upright in heart have many infirmities: and we ſhall perceive many other things admitting of an apt accommodation, as we proceed. We cannot fully underſtand theſe particular rules, and ſhall not dwell upon them. In general it has been obſerved that the hair turned white in the plague, which was one token of leproſy, may denote the caſe of ſuch perſons, who are grown hoary in ſin, and yet continue in it: the plague deeper than the ſkin (another token, and oppoſed to a ſuperficial appearance thereon), may denote the difference betwixt ſins of ſurpriſe, and thoſe, which appear to ſpring from the habitual ſtate of the heart, and affections: the ſpreading of the plague after inſpection, deſcribes the caſe of ſuch, as grow worſe in ſin after convictions, and reproofs: the quick raw fleſh, or proud fleſh, may denote the diſpoſition to ſelf-juſtification; or even boaſting of, and glorying in ſin: the total eruption, which proved that there was no leproſy, may ſignify, on the other hand, that conſciouſneſs of guilt, which produces ingenuous unreſerved confeſſion; and is a good evidence, that its power is dethroned: and the plague breaking out, after the cure of an old ſore, may repreſent the return of a profeſſor back again to the habitual practice of his old iniquities: whilſt the *utter uncleanneſs* of thoſe, who were leprous in their heads, might ſhadow forth their dangerous ſtate, whoſe ungodly lives are the reſult of infidel, or heretical principles. But it is enough to have hinted theſe things, without entering into any further diſcuſſion of them; as we have plainer rules to direct us, than theſe antiquated laws.

16 Or if the raw flesh turn again, and be changed into white; he shall come unto the priest:

17 And the priest shall see him: and behold, *if* the plague be turned into white; then the priest shall pronounce *him* clean *that hath* the plague: he *is* clean.

18 The flesh also, in which, *even* in the skin thereof, was a bile, and is healed,

19 And in the place of the bile there be a white rising, or a bright spot white, and somewhat reddish, and it be shewed to the priest;

20 And if when the priest seeth it, behold, it *be* in sight lower than the skin, and the hair thereof be turned white; the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it *is* a plague of leprosy broken out of the bile.

21 But if the priest look on it, and behold, *there be* no white hairs therein, and *if* it be not lower than the skin, but *be* somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days.

22 And if it spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean; it *is* a plague.

23 But if the bright spot stay in his place, *and* spread not, it *is* a burning bile; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

24 Or if there be *any* flesh, in the skin whereof *there is* a hot burning, and the quick *flesh* that burneth have a white bright spot, somewhat reddish or white;

25 Then the priest shall look upon it: and behold, *if* the hair in the bright spot be turned white, and it *be in* sight deeper than the skin; it *is* a leprosy broken out of the burning: wherefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it *is* the plague of leprosy.

26 But if the priest look on it, and behold, *there be* no white hair on the bright spot, and it *be* no lower than the *other* skin, but *be* somewhat dark; then the priest shall shut him up seven days.

27 And the priest shall look upon him the seventh day: *and* if it be spread much abroad in the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it *is* the plague of leprosy.

28 And if the bright spot stay in his place, *and* spread not in the skin, but it *be* somewhat dark; it *is* a rising of the burning, and the priest shall pronounce him clean: for it *is* an inflammation of the burning.

29 If a man or woman hath a plague upon the head or the beard;

30 Then the priest shall see the plague: and behold, if it *be* in sight deeper than the skin, and *there be* in it a yellow thin hair; then the priest shall pronounce him unclean: it *is* a dry scall, *even* a leprosy upon the head or beard.

31 And if the priest look on the plague of the scall, and behold, it *be* not in sight deeper than the skin, and *that there is* no black hair in it; then the priest shall shut up *him that hath* the plague of the scall, seven days.

32 And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the plague: and behold, *if* the scall spread not, and there be in it no yellow hair, and the scall *be* not in sight deeper than the skin;

33 He shall be shaven, but the scall shall he not shave: and the priest shall shut up *him that hath* the scall seven days more.

34 And in the seventh day the priest shall look on the scall: and behold, *if* the scall be not spread in the skin, nor *be* in sight deeper than the skin; then the priest shall pronounce him clean: and he shall wash his clothes, and be clean.

35 But if the scall spread much in the skin after his cleansing;

36 Then the priest shall look on him: and behold, if the scall be spread in the skin, the priest shall not seek for yellow hair; he *is* unclean.

37 But if the scall be in his sight at a stay, and *that* there is black hair grown up therein; the scall is healed, he *is* clean: and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

38 If a man also, or a woman have in the skin of their flesh, bright spots, *even* white bright spots;

39 Then the priest shall look: and behold, *if* the bright spots in the skin of their flesh *be* darkish white; it *is* a freckled spot *that* groweth in the skin; he *is* clean.

40 And

40 And the man whoſe hair is fallen off his head, he *is* bald: *yet is* he clean.

41 And he that hath his hair fallen off from the part of his head toward his face, he *is* forehead-bald: *yet is* he clean.

42 And if there be in the bald head, or bald forehead, a white reddiſh ſore; it *is* a leproſy ſprung up in his bald head, or his bald forehead.

43 Then the prieſt ſhall look upon it: and behold, *if* the riſing of the ſore *be* white reddiſh in his bald head, or in his bald forehead, as the leproſy appeareth in the ſkin of the fleſh;

44 He *is* a leprous man, he *is* unclean: the prieſt ſhall pronounce him utterly unclean, his plague *is* in his head.

45 And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes ſhall be rent, and his head bare, and he ſhall put a covering upon his upper lip, and ſhall cry, Unclean, unclean.

46 All the days wherein the plague *ſhall be* in him, he ſhall be defiled; he *is* unclean: he ſhall dwell alone, without the camp *ſhall* his habitation *be*.

47 The garment alſo that the plague of leproſy *is* in *whether it be* a woollen garment, or a linen garment,

48 Whether *it be* in the warp, or woof, of linen or of woollen, whether in a ſkin, or in any thing made of ſkin:

49 And if the plague be greeniſh or reddiſh in the garment, or in the ſkin, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of ſkin; it *is* a plague of leproſy, and ſhall be ſhewed unto the prieſt.

50 And the prieſt ſhall look upon the plague, and ſhut up *it that hath* the plague, ſeven days.

51 And he ſhall look on the plague on the ſeventh day: if the plague be ſpread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in a ſkin, *or* in any work that is made of ſkin; the plague *is* a fretting leproſy; it *is* unclean.

52 He ſhall therefore burn that garment, whether warp, or woof, in woollen or in linen, or any thing of ſkin, wherein the plague is: for it *is* a fretting leproſy; it ſhall be burnt in the fire.

53 And if the prieſt ſhall look, and behold, the plague be not ſpread in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in anything of ſkin;

54 Then the prieſt ſhall command that they waſh *the thing* wherein the plague *is*, and he ſhall ſhut it up ſeven days more.

55 And the prieſt ſhall look on the plague after that it is waſhed: and behold, *if* the plague have not changed his colour, and the plague be not ſpread; it *is* unclean, thou ſhalt burn it in the fire; it *is* fret inward, *whether* it *be* bare within or without.

56 And if the prieſt look, and behold, the plague *be* ſomewhat dark after the waſhing of it; then he ſhall rend it out of the garment, or out of the ſkin, or out of the warp, or out of the woof.

57 And if it appear ſtill in the garment, either in the warp, or in the woof, or in any thing of ſkin; it *is* a ſpreading *plague*: thou ſhalt burn that wherein the plague *is*, with fire.

58 And the garment, either warp or woof, or whatſoever thing of ſkin *it be*, which thou ſhalt waſh, if the plague be departed from them, then it ſhall be waſhed the ſecond time, and ſhall be clean.

59 This

V. 45, 46.] The leproſy would thus be a reproach to a man's character, incapacitate him for buſineſs, ſeclude him from ſociety, even that of his neareſt friends, or any of others, except that of lepers like himſelf; and would ſhut him out from God's ſanctuary. Yet under this great affliction he muſt abide by the deciſion of the prieſt, and humble himſelf under the divine rebuke; proclaim his ſhame, and ſhew peculiar indications of ſelf-abaſement, and ſubmiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God. Thus when the word of God condemns a man as an unconverted ſinner, his only wiſe courſe, is to condemn himſelf, and renouncing every plea, humbly to caſt himſelf upon the mercy of God. For thoſe, who cover, or conceal their ſins, or harden their hearts againſt convictions, will have their mouths ſtopped, and their excuſes ſilenced by the ſentence of the Judge himſelf at laſt.

V. 47—59.] This ſingular effect of the leproſy, which muſt have been ſupernatural, might be intended to denote the

59 This *is* the law of the plague of leprosy in a garment of woollen or linen, either in the warp or woof, or any thing of skins, to pronounce it clean, or to pronounce it unclean.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. Laws for the purification of those, who were cleansed from leprosy, v. 1—32. 2d. The leprosy in houses, v. 33—53. 3d. The summary conclusion of the whole, v. 54—57.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 This shall be the law of the leper, in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest:

3 And the priest shall go forth out of the camp: and the priest shall look, and behold, *if* the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper;

4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed, two birds alive, *and*

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the malignity, and defiling nature of sin; and the necessity there is of parting with all occasions of transgression, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh. Such spotted garments are they, however rich, and beautiful, which are the incentives of pride, and lust.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a question of the utmost importance, whether sin be in dominion in our hearts, or not: for if it be, we have no interest in Christ, no share with God's people, no acceptance in God's ordinances, no real communion with him, no inheritance in his kingdom, or meetness for that holy habitation: but if sin be dethroned, though it dwell within, and cause much conflict, and disquietude; and even produce many defilements in our conduct, and in our best services, which call for, and produce humiliation before God; yet we are his children, accepted in the beloved, and have the seal of his Spirit in our hearts. We should therefore be willing to give this important matter a fair trial, according to the word of God; using the assistance of his ministers, and other experienced Christians; but above all opening the case to our heart-searching compassionate High Priest above: and though we should be jealous of ourselves, and suspect the worst; yet we should not deem every infirmity, or occasional misconduct an evidence of hypocrisy, or unconversion: but should judge as impartially as we can of ourselves, duly considering on the one hand, the imperfect state of Christians in this world; and on the other, duly adverting to the numbers, who think themselves something, when they are nothing. But ministers have need of much knowledge of the Scriptures, and experimental acquaintance with the nature, and effects of divine Grace; as well as much caution, attention, and tenderness, who are called upon to deal thus with men's consciences in doubtful cases; that they may neither deceive some, nor distress others: and they must be sure to do nothing rashly, or without mature examination. Nor should they, who would know the state of their own souls, come hastily to a decision: week after week they should wait upon the Lord, and on the ministry of the word; and if they be much separated from the world, and engaged in secret investigation of the Scriptures, and prayer, and self-examination, it will much conduce to a satisfactory solution. Even if this question be resolved, and we are humbly satisfied that we are real Christians, we must remember that "in many things we "offend all;" and that we have occasion for continual washing in the blood of Christ. But when it is plain on Scripture grounds that a professor of religion is unconverted, and unclean; it is right he should know it; and right that others should be warned to withdraw from his polluting society. And how dreadful is their case, whom the decisions of faithful ministers, the conduct of true believers, and the express testimonies of God's word, concur in declaring unmeet to partake of God's ordinances on earth, and in consequence inadmissible into the kingdom of heaven, if they live and die in this state! Even on earth all their possessions, comforts, and performances are defiled by them; if they do not contaminate the principles, and conduct of others. Yet still there is hope in this case; for by the Gospel that leprosy is cleansed, which the law could but discover. If then such persons do at length see their guilt and danger, let them come to Christ, as he of old, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me "clean." But would they hear him say, "I will, be thou "clean," they must renounce every self-excusing plea, be willing to part with every sin, and every occasion of sin, to submit to his rebukes, to attend upon his directions, and to give him all the praise. And if we have in some measure experienced his cleansing power, we shall gradually become willing to put off this leprous garment of the body, and to leave it to be refined in the grave, that we may be for ever with the Lord.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1—3.] As the priests could not cleanse the lepers, no law is given about it: but when the Lord was pleased to remove the plague, the following rules were to be observed, in re-admitting them to the ordinances of God, and the society of his people.—And they very aptly represent many of the duties, and exercises of truly repenting sinners, as well as the duties of ministers respecting them. It seems the priests might visit, and even touch the leper, without contracting uncleanness thereby: and the words in season, which they might speak to them, as well as the assistance they might afford them in their devotions, might render this a great mercy, and comfort to them under their affliction.

V. 4—7.] The two birds may either signify Christ shedding his blood for sinners, and then rising and ascending into heaven, there in virtue thereof to appear in the presence of God for us: or the bird, that was slain may represent

and clean, and cedar-wood, and ſcarlet, and hyſſop.

5 And the prieſt ſhall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen veſſel over running water.

6 As for the living bird, he ſhall take it, and the cedar-wood, and the ſcarlet, and the hyſſop, and ſhall dip them and the living bird, in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water.

7 And he ſhall ſprinkle upon him that is to be cleanſed from the leproſy, ſeven times, and ſhall pronounce him clean, and ſhall let the living bird looſe into the open field.

8 And he that is to be cleanſed ſhall waſh his clothes, and ſhave off all his hair, and waſh himſelf in water, that he may be clean: and after that he ſhall come into the camp, and ſhall tarry abroad out of his tent ſeven days.

9 But it ſhall be on the ſeventh day, that he ſhall ſhave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eye-brows, even all his hair he ſhall ſhave off: and he ſhall waſh his clothes, alſo he ſhall waſh his fleſh in water, and he ſhall be clean.

10 And on the eighth day he ſhall take two he-lambs without blemiſh, and one ewe-lamb of the firſt year, without blemiſh, and three-tenth deals of fine flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and one log of oil.

11 And the prieſt that maketh *him* clean, ſhall preſent the man that is to be made clean, and thoſe things before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation:

12 And the prieſt ſhall take one he-lamb, and offer him for a treſpaſs-offering, and the log of oil, and wave them *for* a wave-offering, before the LORD.

13 And he ſhall ſlay the lamb in the place where he ſhall kill the ſin-offering, and the burnt-offering, in the holy place: for as the ſin-offering *is* the prieſt's, *ſo is* the treſpaſs-offering: it *is* moſt holy.

14 And the prieſt ſhall take *ſome* of the blood of the treſpaſs-offering, and the prieſt ſhall put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

15 And the prieſt ſhall take *ſome* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand:

16 And the prieſt ſhall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and ſhall ſprinkle of the oil with his finger, ſeven times before the LORD.

17 And of the reſt of the oil that *is* in his hand, ſhall the prieſt put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the treſpaſs-offering.

18 And

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repreſent the Saviour dying for our ſins: and the living bird, the ſinner preſerved, and liberated, by being waſhed in his atoning blood, and the purifying grace of his Spirit, which attends thereon: and in conſequence of being thus delivered from the wrath of God, and the bondage of Satan, "ſeeking thoſe things, which are above, where "Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God." The cedar-wood, an emblem of the ſoundneſs of the cleanſed leper's fleſh, may denote the ſincerity of the true convert's heart, and the incorruptible nature of true grace: the ſcarlet, which was oppoſed to the ſnowy whiteneſs of the leproſy, and implied that the man was recovered to his former ruddy complexion, might repreſent the true penitent as come to himſelf, and to his right mind: the hyſſop, an inſignificant ſhrub, commonly uſed in the legal ſprinklings, (*Pſalm* 51. v. 7.) might ſignify faith, of ſmall eſtimation among men, but of great efficacy in applying the ſalvation of Chriſt to the ſoul: or that mean inſtruments may be uſeful in directing poor ſinners to Chriſt.—All theſe were to be dipped in the blood, and water: for all our ſincerity, repentance, and faith are derived from that living purifying water, the Holy Ghoſt; and are only acceptable through the blood of the Saviour.

V. 8, 9.] Thus the true penitent, having in private conference with the miniſters of Chriſt, and in the ſecret exerciſes of faith, and prayer, got ſome comfortable hope of acceptance in the beloved, proceeds to put away all the remainder of his ſins, and ſeriouſly to prepare himſelf for a more ſolemn profeſſion of his faith, in the public ordinances of the Goſpel: for all this was done by the leper "without the camp."

V. 10—18.] The preparation being made, the cleanſed leper before the congregation in the court of the tabernacle, by the appointed ſacrifices, made profeſſion of his repentance, and faith, and devotedneſs to God; and thus both expreſſed his gratitude, and joined himſelf to the

18 And the remnant of the oil that *is* in the prieſt's hand, he ſhall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleanſed: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him before the LORD.

19 And the prieſt ſhall offer the ſin-offering and make an atonement for him that is to be cleanſed from his uncleanneſs, and afterward he ſhall kill the burnt-offering.

20 And the prieſt ſhall offer the burnt-offering, and the meat-offering upon the altar: and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him, and he ſhall be clean.

21 And if he *be* poor, and cannot get ſo much; then he ſhall take one lamb *for* a treſpaſs-offering, to be waved, to make an atonement for him, and one-tenth deal of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering, and a log of oil:

22 And two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, ſuch as he is able to get; and the one ſhall be a ſin-offering, and the other a burnt-offering.

23 And he ſhall bring them on the eighth day, for his cleanſing, unto the prieſt, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, before the LORD.

24 And the prieſt ſhall take the lamb of the treſpaſs-offering, and the log of oil, and the prieſt ſhall wave them *for* a wave-offering, before the LORD.

25 And he ſhall kill the lamb of the treſpaſs-offering, and the prieſt ſhall take *ſome* of the blood of the treſpaſs-offering, and put *it* upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot.

26 And the prieſt ſhall pour of the oil into the palm of his own left hand.

27 And the prieſt ſhall ſprinkle with his right finger, *ſome* of the oil that *is* in his left hand, ſeven times before the LORD.

28 And the prieſt ſhall put of the oil that *is* in his hand, upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleanſed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot; upon the place of the blood of the treſpaſs-offering.

29 And the reſt of the oil that *is* in the prieſt's hand, he ſhall put upon the head of him that is to be cleanſed, to make an atonement for him before the LORD.

30 And he ſhall offer the one of the turtle-doves, or of the young pigeons, ſuch as he can get:

31 *Even* ſuch as he is able to get, the one *for* a ſin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, with the meat-offering. And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him that is to be cleanſed, before the LORD.

32 This *is* the law *of him* in whom *is* the plague of leproſy, whoſe hand is not able to get *that which pertaineth* to his cleanſing.

33 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and unto Aaron, ſaying,

34 When ye be come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a poſſeſſion, and

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Lord's people. And in like manner, our profeſſion at the Lord's table ſhould be the counterpart of what has ſecretly paſſed between God and our ſouls: and the private exercise of repentance and faith, ſhould ever be followed by this public, and appointed profeſſion: in preparing for which, the counſel and approbation of the pious, and experienced miniſters of Chriſt may be very uſeful.—Several of theſe ceremonies were the ſame as thoſe uſed in conſecration of a prieſt, (c. 8. v. 23, 24.) which might teach *them* a ſalutary, but humiliating leſſon.—The purification of a cleanſed leper was as the conſecration of a prieſt: the conſecration of a prieſt, as the purification of a leper.—Every truly penitent believer is a ſpiritual prieſt; and no prieſt, the Saviour alone excepted, was ever more, or better, than an unclean ſinner, waſhed in the blood of Chriſt, and ſanctified by his Spirit.—Thus ſin being waſhed away from the powers of the ſoul, and the members of the body, the whole man becomes devoted to the ſervice of God.

V. 32. *Whoſe hand is not able*, &c.] Poverty would excuſe from expenſive ſacrifices, but not from ſuch, as the poor man could procure. The Goſpel is graciouſly accommodated to our loſt condition; but excuſes not impenitence, unbelief, ſloth, or careleſſneſs.

V. 34. *I put*, &c.] This extraordinary plague was entirely a viſitation from God: and repreſented the prevalence of ſin in families, churches, and nations: and very aptly deſcribes the ſtate of Iſrael, when the leproſy of idolatry had ſo infected their whole nation, that as unclean, it muſt be demoliſhed, and carried captive to Babylon.—

and I put the plague of leproſy in a houſe of the land of your poſſeſſion.

35 And he that owneth the houſe ſhall come and tell the prieſt, ſaying, it ſeemeth to me *there is* as it were a plague in the houſe:

36 Then the prieſt ſhall command that they empty the houſe, before the prieſt go *into it* to ſee the plague; that all that *is* in the houſe be not made unclean: and afterward the prieſt ſhall go in to ſee the houſe.

37 And he ſhall look on the plague, and behold, *if* the plague *be* in the walls of the houſe, with hollow ſtrakes, greeniſh or reddiſh, which in ſight *are* lower than the wall;

38 Then the prieſt ſhall go out of the houſe to the door of the houſe, and ſhut up the houſe ſeven days.

39 And the prieſt ſhall come again the ſeventh day, and ſhall look: and behold *if* the plague be ſpread in the walls of the houſe:

40 Then the prieſt ſhall command that they take away the ſtones, in which the plague *is*, and they ſhall caſt them into an unclean place without the city.

41 And he ſhall cauſe the houſe to be ſcraped within round about, and they ſhall pour out the duſt that they ſcrape off, without the city into an unclean place.

42 And they ſhall take other ſtones, and put *them* in the place of thoſe ſtones: and he ſhall take other morter, and ſhall plaiſter the houſe.

43 And if the plague come again, and break out in the houſe, after that he hath taken away the ſtones, and after he hath ſcraped the houſe, and after it is plaiſtered;

44 Then the prieſt ſhall come and look, and behold, *if* the plague be ſpread in the houſe, it *is* a fretting leproſy in the houſe; it *is* unclean.

45 And he ſhall break down the houſe, the ſtones of it, and the timber thereof, and all the morter of the houſe: and he ſhall carry *them* forth out of the city into an unclean place.

46 Moreover, he that goeth into the houſe all the while that it is ſhut up, ſhall be unclean until the even.

47 And he that lieth in the houſe, ſhall waſh his clothes: and he that eateth in the houſe, ſhall waſh his clothes.

48 And if the prieſt ſhall come in, and look *upon it*, and behold, the plague hath not ſpread in the houſe, after the houſe was plaiſtered: then the prieſt ſhall pronounce the houſe clean, becauſe the plague is healed.

49 And he ſhall take to cleanſe the houſe two birds, and cedar-wood, and ſcarlet, and hyſſop.

50 And he ſhall kill the one of the birds in an earthen veſſel, over running water.

51 And he ſhall take the cedar-wood, and the hyſſop, and the ſcarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the ſlain bird, and in the running water, and ſprinkle the houſe ſeven times.

52 And he ſhall cleanſe the houſe with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar-wood, and with the hyſſop, and with the ſcarlet.

53 But he ſhall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the houſe: and it ſhall be clean.

54 This *is* the law for all manner of plague of leproſy and ſcall,

lon.—The rules preſcribed concerning the leproſy in houſes, imply the care, with which they, who fear God, ſhould proteſt againſt, and ſeparate from prevailing iniquities: and the attention and pains, which magiſtrates, miniſters, and maſters of families ſhould employ in ſearching out, checking and reſtraining, cenſuring, and puniſhing ſin; in preventing it's progreſs, and in promoting reformation: as well as the methods, which the Lord takes with nations, and churches, before he proceeds to extremities: and the certain, ſhameful, and miſerable deſtruction, which awaits them, when theſe methods prove unſucceſsful: (*Ezek.* c. 24. v. 13.) and that the Lord frequently gives them up to that filthineſs, in which they have delighted.—Thus alſo ſin is ſo interwoven with the fabric of the human body, that it muſt be taken down by death: but if, previouſly the leproſy of reigning ſin be cleanſed from the ſoul, it will be received into the holy manſions of the bleſſed, and the body alſo will be raiſed incorruptible: otherwiſe both ſoul and body muſt at laſt be carried forth out of the city of God, to that unclean place, prepared for the devil, and his angels.

55 And

55 And for the leproſy of a garment, and of an houſe,

56 And for a riſing, and for a ſcab, and for a bright ſpot:

57 To teach when *it is* unclean, and when *it is* clean: this *is* the law of leproſy.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, Laws reſpecting the running iſſues, 1ſt. Of men, v. 1—18. *2d. Of women, v.* 19—33.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, and to Aaron, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When any man hath a running iſſue out of his fleſh, becauſe of his iſſue he *is* unclean.

3 And this ſhall be his uncleanneſs in his iſſue: whether his fleſh run with his iſſue, or his fleſh be ſtopped from his iſſue, it *is* his uncleanneſs.

4 Every bed whereon he lieth that hath the iſſue, is unclean: and every thing whereon he ſitteth, ſhall be unclean.

5 And whoſoever toucheth his bed, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

6 And he that ſitteth on *any* thing whereon he ſat that hath the iſſue, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe *himſelf* in water, and be unclean until the even.

7 And he that toucheth the fleſh of him that hath the iſſue, ſhall waſh his clothes,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When "that God, who is rich in mercy, for his great "love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead "in ſins, hath quickened us" by his grace, (*Eph.* c. 2. v. 4, 5.) we ſhall evidence the change by ſincerely repenting of, and forſaking all our former ſins; we ſhall diſcover a right judgment, and diſpoſition of heart, and ſhall in uprightneſs become the ſervants of the Lord: but eſpecially we ſhall be led by the miniſtry of the word to ſee the ſuitableneſs, and precioufneſs of the atoning blood, and the ſanctifying grace of Jeſus Chriſt; and gladly waſhing in "this fountain opened for ſin, and for un-"cleanneſs," ſhall in heart, and affection aſcend, whither the riſen Saviour is gone before. They, who are thus delivered from the prevailing power of ſin, will daily be cleanſing themſelves more and more from all remaining filthineſs of fleſh, and ſpirit, and perfecting holineſs in the fear of God: and without needleſs delay will deem it their duty and privilege, after previous examination, and ſerious preparation, to ſeek admiſſion to the communion of the ſaints, that with them, they may publicly profeſs their faith in, and love to the Saviour, in the ordinances of his appointment. From thenceforth, conſidering themſelves as bought with a price, they will deſire to do all in the name of Chriſt; and through him to glorify God with body, and ſpirit, which are his.—This is the true cleanſing of a leper, and his admiſſion into the courts of the Lord's houſe: or the conſecration of an unclean ſinner to the ſpiritual prieſthood. Have we then the inward conſciouſneſs of ſuch a change, and ſuch a joining of ourſelves to the Lord, and to his people? If ſo, let us give God the praiſe, let us humbly remember what we were, let us abound in ſpiritual ſacrifices, according to our ability, and opportunity; let us follow more after holineſs; and let us compaſſionate other poor lepers, and deſire, ſeek, and pray for their cleanſing alſo.—All theſe things remind us of the odiouſneſs of ſin, and the abſolute neceſſity of the blood of Chriſt, to render our ſincereſt repentance, and the beſt of our fruits meet for repentance, acceptable before a holy God. They ſhew likewiſe, that all, who are intereſted in the blood, partake of the Spirit, and are devoted to the ſervice of the Redeemer. All of them call upon us to watch and pray; to look well to our hearts, and to our houſholds, and to the Church of God: that in our places, we may ſearch, and purge out iniquity, and ſo prevent it's prevalency, to the deſtruction of thoſe, with whom we are connected. Nor is the readineſs of God to pardon the true believer more manifeſt; than his determination to deſtroy impenitent ſinners.—Let us all then take warning, and cry earneſtly to him to cleanſe our ſouls before we die; that we may never come into the place, where unclean ſpirits are tormented; but that "when this earthly houſe of our tabernacle ſhall "be diſſolved, we may have a building of God, a houſe "not made with hands eternal in the heavens." (2 *Cor.* c. 5. v. 1.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 2. *When a man hath*, &c.] We need not enter particularly into the conſideration of theſe laws, the reaſons of which may in ſome degree appear from the "practical obſervations." Some of the caſes mentioned were diſeaſes contracted by licentiouſneſs; others might be the reſult of ſuch things, as it is a ſhame to ſpeak of, though done of men in ſecret. Others though natural, and healthful, yet occaſioned a ceremonial uncleanneſs, and ſeparation, which is throughout the Old Teſtament made the emblem of that ſpiritual pollution, which ſeparates ſinners from a holy God: and finally, the other diſeaſes, which were only an affliction, and had no immediate connexion with perſonal and actual ſin, were all originally the conſequence of the ſinful ſtate of human nature: and therefore they not only excluded the diſeaſed perſon from the ſanctuary, but rendered thoſe unclean, who touched them, and were to be followed by ſacrifices, and purifications not entirely diſſimilar to thoſe of the cleanſed leper.

and

and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

8 And if he that hath the issue spit upon him that is clean; then he shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

9 And what saddle soever he rideth upon, that hath the issue, shall be unclean.

10 And whosoever toucheth any thing that was under him, shall be unclean until the even: and he that beareth *any of* those things, shall wash his clothes and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

11 And whomsoever he toucheth that hath the issue (and hath not rinsed his hands in water) he shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

12 And the vessel of earth that he toucheth which hath the issue, shall be broken: and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

13 And when he that hath an issue is cleansed of his issue; then he shall number to himself seven days for his cleansing, and wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in running water, and shall be clean.

14 And on the eighth day he shall take to him two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and give them unto the priest.

15 And the priest shall offer them, the one *for* a sin-offering, and the other *for* a burnt-offering; and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD, for his issue.

16 And if any man's seed of copulation go out from him, then he shall wash all his flesh in water, and be unclean until the even.

17 And every garment, and every skin whereon is the seed of copulation, shall be washed with water, and be unclean until the even.

18 The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall *both* bathe *themselves* in water, and be unclean until the even.

19 And if a woman have an issue, *and* her issue in her flesh be blood, she shall be put apart seven days: and whosoever toucheth her, shall be unclean until the even.

20 And every thing that she lieth upon in her separation, shall be unclean: every thing also that she sitteth upon, shall be unclean.

21 And whosoever toucheth her bed, shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

22 And whosoever toucheth any thing that she sat upon, shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

23 And if it *be* on *her* bed, or on any thing whereon she sitteth, when he toucheth it; he shall be unclean until the even.

24 And if any man lie with her at all, and her flowers be upon him, he shall be unclean seven days: and all the bed whereon he lieth shall be unclean.

25 And if a woman have an issue of her blood many days out of the time of her separation, or if it run beyond the time of her separation; all the days of the issue of her uncleanness shall be as the days of her separation: she *shall be* unclean.

26 Every bed whereon she lieth all the days of her issue, shall be unto her as the bed of her separation: and whatsoever she sitteth upon, shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her separation.

27 And whosoever toucheth those things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even.

28 But if she be cleansed of her issue, then she shall number to herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean.

29 And on the eighth day she shall take unto her two turtles, or two young pigeons, and bring them unto the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

V. 24.] When this was done in presumption, it was either to be punished with death, or the offenders might expect to be cut off by the judgment of God: when inadvertently, this purification was to be observed. This must not be considered as a mere ceremonial restriction; the nature of the case shews the contrary: and the violation of this precept must be allowed to be one of those abuses, that pollute the marriage-bed, which is otherwise undefiled.

30 And the prieſt ſhall offer the one *for* a ſin-offering, and the other *for* a burnt-offering; and the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for her before the LORD, for the iſſue of her uncleanneſs,

31 Thus ſhall ye ſeparate the children of Iſrael from their uncleanneſs; that they die not in their uncleanneſs, when they defile my tabernacle that *is* among them.

32 This *is* the law of him that hath an iſſue, and *of* him whoſe ſeed goeth from him, and is defiled therewith:

33 And of her that is ſick of her flowers, and of him that hath an iſſue, of the man and of the woman, and of him that lieth with her which is unclean.

CHAP. XVI.

Preſcribes the obſervances of the great day of atonement, and contains 1ſt. Aaron prohibited from entering at all times into the moſt holy place, v. 1—2. 2d. The ſacrifices, and ſolemnities, with which he was to enter, on that annual occaſion, v. 3—17. 3d. The purification of the altar, &c. v. 18, 19. 4th. The ſending away of the ſcape-goat, the offering of the burnt-offerings, the burning of the ſin-offerings, and the purification of the perſons employed, v. 20—28. 5th. The day appointed for this ſolemnity, and the manner, in which the people were to obſerve it, v. 29—34.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, after the death of the two ſons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died:

2 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy *place* within the vail, before the mercy-ſeat, which *is* upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-ſeat.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have cauſe to be thankful that we now need fear no defilement, but that of ſin; nor have occaſion for any of theſe ceremonial, and burdenſome purifications. Yet when we conſider how nearly we are beſet with occaſions of moral uncleanneſs by day, and by night; alone, and in company; nay, ſleeping as well as awake, we may well ſay with David, "who can underſtand his errors? "cleanſe thou me from my ſecret ſins." And theſe laws may remind us that God ſees all thoſe things, which are totally concealed from human eyes; and eſcape the cenſure of mortal men. Being ſuch unholy creatures, and having to do with ſuch an holy God, we muſt for ever have been baniſhed from his preſence, had he not promiſed, "from all their filthineſs will I cleanſe them;" and provided the fountain for, and appointed the means of our purification. In the daily exerciſe of ſelf-examination, repentance and faith in the one ſin-offering, which Chriſt hath offered; and by daily prayer for his ſanctifying grace we ſeek and find this purification, and this purity of heart, wherewith we ſhall be admitted "to ſee God." Whilſt we obſerve the rule of God's word, and aim at his glory through Jeſus Chriſt, all things become pure to us: but every thing is an occaſion of increaſing, and communicating defilement to the impenitent and unbelieving. With ſerious recollection, and humble reverence ſhould we approach our holy heart-ſearching God in his ordinances: and in our daily walk be careful to poſſeſs our veſſels in ſanctification and honour; conſulting expediency and avoiding exceſs in things moſt lawful; and being careful not to be brought under the power of any. Many of our diſeaſes may remind us of our perſonal tranſgreſſions, all our infirmities evince that we are ſinners: thence ſhould we learn patience, and take occaſion to humble ourſelves before God, the more earneſtly to ſeek forgiveneſs, and to wait with chearful expectation for the coming of him, "who ſhall change our vile body, that it may "be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to "the working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all "things to himſelf." (*Phil.* c. 3. v. 20, 21.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1. *After the death*, &c.] The appointment of this annual expiation of his own ſins, and thoſe of his family, and nation, would encourage Aaron with the aſſurance of acceptance, and continuation in the prieſthood; and inſtruct him, and his ſons to avoid Nadab, and Abihu's ſin, and puniſhment: for they would be perfectly ſafe, whilſt they adhered to their rule; and might by that example be rendered very attentive to it.

V. 2. *That he come not at all times*, &c.] The ordinary prieſts went into the ſanctuary, where was the golden candleſtick, and the table of ſhew-bread: and there *without the vail, before the mercy-ſeat*, burnt incenſe upon the golden altar, one at a time: but they went no further. The high-prieſt alone went within the vail into the holy of holies, where the ark of the covenant was; and that only on one day in the year: (*Heb* c. 9. v. 6—8.) and it was at the peril of his life, if at any other time, or in any other manner, he ventured into the preſence of the Lord, of which the cloud of glory above the mercy-ſeat, was the ſymbol. Beſides the typical meaning, of which hereafter, it is natural here to obſerve, that the Old Teſtament worſhip was much connected with ſenſible objects; which are leſs revered, when rendered familiar: but the New Teſtament worſhip is more ſimple and entirely by faith; and the objects thereof will be admired, and adored in proportion to the frequency, and intenſeneſs, with which we meditate upon them: therefore they were commanded to keep their diſtance; we are bid to draw near.

3 Thus shall Aaron come into the holy *place:* with a young bullock for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering.

4 He shall put on the holy linen coat, and he shall have the linen breeches upon his flesh, and shall be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen mitre shall he be attired: these *are* holy garments; therefore shall he wash his flesh in water, and *so* put them on.

5 And he shall take of the congregation of the children of Israel, two kids of the goats for a sin-offering, and one ram for a burnt-offering.

6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin-offering, which *is* for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.

7 And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

8 And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scape-goat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the LORD's lot fell, and offer him *for* a sin-offering.

10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scape-goat, shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make an atonement with him, *and* to let him go for a scape-goat into the wilderness.

11 And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin-offering, which *is* for himself, and shall make an atonement for himself, and for his house, and shall kill the bullock of the sin-offering, which *is* for himself.

12 And he shall take a censer-full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the LORD, and his hands-full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring *it* within the vail.

13 And he shall put the incense upon the fire

V. 3. *Thus shall Aaron*, &c.] We find (*Numb.* c. 29. v. 7—11.) that a burnt-offering, in addition to those here prescribed, and to the daily sacrifices, was to be offered: both of which are supposed to have preceded the solemnities appointed in this chapter.

V. 4. *He shall wash*, &c.] The high priest's repeated washings might typify Christ's perfect purity; but more evidently were intended to remind him of his own sinfulness, who needed such repeated ablutions. He performed the services of this day in the clean, but mean garments of the ordinary priests, not in his own rich robes: for Christ performed his whole atoning work, in his holy human nature; having laid aside his robes of majesty, when he assumed the form of a servant.

V. 6. *Shall offer*, &c.] All requisite preparations being made, the high priest himself slew the sin-offering for himself and family; and having thus made ready the blood for the ensuing solemnity, he probably left the other priests, to prepare the fat, and the flesh, &c. to be burnt, according to the law of the sin-offering, (ch. 4.)

V. 8. *The other lot for the scape-goat*, &c.] This phraseology, and the original word here used have occasioned some employment for the critics: but it does not appear, that they have thrown much useful light upon the subject. Probably our translation, though it have some difficulty in it, is as expressive of the evident meaning of the type, as any other, for which it could be changed. The dying goat represented Christ suffering for our sins: the scape-goat; Christ rising to effectuate the purposes of his death, in the actual forgiveness, and justification of his believing people. A goat was an animal *clean* by the law; yet not cleanly, as the sheep, in the opinion of man; nay, it is the emblem of a wicked man in the representation of the day of judgment, (*Matt.* c. 25. v. 31, 32.) Thus Christ *seemed* to men a sinner, but was in God's account sinless: and when numbered amongst transgressors, he died by man's sentence as a malefactor; in God's as a sacrifice. Two kids of the goats having been provided equally fit for a sin-offering, it was decided by lot, which was to be slain, and which was to escape. A lot is a solemn appeal to God in a doubtful matter, which relates to practice; as an oath is in testimonies, and engagements: and each of them ought to be the last resource; when other methods of decision fail: each should be used as a solemn act of religion, or not at all. And it stands as an answerable objection to all lotteries, and games of chance, that they are a profanation of a *religious ordinance*, which is every where spoken of in Scripture, as having been used with the utmost reverence. They are an appeal to God's decision ("for the lot is cast "into the lap, but the whole disposal of it is of the "Lord") in a matter of covetousness, or of diversion; and form a species of "taking his name in vain," not much unlike rash, and profane swearing in trifling conversation, or when men are striking bargains.

V. 12. 14.] The high priest, having carried the censer, and the incense within the vail, and caused the smoke to ascend before the mercy-seat, (without which he must not appear there, on pain of death,) seems to have gone forth, and fetched the blood of his own sin-offering, and to have sprinkled it, as prescribed: then to have gone forth again, and to have killed the people's sin-offerings, and with the blood thereof to have entered the *third* time: and, as the Jewish writers say, to have left the censer, till he had applied the blood to the altar, &c. and then to have entered the fourth time, to fetch it away. But all that the Jewish writers advance, can only shew how they understood the Scriptures, which relate to the subject; and in some cases what variations, and additions

fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incenſe may cover the mercy-ſeat that *is* upon the teſtimony, that he die not.

14 And he ſhall take of the blood of the bullock, and ſprinkle *it* with his finger upon the mercy-ſeat eaſtward: and before the mercy-ſeat ſhall he ſprinkle of the blood with his finger ſeven times.

15 Then ſhall he kill the goat of the ſin-offering that *is* for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood, as he did with the blood of the bullock, and ſprinkle it upon the mercy-ſeat, and before the mercy-ſeat.

16 And he ſhall make an atonement for the holy *place*, becauſe of the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael, and becauſe of their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins: and ſo ſhall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation that remaineth among them, in the midſt of their uncleanneſs.

17 And there ſhall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy *place*, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himſelf, and for his houſhold, and for all the congregation of Iſrael.

18 And he ſhall go out unto the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and ſhall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put *it* upon the horns of the altar round about.

19 And he ſhall ſprinkle of the blood upon it with his finger ſeven times, and cleanſe it, and hallow it from the uncleanneſs of the children of Iſrael.

20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he ſhall bring the live goat:

21 And Aaron ſhall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confeſs over him all the iniquities of the children of Iſrael, and all their tranſgreſſions in all their ſins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and ſhall ſend *him* away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderneſs.

22 And the goat ſhall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited: and he ſhall let go the goat in the wilderneſs.

23 And Aaron ſhall come into the tabernacle of the congregation, and ſhall put off the linen garments, which he put on when he went into the holy *place*, and ſhall leave them there.

24 And he ſhall waſh his fleſh with water in the holy place, and put on his garments, and come forth, and offer his burnt-offering, and the burnt-offering of the people, and make an atonement for himſelf, and for his people.

25 And the fat of the ſin-offering ſhall he burn upon the altar.

26 And he that let go the goat for the ſcape-goat, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterward come into the camp.

27 And the bullock *for* the ſin-offering, and the goat *for* the ſin-offering, whoſe blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy *place*, ſhall *one* carry forth without the camp, and they ſhall burn in the fire their ſkins, and their fleſh, and their dung.

28 And he that burneth them, ſhall waſh his clothes, and bathe his fleſh in water, and afterward he ſhall come into the camp.

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tions they made to the divine appointments, which contribute; little to our edification.

V. 16. *An atonement for the holy place*, &c.] The uncleanneſs of the people, and all their manifold tranſgreſſions, even contaminated the tabernacle, that was amongſt them, and all it's furniture; ſo that they needed an atonement. Thus the ſinfulneſs of man's heart defiles all his ſervices, the beſt of which need the blood of Chriſt to render them acceptable,

V. 21.] The high prieſt transferred all the tranſgreſſions of Iſrael, with all their aggravations unto the ſcape-goat, by confeſſing them over it's head; to be with it ſent away into the wilderneſs, never more to be heard of. In the latter days of the Jewiſh Church the high prieſt had his *form of confeſſion*; but God preſcribes none: and an attentive obſervance of God's law, and of the people's conduct, with ſuitable previous conſideration, would enable him to do it much more profitably without one.

V. 26. *Shall waſh his clothes*, &c.] To ſhew the defiling nature of ſin, and the inſufficiency of theſe typical expiations, he, who led away the ſcape-goat, and he who burnt the ſin-offering, contracted defilement, and needed purification.

29 And

29 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you.

30 For on that day shall *the priest* make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD.

31 It *shall be* a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever.

32 And the priest whom he shall anoint, and whom he shall consecrate to minister in the priest's office in his father's stead, shall make the atonement, and shall put on the linen clothes, *even* the holy garments.

33 And he shall make an atonement for the holy sanctuary, and he shall make an atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and for the altar: and he shall make an atonement for the priests, and for all the people of the congregation.

34 And this shall be an everlasting statute unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year. And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

CHAP.

V. 29—31. *Afflict your souls*, &c.] The Israelites all over the camp at that time, and all over the land, when they were put in possession of Canaan, were to spend this day in solemn humiliation before God for their sins, in godly sorrow, in penitent confessions, and in devotional exercises, either in secret, or in their families, and assemblies: and for this purpose all other business was to be laid aside.

V. 34. *Once a year*, &c.] Whilst this was properly attended to, the annual expiation of national guilt would prevent the forfeiture of their national covenant, tho' they never could take away sin, as pertaining to the conscience; except as in them by faith the great antitype was discerned (*Heb.* c. 9. v. 8—14.) but in idolatrous times it was either utterly neglected, or very carelessly attended to; and when the substance came, all these shadows lost their use, and efficacy.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

These varied shadows of good things to come lead us into undesigned, and almost unavoidable repetitions: for it must surely be inexcusable to shut our eyes that we may not see, or seeing to refrain from noting, though repeatedly, these manifold remembrances of sin, as chargeable upon the best of men, in their most holy actions; as polluting all things, that the sinner touches, and only to be atoned for with blood; but with nobler blood, than that of bulls and goats. Doubtless these are so many demonstrations, that we rightly understand what the New Testament teaches of Christ, when we see him to be the substance of all these shadows; and his Church the building, for which all these scaffoldings were prepared. Here we see in a type our great High Priest, our sacrifice, our advocate, our Saviour from our sins. Thus he vailed his glory, when because "the children were partakers of flesh, "and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the "same" (*Heb.* c. 2. v. 14.) and appeared in human nature yet free from sin, though he had richer robes of glory and beauty, wherein angels saw and adored him "in the form "of God" as their Creator, and Lord. By the one sacrifice of himself he made an actual atonement for sin on earth; and with the same human nature, and with his own blood, ascended into Heaven, to appear before the Father's mercy-seat, with the incense of his prevailing intercession for his people. In this his work none of his people (though under him priests unto God) may come near, as if they would pretend to join in his meritorious intercession. Thence with his spiritual presence he meets his assembled Disciples, and renders his ordinances sanctifying to them, and acceptable to God, and at the end of the world, he will come in his own glory, and in that of his Father, to complete the grand design. As in another glass we see the Saviour in the sin-offering of the goat; in the likeness of sinful flesh, suffering without the camp, not only when by the disposal of God he was taken and slain by the hands of wicked men, but when his soul endured intense agonies from the fiery justice of a righteous God: yet in the scape-goat we see him rising, and bearing the sins of all true believers into the land of forgetfulness; (*Rom.* c. 8. v. 33, 34.) but in how many things do these shadows fail of truly representing the substance? Plain it was "that the way into the holiest was not made mani-"fest," when the high priest himself must enter so seldom, and so circumspectly on pain of death. Jesus needed not to offer sacrifice for his own sin; for he was without sin. Though "the Lord caused to meet on him, the iniqui-"ties of us all," yet he thence contracted no pollution, nor needed any purification, having perfectly expiated the whole: and that without such multiplied sacrifices, repeated every year by a succession of priests, which could never take away sins, (*Heb.* c. 10. v. 11, 12.) for his sacrifice of infinite value sufficed at once. And feebly indeed do the holy places made with hands shadow forth the Heaven of Heavens; or the smoke of fragrant gums for a few hours in a year, his continued and meritorious advocacy: nor do the benefits, which Israel as a nation derived from this annual atonement, or the external privileges thus continued to them, at all vie with "the access "with boldness to the throne of Grace," the mercy, the peace, the spiritual and everlasting blessings and consolations, which true believers in all ages enjoy through the atonement of the Son of God. Yet let it be remembered that none but humbled souls, who mourn for, confess forsake, and mortify their sins; who repent and bring

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. A prohibition of sacrificing elsewhere than at the door of the tabernacle; and of sacrificing unto devils, v. 1—9. 2d. A prohibition of eating blood, or that which dieth of itself, v. 10—16.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his sons, and unto all the children of Israel, and say unto them, This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded, saying,

3 What man soever *there be* of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat in the camp, or that killeth *it* out of the camp,

4 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man, he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people:

5 To the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices, which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation unto the priest, and offer them *for* peace-offerings unto the LORD.

6 And the priest shall sprinkle the blood upon the altar of the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and burn the fat for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

7 And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils, after whom they have gone a whoring: This shall be a statute for ever unto them throughout their generations.

8 And thou shalt say unto them, Whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers which sojourn among you, that offereth a burnt-offering or sacrifice,

9 And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer it unto the

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forth fruits meet for repentance, can derive true comfort from these privileges. The proud, the carnal, the impenitent and unbelieving have but the shadow still; and a shadow of their own devising, not of God's appointing. And though Christ needed but once to suffer; yet we need constantly to look to him, and besides our daily exercise of repentance: seasons set apart from time to time to afflict our souls, to humble ourselves before God, and to mortify our sinful desires, are very profitable, and have in all ages met with the approbation of God, and been sanctioned by the example of holy men. Nor will this mar, but purify our holy joy and endear the Saviour, and the throne of Grace, and greatly assist us, in so looking unto Jesus, that we may not be weary or faint in our minds either in doing his will, or suffering for his sake.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 3—9.] We may suppose that this rule extended to all their cattle, which were slaughtered, whilst they were in the wilderness: all were to be presented before the door of the tabernacle, offered as peace-offerings, and the blood sprinkled, and the fat burned on the altar by the priest, with the accustomed ceremonies: but that when they entered Canaan, it was only continued in respect of their sacrifices, and they might slaughter cattle for food any where. (*Deut.* c. 12. v. 14—15.) By this law honour was put upon God's appointments; and upon the person, priesthood, and sacrifice of Christ: and idolatry was prevented, which it seems was practised secretly amongst them, in violation of their national covenant, by means of the custom of sacrificing in all parts of the camp. This is called sacrificing to devils; for all false worship is a kind of deifying those ambitious spirits; as all wickedness is rendering them service: and by both Satan aspires at being the god, and prince of this world. Probably the original word translated devils, and which is supposed to be derived from the roughness of a goat, referred to the images of their false gods, which were often made in that shape. And indeed sacrificing elsewhere, than at God's altar, was itself a species of idolatry, and a substitution of another object of worship, besides Jehovah, who would be distinguished by dwelling (in the symbol of the visible glory) between the cherubims, above the mercy-seat, in the tabernacle. The whole kingdom of Israel from the days of Jeroboam habitually violated this law: and through the reigns of most of David's successors, the kingdom of Judah were in great measure guilty of the same, "whilst "the people still sacrificed upon the high places." And in some cases the Lord dispensed with the letter of it, by accepting sacrifices from his prophets. which were offered elsewhere. For the typical import formed the grand intention of the ceremonial law. The worship of God at the tabernacle, represented the sinner's approach to God in Christ, and through his mediation: but offering sacrifice elsewhere, was the emblem of a proud contemptuous neglect of that great salvation: (*Heb.* c. 2. v. 3. c. 10. v. 29.) With reference therefore to that signification, this prohibition, and sanction were annexed; the disregard to which would be imputed to a man, as if he had shed blood, or committed murder; and the magistrate was to punish it as such; or God would himself cut him off by

the LORD; even that man shall be cut off from among his people.

10 And whatsoever man *there be* of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

11 For the life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls: for it *is* the blood *that* maketh an atonement for the soul.

12 Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you, eat blood.

13 And whatsoever man *there be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten, he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust.

14 For *it is* the life of all flesh, the blood of it *is* for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh *is* the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it, shall be cut off.

15 And every soul that eateth that which died *of itself*, or that which was torn *with beasts (whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger) he shall both wash his clothes, and bathe *himself* in water, and be unclean until the even: then shall he be clean.

16 But if he wash *them* not, nor bathe his flesh; then he shall bear his iniquity.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Conformity to heathen customs prohibited, and obedience to God's commandments required, v. 1—5. *2d. Laws restricting marriage amongst relations, v.* 6—18. *3d. Laws against base lusts, and idolatries, enforced by the judgments about to be executed on the Canaanites for such practices, v.* 19—30.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, I *am* the LORD your God.

3 After the doings of the land of Egypt wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan whither I

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by his vengeance. Nor was it even to be tolerated in strangers.

V. 13. *Cover it*, &c.] This was to teach the people, that some great mystery was implied in the atonement of blood; and to create a reverence of it: for the same reason they were forbidden to eat the animals, which died of themselves; because the blood was in them, (v. 15—16.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should greatly reverence, and value all the Lord's appointments; and it is at their peril, if men contemn, or change them: but the greatest danger lies in neglecting the salvation, which is in Jesus Christ. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily:" "He, that honoureth not him, honoureth not the Father, that sent him:" "And he that gathereth not with him, scattereth." If then his human nature be the true temple, in which God dwells, and will be worshipped: "if his name be Emmanuel:" "if this be the true God, and eternal life," (1 *John*, c. 5. v. 20—21.) may we not add, "little children, keep yourselves from idols?" Surely all, who value their own souls, should look to themselves in an age, and nation, where men, *called Christians*, spend their lives in degrading him, whom prophets and apostles shed their blood to glorify; and "whom all the angels of God worship." For though we may offer our spiritual sacrifices in every place, yet unless we come by Christ, as our way, and trust in him as our all-sufficient atonement, and almighty Saviour, and worship God in him, our services will be found an abomination, and our hope a delusion. From such temptations of the enemy we should keep at the utmost distance, by a close adherence to the word of God, a constant attendance on his ordinances, and dependance on his grace: who will then preserve us from the snares of our crafty and malicious enemy. And faith in, and love to Christ, will sanctify, and turn into a sacrifice even our ordinary meals. From the latter of these prohibitions, we may learn to adore the mystery of atoning blood with deeper veneration; and to use our liberty without cruelty, or sensuality: and to renounce the company of those, who are yet dead in sin, and the practice of dead works; and the expectation of happiness from dying creatures; to rejoice in the Lord as our portion, and glorify him as the God of our salvation. But let presumptuous careless sinners tremble; for if God "set his face against them," (v. 10.) he will at length cut them off with terrible vengeance.

bring

bring you, ſhall ye not do: neither ſhall ye walk in their ordinances.

4 Ye ſhall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I *am* the LORD your God.

5 Ye ſhall therefore keep my ſtatutes and my judgments: which if a man do, he ſhall live in them: I *am* the LORD.

6 None of you ſhall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover *their* nakedneſs: I *am* the LORD.

7 The nakedneſs of thy father, or the nakedneſs of thy mother, ſhalt thou not uncover: ſhe *is* thy mother, thou ſhalt not uncover her nakedneſs.

8 The nakedneſs of thy father's wife ſhalt thou not uncover: it *is* thy father's nakedneſs.

9 The nakedneſs of thy ſiſter, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, *whether ſhe be* born at home, or born abroad, *even* their nakedneſs thou ſhalt not uncover.

10 The nakedneſs of thy ſon's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, *even* their nakedneſs thou ſhalt not uncover: for theirs *is* thine own nakedneſs.

11 The nakedneſs of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, (ſhe *is* thy ſiſter) thou ſhalt not uncover her nakedneſs.

12 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy father's ſiſter: ſhe *is* thy father's near kinſwoman.

13 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy mother's ſiſter: for ſhe *is* thy mother's near kinſwoman.

14 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy father's brother, thou ſhalt not approach to his wife: ſhe *is* thine aunt.

15 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy daughter in law: ſhe *is* thy ſon's wife, thou ſhalt not uncover her nakedneſs.

16 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of thy brother's wife: it *is* thy brother's nakedneſs.

17 Thou ſhalt not uncover the nakedneſs of a woman and her daughter, neither ſhalt thou take her ſon's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedneſs; *for* they *are* her near kinſwomen: it *is* wickedneſs.

18 Neither ſhalt thou take a wife to her ſiſter, to vex *her*, to uncover her nakedneſs, beſides the other in her life *time*.

19 Alſo

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 5. *Which if a man do*, &c.] In an upright obedience to the moral precepts, and a believing attendance on the appointed ordinances of God's law, his favour, and eternal life might be expected; though not as a *merited* recompence thereof. But probably the Lord intended to warn them of the danger, not only of incurring condemnation by neglecting theſe commandments; but of reſting in their imperfect obedience, inſtead of looking through them "to Chriſt, as the end "of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believ-"eth." Aſſuredly St. Paul twice quotes this text as deſcriptive of the righteouſneſs of the law, in contradiſtinction to the righteouſneſs of faith: (*Rom.* c. 10. v. 5. *Gal.* c. 3. v. 12.)

V. 6—17.] As theſe laws forbad marriage betwixt ſuch near relations, they alſo prohibited all unchaſtity betwixt them, or any approach to it. The marriage of parents and children, or grand-children, &c, in all the variation here ſpoken of, has ſomething in it at firſt glance unnatural; and would be deſtructive of all that authority, and ſubordination, which are of ſuch importance to ſociety. In the marriages of nephews unto aunts, ſomewhat of the ſame kind may be perceived: and it is obſervable that the marriage of uncles with their nieces is not prohibited; though from the ſuppoſed parity of the caſe, it be included in our laws. The only collateral relations, which are forbidden to marry, are brothers and ſiſters, by whole, or half blood, or affinity. The caſe is different here: the firſt marriages of Adam's poſterity muſt have been of brothers and ſiſters; and we may not therefore pronounce them *immoral* in themſelves: but as human nature *now* is, it is very expedient that thoſe, who are ſo much together in youth, ſhould by ſuch a reſtriction be taught to look upon all intercourſe as prohibited, and inceſtuous; which muſt aſſiſt in keeping out temptations to evil. It is moreover deſirable that by intermarriages, relationſhip, and its endearments, and benevolences ſhould be diffuſed; and families prevented from an unſocial ſeparation from other perſons; which is the tendency of theſe laws. They are therefore to be conſidered either as moral in themſelves, or ſo nearly connected with other moral obligations, as to be proper to be obſerved by all mankind; and in general the wiſer Heathens have deemed ſuch marriages unlawful, and abſtained from them, (1 *Cor.* c. 5. v. 1.)

V. 16. *Of thy brother's wife*, &c.] Except in the caſe of the brother dying without iſſue. As this was peculiar to the Jewiſh laws, the reſtriction is general to us.

V. 18. *A wife to her ſiſter*, &c.] This is variouſly interpreted: ſome conſider it as a prohibition of polygamy: others argue that it implies an allowance of it; and only prohibits

19 Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.

20 Moreover, thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her.

21 And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through *the fire* to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it *is* abomination.

23 Neither shalt thou lie with any beast to defile thyself therewith: neither shall any woman stand before a beast to lie down thereto: it *is* confusion.

24 Defile not you yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you.

25 And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants.

26 Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations; *neither* any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you:

27 (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which *were* before you, and the land is defiled.

28 That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that *were* before you.

29 For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit *them*, shall be cut off from among their people.

30 Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that *ye* commit not *any one* of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I *am* the LORD your God.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1st. A general requisition of holiness, v. 1—2. 2d. Miscellaneous moral, and ceremonial laws, as rules, or means of holiness, most of which are either repetitions, or explanations of precepts before given, especially of the ten commandments; and cannot with brevity be classed under distinct heads, v. 3—37.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak

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prohibits a man from marrying two sisters, as Jacob had done, to the disquiet of himself, and his family. And others suppose that it prohibits the marrying of the sister of a former wife, even after her death. But as the argument against polygamy, under the Christian dispensation, is not affected by its existence being supposed in the Old Testament laws: and as it is generally determined, with propriety enough, that a man should not marry the sister of his deceased wife, any more than a woman the brother of her deceased husband: so the solution seems to be of more difficulty, than importance. Other restrictions of marriage, which pride, covetousness, or false policy have devised, have not proved for the benefit of mankind.

V. 21. *Pass through the fire to Molech.*] By this cruel ordinance, which will hereafter be spoken of, they dedicated their offspring to this pretended deity, and supposed that they placed the whole family under his protection.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we would obey God's commands, we must break off old customs, and renounce conformity to the world: for wherever we go, we shall find its maxims, and observances in many things directly opposite thereto: yet are they enforced with an authority, which rivals his; and are disobeyed with great difficulty, and at the expence of enduring much contempt, and reproach. But the broad, smooth, frequented paths of the world lead to destruction; the ways of God to life eternal: every one of his commandments are also good in themselves, and conducive to the peace, comfort, and true honour of the human species; and he is as kind in what he prohibits, as in what he allows. He formed mankind for social life, created them male and female, instituted marriage, and blessed it; he hath formed the regulations thereof in wisdom and in love for the good of individuals, of families, and of society; of the present, and of the succeeding generations: where his laws are observed, the most important advantages arise from the intercourse of the sexes: where they are disregarded, disgrace, disease, and every evil thing ensue. But what a sink of iniquity is the human heart, that it should be necessary to prohibit such detestable, filthy, and cruel practices, as are here mentioned! That ever it should enter into the mind of a rational creature to serve the devil, and their own lusts with such degradation, far beneath the brutes themselves! From this polluted fountain the earth hath been filled with abominable crimes in all ages; and the very creation groans under the burden of man's iniquity: and though one land after another vomiteth out it's inhabitants, as unable longer to endure their wickedness: though one generation are swept away after another into the grave; yet still the earth is filled with sin: ere long it shall be burnt up with

2 Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God *am* holy.

3 Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

4 Turn ye not to idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I *am* the LORD your God.

5 And if ye offer a sacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD; ye shall offer it, at your own will.

6 It shall be eaten the same day ye offer it, and on the morrow: and if ought remain until the third day, it shall be burnt in the fire.

7 And if it be eaten at all on the third day *it is* abominable; it shall not be accepted.

8 Therefore *every one* that eateth it, shall bear his iniquity, because he hath profaned the hallowed thing of the LORD: and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

10 And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather *every* grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

11 Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

12 And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

13 Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob *him*: the wages of him that is hired, shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

14 Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

15 Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: *but* in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

16 Thou shalt not go up and down *as* a tale-bearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I *am* the LORD.

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all it's works; and new heavens, and a new earth, in which dwelleth righteousness, shall succeed. But without we are previously cleansed in the fountain of the Redeemer's blood, and have "a new heart given us, and a "new spirit put within us," we shall never find entrance thereinto. Let us then profit by the awful examples of vengeance recorded, and fear the threatenings denounced in God's word: let us mortify the deeds of the body, and learn self-denial: and above all, being aware of the deceitfulness, and wickedness of the human heart, let us walk watchfully, and humbly dependant upon the Grace of God, sought in earnest prayer: then we shall escape the condemnation of the wicked, and the Lord himself will be our God, and our portion for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 2. *Ye shall be holy*, &c.] Holiness consists in separation from sin, devotedness to God, and conformity to his moral excellencies, which are also transcribed in his holy law. Without holiness we cannot walk with God, or have fellowship with him: and though an *external* purity was under the law expressed by being holy to the Lord; yet this was but an *emblem* of that purity of heart, which was especially intended. (See 1 *Peter*, c. 1. v. 14—16.)

V. 3. *Ye shall fear*, &c.] Most of these precepts rather require an attentive mind, and an obedient heart in the reader, than the labour of an expositor. "Every man," whatever his age, wisdom, or wealth may be, is commanded to "fear his mother," (here placed first) "and "his father." That is to treat them with respect, and tenderness, fearing to grieve or offend them, and reverencing their authority and commands. Children are apt to love the mother most, and fear the father most: and, when grown up men, are apt to treat the mother's authority with neglect, though they may be kind to them; to obviate this propensity the precept seems intentionally to be thus worded, and thus connected, as equally indispensable, with keeping God's sabbaths.

V. 5—8.] Many reasons for these repetitions of some laws more than others, might arise from the conduct, or customs of the people, or of the surrounding nations.

V. 13. *The wages*, &c.] That is if he want, or require it.

V. 14. *Thou shalt not*, &c.] The spirit of this law forbids speaking to the disadvantage of the absent; reproaching and insulting the meek; imposing upon, or giving bad counsel to the ignorant; or reviling, or ridiculing men's bodily infirmities.

V. 16. *A tale-bearer*, &c.] The original word seems to imply a cheating pedlar, who trades in scandal, and goes from place to place bartering one slander for another, to the injury of all parties concerned. This infamous, though common practice, is connected with conspiring, or procuring the death of another, as if of equal malignity.

17 Thou

17 Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him.

18 Thou ſhalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge againſt the children of thy people, but thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf: I *am* the LORD.

19 Ye ſhall keep my ſtatutes: Thou ſhalt not let thy cattle gender with a divers kind: Thou ſhalt not ſow thy field with mingled ſeed: neither ſhall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee.

20 And whoſoever lieth carnally with a woman that *is* a bond maid betrothed to an huſband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; ſhe ſhall be ſcourged: they ſhall not be put to death, becauſe ſhe was not free.

21 And he ſhall bring his treſpaſs-offering unto the LORD, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *even* a ram for a treſpaſs-offering.

22 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for him with the ram of the treſpaſs-offering before the LORD, for his ſin which he hath done, and the ſin which hath done ſhall be forgiven him.

23 And when ye ſhall come into the land, and ſhall have planted all manner of trees for food; then ye ſhall count the fruit thereof as uncircumciſed: three years ſhall it be as uncircumciſed unto you: it ſhall not be eaten of,

24 But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof ſhall be holy to praiſe the LORD *withal*.

25 And in the fifth year ſhall ye eat of the fruit thereof, that it may yield unto you the increaſe thereof: I *am* the LORD your God.

26 Ye ſhall not eat *any thing* with the blood: neither ſhall ye uſe inchantment, nor obſerve times.

V. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate*, &c.] If any one have injured us, inſtead of harbouring reſentment, venting reproaches, to contriving revenge, we ſhould calmly and fairly reaſon the matter with him: not only that convinced of his fault, he may make proper acknowledgments and reparation *to us*; but that he may repent, and obtain forgiveneſs *of God*. (*Matt.* c. 18. v. 15.) This ſeems the *literal* import of this remarkable precept: but the reaſon of it extends much further; and ſhews that it evinces a want of love to others, and may be conſtrued into hatred of them, if we ſee them commit, and continue in ſin, with indifference, and without attempting in a proper manner to bring them to repent, and forſake their ſins: and that a mild, plain, and ſeaſonable reproof is one of the beſt expreſſions of love to our brother, of which we are capable; though it be very difficult, and generally unwelcome. (*Pſalm* 141. v. 5.) It is like ſeizing a ſerpent, which is about to ſting a man to death, at the hazard of being ſtung ourſelves.

V. 18. *Thou ſhalt love*, &c.] This law *ſeems* here limited to their brethren of the houſe of Iſrael; for as they lived among the devoted Canaanites, and were required to extirpate them, they could not extend to them this law of love. This gave riſe to the narrow interpretation, which the Scribes put upon it; (*Matt.* c. 5. v. 43.) though by looking to the 33d and 34th verſes, they might have ſeen that all other ſtrangers were included in it. The whole law, as "it relates to our duty to man," is briefly comprehended in this ſaying, (*Rom.* c. 13. v. 8, 9. *Gal.* c. 5. v. 14.) which is ſo often quoted in the New Teſtament, and ſo highly commended.—It evidently requires that we ſhould be as unwilling to injure, and as deſirous to benefit any human being, as we ſhould be unwilling to hurt, and deſirous to do good to ourſelves: and this in relation to body, ſoul, property, character, eaſe, peace, and connexions: and that we ſhould honour what is honourable, love what is lovely, commend what is commendable, excuſe what is excuſeable, and compaſſionate what calls for pity, &c.; even as we ſhould have done in our own caſe. This one rule properly obſerved would fill the world with peace, and happineſs; even as full as it now is of diſcord and miſery.

V. 19.] Theſe practices might be conſtrued into an attempt to alter the original conſtitution of God in creation: and this prohibition ſeems to imply a commandment of ſincerity, and Godly ſimplicity in all we do: ſingleneſs of dependance on Chriſt; ſingleneſs of eye to the glory of God, and his acceptance and approbation; and ſingleneſs of expectation from him as our portion. To endeavour to reconcile the ſervice of God and mammon: or the pleaſures of the world, and thoſe of religion: to unite works and grace in the matter of juſtification; and many other ſuch heterogeneous and unnatural commixtures may here be covertly prohibited.

V. 23—25.] This commandment might be intended to teach them to wait patiently the Lord's time for every deſirable good, and not to yield to the eagerneſs of their natural appetites, and inclinations. Thus he alſo waits for the maturity of our fruits of righteouſneſs; though our firſt attempts to glorify him, may be *unmeet* for that purpoſe, as the fruits of theſe young trees, whilſt they were to be accounted *uncircumciſed*.

V. 26. *Uſe enchantments*, &c.] Aſtrological calculations, or other attempts at prediction, or fortune-telling: the uſe of ſpells, and charms for the cure of diſeaſes, &c.; with many other practices too frequent amongſt profeſſing Chriſtians, are attempts to revive this worſhip of Satan and ſhould be abhorred as his very ordinances: being *means uſed* to get help, and information *elſewhere*, inſtead of depending on, ſubmitting to, and waiting for them from God, in the uſe of lawful means, or when we cannot obtain them from him. (v. 31.)

27 Ye ſhall not round the corners of your heads, neither ſhalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.

28 Ye ſhall not make any cuttings in your fleſh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I *am* the LORD.

29 Do not proſtitute thy daughter, to cauſe her to be a whore; leſt the land fall to whoredom, and the land become full of wickedneſs.

30 Ye ſhall keep my ſabbaths, and reverence my ſanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

31 Regard not them that have familiar ſpirits, neither ſeek after wizards to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

32 Thou ſhalt riſe up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I *am* the LORD.

33 And if a ſtranger ſojourn with thee in your land, ye ſhall not vex him.

34 *But* the ſtranger that dwelleth with you, ſhall be unto you as one born amongſt you, and thou ſhalt love him as thyſelf; for ye were ſtrangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

35 Ye ſhall do no unrighteouſneſs in judgmen, in mete-yard, in weight, or in meaſure.

36 Juſt balances, juſt weights, a juſt ephah, and a juſt hin ſhall ye have: I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 Therefore ſhall ye obſerve all my ſtatutes, and all my judgments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

CHAP.

V. 27, 28.] Theſe were doubtleſs ſuperſtitious practices of the Heathens; and perhaps the prohibition of the next verſe has alſo relation to the very common practices of many idolaters in honour of their infamous deities.

V. 34.] They were to encourage ſtrangers to reſide amongſt them, that they might learn the knowledge of God, and of his truth, law, and worſhip, Remembering the kind uſage, which their fathers at firſt met with in Egypt, and how reaſonable it appeared to them, they were to imitate it: and remembering how cruel, and hard they deemed their after-treatment, they were to avoid copying ſo bad an example.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though the Lord be rich in mercy, and goodneſs, yet his perfect holineſs renders it impoſſible, that we ſhould be happy in him, or that he ſhould delight in us, without we be made holy alſo: thoſe, therefore, whom he ſpecially loves, he effectually ſanctifies. To underſtand the nature of this holineſs, let us meditate on theſe moral precepts: there we ſhall learn, that it conſiſts in reverencing the majeſty and authority of God, in loving his excellency, in gratefully remembering his mercies, in delighting in his worſhip and ſervice, in ſubmitting to his will, and confiding in his power and love: that it includes in it truth, and integrity, equity, and benevolence, love to our brethren, compaſſion for the miſerable, liberality to the poor, kindneſs to ſtrangers, and to enemies, and to all men, with a ſuitable regard to all relative duties: and alſo purity, chaſtity, ſobriety, and an habitual government of the appetite, and paſſions, according to the commandments, and in the faith, fear, and love of God. Would we know in what manner this holineſs is to be attained, we muſt conſider the intention, and meaning of the poſitive inſtitutions of the word of God; that by a believing attendance on thoſe, which the New Teſtament enjoins, we may through them receive from the Redeemer's fulneſs, the ſanctifying influences of divine Grace: remembering alſo that the vanities of the world, and the ſuperſtitions of falſe religion are as much the means of ſin, as the ordinances of God are means of grace: and therefore we muſt withdraw from them to the utmoſt diſtance, if we would be the holy people of a holy God. In his holineſs he is peculiarly attentive to the poor; and if we are his people we ſhall be ſo too; and if "he gives us all "things *richly* to enjoy," we muſt not think that our indigent brother is to be always put off with the bareſt neceſſaries, but ſhould enable him at ſome times to taſte with us the comforts of life alſo; not deeming that waſted, which he receives. This and all other relative duties muſt ſpring from a regard to God, who both avenges the injuries, and recompenſes the kindneſſes ſhewn thoſe, who cannot avenge or recompenſe for themſelves; and eſpecially bleſſes thoſe who reſpect their parents, and give honour to whom honour is due.—The attention of God not only reaches to groſs, and ſcandalous inſtances of injuſtice, but to the petty diſhoneſty of falſe weights, and meaſures, and our conſcience ought to be no leſs ſcrupulous and minute.—How prone to iniquity muſt man's heart be, when parents are capable of proſtituting their own daughters; and when ſuch vile practices, inſtead of exciting abhorrence, are readily imitated, 'till they overſpread whole nations! But though ſome crimes are more enormous than others, none can be expiated but by the blood of Chriſt, or forgiven without repentance: nor are any of God's precepts to be accounted ſmall; but we muſt ſhew our ſincerity, and ſimplicity in his ſervice, by obſerving them all, by giving every part of religion it's due place, and proportion; and by doing all things, for thoſe ends and purpoſes, which he hath appointed, without neglecting, or perverting any.—If ſin be the greateſt of all evils, what need have we to be thankful to thoſe, who tell us plainly of our faults, and will not ſuffer ſin upon us! But all men ſhould deteſt their conduct, who backbite, and ſlander others, and rob them of their characters, when they have no power to defend themſelves.—Finally, the nearer our lives, and tempers are to the precepts of God's law, the happier ſhall we be, and the

happier

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The punishment of those, who gave their seed unto Molech, or sought unto witches, or wizards, v. 1—6. *2d. That of those, who cursed father, or mother, committed adultery, incest, unnatural crimes, or witchcraft, v.* 9—21. 27. *3d. General calls unto holiness, v.* 7, 8. 22—26.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Again, thou shalt say to the children of Israel, Whosoever *he be* of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn in Israel, that giveth *any* of his seed unto Molech; he shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall stone him with stones.
3 And I will set my face against that man, and will cut him off from among his people; because he hath given of his seed unto Molech, to defile my sanctuary, and to profane my holy name.
4 And if the people of the land do any ways hide their eyes from the man, when he giveth of his seed unto Molech, and kill him not;
5 Then I will set my face against that man, and against his family, and will cut him off, and all that go a whoring after him, to commit whoredom with Molech, from among their people.
6 And the soul that turneth after such as have familiar spirits, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people.
7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I *am* the LORD your God.
8 And ye shall keep my statutes, and do them: I *am* the LORD which sanctify you.
9 For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood *shall be* upon him.
10 And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.
11 And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.
12 And if a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood *shall be* upon them.
13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed

happier shall we render all around us, and the better we shall adorn the gospel: let us then daily and earnestly pray "Lord have mercy upon us, and write all thy laws "in our hearts we beseech thee. Amen."

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 2—5.] Molech is supposed to have been an idol, worshipped by the Ammonites, and neighbouring nations; to whom they sometimes offered their children as sacrifices, according to some authors, in the following manner. An image of an enormous size was made of hollow iron, which they heated with great fires beneath; and when it was sufficiently hot, they put the children into it's arms, where they were burnt to death: mean time their cries were drowned in the noise of trumpets, and other musical instruments in abundance, which were played on for that purpose. At other times the children only passed through a fire, or between two fires, and were thus devoted to this demon.—Nothing can be conceived more horrible than such practices: nothing can more demonstrate the madness, and desperate wickedness of man's heart, and the power of satan over wicked people; than the occasion, which there was of enacting such laws as this, and prohibiting parents from such cruelty to their own offspring on pain of death: except it be, that notwithstanding these laws and sanctions, numbers of Israelites were, from age to age, so infatuated, as to persist in this barbarity. Committed by *them*, it was the highest imaginable contempt of the Name, sanctuary and worship of Jehovah; and a shameful violation of their national covenant: if therefore, by any means, the criminal escaped the sword of the magistrate, God declared his determination to execute vengeance on him, on his family, and on all, who aided and abetted this spiritual whoredom.

V. 6. *Go a whoring*, &c.] By this expression our former conclusion is corroborated, (*See note*, c. xix. v. 26.) that consulting with men, or women practising *or pretending* to witchcraft, in any of it's forms, is a real act of idolatry, and of worshipping the devil.

V. 9. *His blood shall be upon him.*] They, who put him to death, would contract no guilt; he deserved his doom, and had none to blame but himself.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When neither the fear and love of God, nor regard to the state of future, and eternal recompense; nor any

committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death: their blood *shall be* upon them.

14 And if a man take a wife and her mother, it *is* wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you.

15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast.

16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood *shall be* upon them.

17 And if a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nakedness, and she see his nakedness, it *is* a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people: he hath uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.

18 And if a man shall lie with a woman having her sickness, and shall uncover her nakedness, he hath discovered her fountain, and she hath uncovered the fountain of her blood: and both of them shall be cut off from among their people.

19 And thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy mother's sister, nor of thy father's sister; for he uncovereth his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity.

20 And if a man shall lie with his uncle's wife, he hath uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless.

21 And if a man shall take his brother's wife, it *is* an unclean thing: he hath uncovered his brother's nakedness, they shall be childless.

22 Ye shall therefore keep all my statutes, and all my judgments, and do them; that the land whither I bring you to dwell therein spue you not out.

23 And ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations which I cast out before you: for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them.

24 But I have said unto you, Ye shall inherit their land, and I will give it unto you to possess it, a land that floweth with milk and honey: I *am* the Lord your God, which have separated you from *other* people.

25 Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not

motives of reason, truth, decency, and the welfare of society, can deter men from enormous crimes; it is needful for the magistrate to use his sword; and by cutting off a mortified limb, to prevent further mischief to the body politic. Such examples of severity, when not needlessly multiplied, are wholesome lessons: and the lives of individuals thus taken away, prevent the spread of wickedness, and the accumulation of national guilt.—But if magistrates neglect their duty, and criminals evade human laws, God will set his face against them; and how then can they escape? Are we shocked at the unnatural cruelty of these ancient idolaters, in thus sacrificing their children to the devil, in the form of an idol? Indeed we justly may. But alas! there are vast multitudes of parents in the world, who, by their pernicious instructions, and wicked examples; and by the mysteries of iniquity, into which they early initiate their children, effectually devote them to satan's service, and blindly forward their everlasting destruction, in a manner not a whit less, if not still more, to be lamented. But what an account must such parents render to God, and what a meeting will they have with their children at the day of judgment? On the other hand let children remember that he, who cursed father, or mother, was surely put to death, with his blood upon his own head. Let adulterers hear the judgment of God respecting their crimes; and remember that their rejoicing in the slackness of human justice, and in the impunity, which now emboldens them in sin, is an expiring joy; and will probably occasion their still deeper guilt and condemnation. The secret, and unnatural crimes, which many are conscious of, who conceal them from men, will soon be brought to light, and into judgment before a holy God; and criminal indulgencies will surely issue in dreadful lamentations hereafter; if they are not mourned for with godly sorrow, and bitter remorse in this world.—If such crimes caused God to abhor the Canaanites, much more will he abhor them in his professing people. By his word and ordinances he hath severed us from others, and is known by the Name of the Lord, that sanctifieth us. Let us then separate ourselves from the company and practices of the ungodly; let us attend on his ordinances, plead his promises, and seek his salvation, that we may be holy in reality, as well as in profession: that we may learn, and observe the difference between clean and unclean in every thing: that the Lord may indeed be our God, and portion, and we his people in time, and to eternity.

make

make your ſouls abominable by beaſt or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have ſeparated from you as unclean.

26 And ye ſhall be holy unto me: for I the LORD *am* holy, and have ſevered you from *other* people, that ye ſhould be mine.

27 A man alſo or woman that hath a familiar ſpirit, or that is a wizard, ſhall ſurely be put to death: they ſhall ſtone them with ſtones; their blood *ſhall be* upon them.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. Laws reſpecting the mourning, families, and marriages of the prieſts, v. 1—15. 2d. Concerning corporal blemiſhes, which excluded from the work of the prieſthood. v. 16—24.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Speak unto the prieſts the ſons of Aaron, and ſay unto them, There ſhall none be defiled for the dead among his people.

2 But for his kin that is near unto him, *that is*, for his mother, and for his father, and for his ſon, and for his daughter, and for his brother,

3 And for his ſiſter a virgin, that is nigh unto him, which hath had no huſband; for her may he be defiled.

4 *But* he ſhall not defile himſelf, *being* a chief man among his people, to profane himſelf.

5 They ſhall not make baldneſs upon their head, neither ſhall they ſhave off the corner of their beard, nor make any cuttings in their fleſh.

6 They ſhall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God, they do offer; therefore they ſhall be holy.

7 They ſhall not take a wife *that is* a whore or profane; neither ſhall they take a woman put away from her huſband: for he *is* holy unto his God.

8 Thou ſhalt ſanctify him therefore, for he offereth the bread of thy God: he ſhall be holy unto thee, for I the LORD which ſanctify you *am* holy.

9 And the daughter of any prieſt, if ſhe profane herſelf by playing the whore, ſhe profaneth her father: ſhe ſhall be burnt with fire.

10 And *he that is* the high prieſt among his brethren, upon whoſe head the anointing oil was poured, and that is conſecrated to put on

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *Defiled for the dead*, &c.] Any perſon was rendered unclean for ſeven days by entering into the tent, where the dead body lay, (*Numbers*, c. xix. v. 14.) The prieſts therefore muſt not attend on any funeral, except on thoſe of their neareſt relations; "no not "that of a chief man among the people," as v. 4 may be interpreted. By this reſtriction, and the prohibition of expreſſing their grief by any extravagant, or ſuperſtitious tokens, they were taught to moderate their natural paſſions; and perhaps to intimate their belief of a future ſtate. (1 *Theſſ.* c. iv. v. 13—15.)

V. 6. *Profane the name*, &c.] The office of the prieſts in offering the ſacrifices, (here called the bread of their God, the proviſions of God's houſe and altar, wherein he, as it were, came and feaſted with his people,) would be placed in a conſpicuous light, and many would note their conduct: it behoved them therefore to be very circumſpect; leſt God, and his worſhip, ſhould be diſregarded through their miſconduct, even in little things.

V. 7. The prieſts muſt not marry one, who had been an harlot, though penitent; nor a woman of ſuſpicious character or ungodly; nor one, who had been divorced; for it might be preſumed, that it was for ſome miſconduct. Their male children were all prieſts by birth, "and," ſays Mr. Henry, "he that would ſeek a godly ſeed, muſt firſt "ſeek a godly wife."

V. 8. *Thou ſhalt ſanctify*, &c.] This ſeems addreſſed to Moſes, as a command to give proper inſtructions, and to exerciſe his authority, and influence, that the prieſts ſhould be thus preſerved from unhallowed marriages, and from every other thing, which was not conſiſtent with their ſacred character.

V. 9. Such conduct in a prieſt's daughter would be highly diſgraceful to religion, and a reflection upon the parent's care of his family. This dreadful puniſhment denounced of God would not only be a reſtraint upon the children, but a leſſon to the parents, to watch over, and keep them out of the way of temptation, and give them a proper education.

V. 10—15. The eldeſt ſon of the high prieſt is ſuppoſed to have been anointed in his father's life time, if he came to a proper age, and to have acted as his deputy in caſe of ſickneſs, or ceremonial uncleanneſs. Upon his death therefore the office immediately devolved upon him, and he muſt not incapacitate himſelf for performing it, either then or on any future occaſion, on any account whatſoever. As the immediate type of Chriſt he muſt ſhew greater ſuperiority over his natural affections, and

on the garments, ſhall not uncover his head, nor rent his clothes:

11 Neither ſhall he go in to any dead body, nor defile himſelf for his father, or for his mother:

12 Neither ſhall he go out of the ſanctuary, nor profane the ſanctuary of his God; for the crown of the anointing oil of his God *is* upon him: I *am* the LORD.

13 And he ſhall take a wife in her virginity.

14 A widow, or a divorced woman, or profane, *or* an harlot, theſe ſhall he not take: but he ſhall take a virgin of his own people to wife.

15 Neither ſhall he profane his ſeed among his people: for I the LORD do ſanctify him.

16 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

17 Speak unto Aaron, ſaying, Whoſoever *he be* of thy ſeed in their generations, that hath *any* blemiſh, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God:

18 For whatſoever man *he be* that hath a blemiſh, he ſhall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat noſe, or any thing ſuperfluous,

19 Or a man that is broken-footed, or broken-handed;

20 Or crook-backed, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemiſh in his eye, or be ſcurvy, or ſcabbed, or hath his ſtones broken:

21 No man that hath a blemiſh, of the ſeed of Aaron the prieſt, ſhall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire; he hath a blemiſh, he ſhall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.

22 He ſhall eat the bread of his God, *both* of the moſt holy, and of the holy;

23 Only he ſhall not go in unto the vail, nor come nigh unto the altar, becauſe he hath a blemiſh; that he profane not my ſanctuaries: for I the LORD do ſanctify them.

24 And Moſes told *it* unto Aaron, and to his ſons, and unto all the children of Iſrael.

CHAP.

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and be more circumſpect in his conduct, than the other prieſts. Therefore he muſt marry a virgin, and none elſe (*Ez.* c. xliv. v. 22. *Rev.* xiv. 4. 2 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 2.) and muſt neither leave any ſtain on his poſterity by his own improper marriage, or by allowing them to marry improperly.

V. 17—24. Theſe corporal blemiſhes, though they rendered the prieſts unfit for ſome of their work, yet did not exclude them from their maintenance, or from ſubordinate ſervices, not even from inſtructing the people. They were external ſigns of the ſcandals and reproach of ſin, reſting on a man's character, (1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 7.) which render even the true penitent unfit for the work of the miniſtry, until they be done away by a continued courſe of good behaviour.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As theſe prieſts were types, ſo all miniſters muſt be followers, of Chriſt: that their example may elucidate and corroborate their inſtructions, and teach the people in imitating them to imitate the Saviour. He was perfectly ſuperior to all natural affections: and in the buſineſs of his heavenly Father, would not be interrupted, or biaſſed even by his regard to his earthly parent. Abſolutely dead to the world, and filled with zeal for the glory of the Father, and compaſſion to the ſouls of men, he was unwearied in his labours, and perſevering in his ſufferings, 'till he could ſay "it is finiſhed." Without blemiſh, and ſeparate from ſinners he executed his prieſtly office on earth: and, being aſcended into heaven, he is preparing his church of redeemed ſinners, that not having ſpot, or blemiſh, or any ſuch thing, he may eſpouſe it as a chaſte virgin unto himſelf for ever: and he requires all his family to remember the relation, in which they ſtand unto him, and to act conſiſtent therewith. What manner of perſons then ſhould his miniſters be? ſurely their characters ſhould be free from ſcandal: their hearts from the dominion of ſin, and from the love of filthy lucre, worldly honour, and ſenſual indulgence: they ſhould be unwearied in, undiverted from, and chearful about their work, "giving themſelves wholly "thereto:" they ſhould be patient in tribulations, ſuperior to the power of their paſſions, circumſpect in their walk, cautious in their connexions, and exemplary in the government of their families (1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 4—5.) Nothing is of more importance to the intereſts of religion than the unblemiſhed character, and the ſober, decent, and reſpectable conduct, and demeanor of the wives, and children of miniſters, (1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 11. *Titus* c. i. v. 6.) For the people will ever think themſelves authoriſed to go ſome ſteps further in conformity to the world, and compliance with it's vain faſhions, and cuſtoms; and in purſuit of it's intereſts and pleaſures, than the miniſter and his family do: and will interpret his preaching, by *their* practiſing; ſuppoſing *him* accountable for *their* miſconduct, or as giving it the ſanction of his approbation. Our God is *now* as holy, as when he commanded the offending daughter of a prieſt to be burnt! how then ſhould the children of miniſters tremble leſt they diſgrace their parent's character, prevent the effects of his miniſtry, and expoſe themſelves to the fierce wrath of God! Equally careful ſhould this render miniſters of their children; not giving them what is called a good education, which is commonly a worldly education,

CHAP. XXII.

Contains laws. 1*ſt. Concerning the holy things, when the prieſts might eat of them, and when not: who might eat of them, and who might not: and the reſtitution to be made by him, who had unwittingly tranſgreſſed this law, v.* 1—16. 2*d. Concerning the animals, which were to be offered in ſacrifice; with calls and motives to obedience, v.* 17—23.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Speak unto Aaron, and to his ſons, that they ſeparate themſelves from the holy things of the children of Iſrael, and that they profane not my holy name *in thoſe things* which they hallow unto me: I *am* the LORD.
3 Say unto them, Whoſoever *he be* of all your ſeed among your generations, that goeth unto the holy things, which the children of Iſrael hallow unto the LORD, having his uncleanneſs upon him, that ſoul ſhall be cut off from my preſence: I *am* the LORD.
4 What man ſoever of the ſeed of Aaron *is* a leper, or hath a running iſſue; he ſhall not eat of the holy things, until he be clean. And whoſo toucheth any thing *that is* unclean *by* the dead, or a man whoſe ſeed goeth from him;
5 Or whoſoever toucheth any creeping thing, whereby he may be made unclean, or a man of whom he may take uncleanneſs, whatſoever uncleanneſs he hath;
6 The ſoul which hath touched any ſuch ſhall be unclean until even, and ſhall not eat of the holy things, unleſs he waſh his fleſh with water.
7 And when the ſun is down, he ſhall be clean, and ſhall afterward eat of the holy things; becauſe it *is* his food.
8 That which dieth of itſelf, or is torn *with beaſts*, he ſhall not eat to defile himſelf therewith: I *am* the LORD.
9 They ſhall therefore keep mine ordinance, leſt they bear ſin for it, and die therefore, if they profane it: I the LORD do ſanctify them.
10 There ſhall no ſtranger eat *of* the holy thing: a ſojourner of the prieſt, or an hired ſervant, ſhall not eat *of* the holy thing.
11 But if the prieſt buy *any* ſoul with his money, he ſhall eat of it, and he that is born in his houſe: they ſhall eat of his meat.
12 If the prieſt's daughter alſo be *married* unto a ſtranger, ſhe may not eat of an offering of the holy things.
13 But if the prieſt's daughter be a widow, or divorced, and have no child, and is returned unto her father's houſe, as in her youth, ſhe ſhall eat of her father's meat: but there ſhall no ſtranger eat thereof.
14 And if a man eat *of* the holy thing unwittingly, then he ſhall put the fifth *part* thereof unto it, and ſhall give *it* unto the prieſt, with the holy thing.
15 And they ſhall not profane the holy things of the children of Iſrael which they offer unto the LORD;
16 Or ſuffer them to bear the iniquity of treſpaſs,

education, but training them up in ſobriety, frugality, and induſtry, at a diſtance from the diſſipations and temptations of the world; and in the knowledge and fear of God; reſtraining and correcting every evil propenſity, ſetting them a good example, and offering continual prayers for them: for ſtill the child's wickedneſs will be conſidered as the parent's reproach, as well as affliction; and, though *not always*, yet frequently it is ſo. But we are all, if Chriſtians, ſpiritual prieſts: and the miniſter is called to ſet ſuch a good example, in order that the people may imitate it. They too muſt be dead to the world, and ſeparated from it; not ſorrowing, or rejoicing, deſiring, purſuing, or poſſeſſing worldly things in the ſame manner as others do; but taking the Lord for their portion, rejoicing in him continually, delighting in his ſervice, and uſing all to his glory. Our bodily infirmities, bleſſed be God, cannot now exclude us from his ſervice, from theſe privileges, or from his heavenly glory. And they, who on many accounts may be diſqualified for the work of the miniſtry, may ſe[illegible] and find comfort in God, in other ſituations in his church. Finally they, who without their own fault are incapable of further ſervice, muſt neither be deſpiſed, nor deprived of ſuitable maintenance.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 2. *Holy things.*] Theſe were their ſhares of the ſacrifices, the ſhewbread, and whatever was more immediately preſented to the Lord. Some were moſt holy, to be eaten only by the prieſts in the ſanctuary: others were holy, to be eaten by them and their families in their own houſes. But the tythes, and many other perquiſites might be diſpoſed of at their will.

V. 3. *Cut off from my preſence, &c.*] Some interpret this of the offender being excluded from any more officiating as a prieſt: ſome, of his being cut off by ſome immediate ſtroke from God.

V. 16.] To eat the holy things themſelves, was either a preſumptuous, or unwary attempt to expiate their own guilt,

treſpaſs, when they eat their holy things: for I the LORD do ſanctify them.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

18 Speak unto Aaron, and to his ſons, and unto all the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, Whoſoever *he be* of the houſe of Iſrael, or of the ſtrangers in Iſrael, that will offer his oblation for all his vows, and for all his free-will offerings, which they will offer unto the LORD for a burnt-offering;

19 *Ye ſhall offer* at your own will a male without blemiſh of the beeves, of the ſheep, or of the goats.

20 *But* whatſoever hath a blemiſh, *that* ſhall ye not offer: for it ſhall not be acceptable for you.

21 And whoſoever offereth a ſacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, to accompliſh *his* vow, or a free-will offering in beeves, or ſheep, it ſhall be perfect to be accepted; there ſhall be no blemiſh therein.

22 Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wen, or ſcurvy, or ſcabbed, ye ſhall not offer theſe unto the LORD, nor make an offering by fire of them upon the altar unto the LORD.

23 Either a bullock, or a lamb, that hath any thing ſuperfluous or lacking in his parts, that mayeſt thou offer *for* a free-will offering; but for a vow it ſhall not be accepted.

24 Ye ſhall not offer unto the LORD that which is bruiſed, or cruſhed, or broken, or cut; neither ſhall ye make *any offering thereof* in your land.

25 Neither from a ſtranger's hand ſhall ye offer the bread of your God of any of theſe; becauſe their corruption *is* in them, *and* blemiſhes *be* in them: they ſhall not be accepted for you.

26 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

27 When a bullock, or a ſheep, or a goat, is brought forth, then it ſhall be ſeven days under the dam; and from the eighth day, and thenceforth, it ſhall be accepted for an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

28 And *whether it be* cow or ewe, ye ſhall not kill it and her young both in one day.

29 And when ye will offer a ſacrifice of thankſgiving unto the LORD, offer *it* at your own will.

30 On the ſame day it ſhall be eaten up; ye ſhall leave none of it until the morrow: I *am* the LORD.

31 Therefore ſhall ye keep my commandments, and do them: I *am* the LORD.

32 Neither ſhall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Iſrael: I *am* the LORD which hallow you,

33 That brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD.

CHAP. XXIII.

Containing laws concerning, 1ſt. The weekly Sabbath, v. 1—3. 2d. The feaſt of the Paſſover, of unleavened bread, and the oblation of the firſt fruits, v. 4—14. 3d. The feaſt of weeks, or Pentecoſt; with a memento about the gleanings of their fields, 15—22. 4th. The feaſt of trumpets, v. 23—25. 5th. The day of atonement, v. 26—32. 6th. The feaſt of tabernacles, v. 33—44.

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guilt, inſtead of transferring it to the prieſts, as types of Chriſt.

Ver. 21—24.] The burnt-offerings typified Chriſt's unblemiſhed ſacrifice; and denoted *their* entire devotedneſs to God: the peace-offering of a vow repreſented their *indiſpenſable* duty; in theſe caſes only the beſt were to be offered. But the blemiſhed animal might be offered for a free-will offering; when love for the courts, and altar of God, and for his brethren diſpoſed a man, without any previous obligations, to offer a ſacrifice, and make a ſacred feaſt for his friends, for the prieſts, and for the poor.

Ver. 25.] As an intimation of the Lord's purpoſes of kindneſs to the Gentiles, they were to be encouraged to offer ſacrifices to his name; but theſe were not to be allowed of, unleſs they were free from blemiſh.

V. 27.] From the ſame time that the male children were to be dedicated to the Lord by circumciſion, the cattle were deemed meet for ſacrifice: that is, ſay the Jewiſh writers, when one ſabbath, which ſanctifies all things, muſt needs have paſſed over them. (*See note*, c. xii. v. 1—5.)

V. 28.] The reaſon of this reſtriction is not very plain: it might ſeem cruel, and unfeeling; but they were not forbidden thus to ſlay them for food; nor thus in general to ſlaughter other creatures. But the Lord has many reaſons for his conduct, and for his commandments, of which we are not informed: and it might be a ſuperſtitious heathen cuſtom.

AND

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *concerning* the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, *even* these *are* my feasts.
3 Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work *therein:* it *is* the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.
4 These *are* the feasts of the LORD, *even* holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons.
5 In the fourteenth *day* of the first month at even *is* the LORD's passover.
6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.
7 In the first day ye shall have an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.
8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day *is* an holy convocation, ye shall do no servile work *therein.*
9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
10 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the first-fruits of your harvest unto the priest:
11 And

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst with gratitude we recollect that our great High-Priest is not liable to such incapacitating impediments to the discharge of his office, either habitual or incidental; but is such a perfectly holy, and glorious High-Priest, as became us: and that his one unblemished sacrifice is of perpetual, and general efficacy for all, who come to God through him: let us also remember, that the Lord nevertheless requires that we reverence his Name, his truths, his ordinances, and his commandments: the man, who enters into the ministry, and who handles the Word of God, or administers his sacraments, out of covetousness, or ambition; whilst he indulges in known, allowed, and habitual sin, either openly, or in secret: and those professed Christians, who make religion their pretence, but gain their object; or who approach the Lord's table as a step towards preferment, and nothing more; or with a heart full of allowed covetousness, malice, or lust; such persons, I say, presume to eat of the holy things with their uncleanness upon them, and must answer for it to God. Let us then beware of hypocrisy; and both examine ourselves concerning, and seek to be purified from our sinful defilements, in the blood of Christ, and by his sanctifying Spirit; that we may not profane the Name of God, in these hallowed things; but use them with acceptance to his glory, and to our own benefit and comfort. And when, as his priests, we have feasted at his table, let us never more defile ourselves with the base pleasures of sin, and of the world. It is very proper that we should carefully distinguish betwixt those, who ought, and those who ought not to eat of these holy things: and we shall find, if we carefully consult the Scriptures, that he who attempts to expiate his own sin, or approaches in the pride of self-righteousness, puts as great an affront on Christ, whose bleeding love to sinners he professes to commemorate, as he who comes to the Lord's table from the gratification of sinful lusts. This is a sin, which is oft committed unwittingly; but will need to be repented of, if men would not bear their own iniquities, which "is a burden too heavy for them to bear." Nor can the minister, who loves the souls of the people, "suffer them" to continue in this dangerous delusion; but must call upon them, not only to repent of, and forsake all their sins; but to put their whole trust in the atonement of Christ, by faith in his Name, for pardon, and acceptance with God: thus, and thus only, will the Lord sanctify them for his peculiar people.—We must serve the Lord with the best of all we have, and are: yet if there be a willing mind, and an upright, humble, thankful heart, with a simple dependance on the unblemished sacrifice of Christ; our imperfect oblations will not be rejected of God, and will be useful to our fellow-creatures.—It is very desirable that strangers should be brought acquainted with the Saviour: but we should be careful, that our zeal for multiplying converts, do not lead us to encourage hypocrites; whose corruption is in them, and who will be a scandal to the cause. Even when the reason of the Lord's appointments doth not appear, or when we meet with many repetitions in his word; we may profitably be reminded to exercise humility, faith in his wisdom, and submission to his authority, who deserves from us the most unreserved obedience in every thing.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *The feasts*, &c.] Or the solemnities of the Lord, as the word is translated, (*Isaiah* ch. xxxiii. ver. 20.) The day of atonement was a great solemnity; but it was a fast.

V. 4. *Ye shall proclaim*, &c.] The priests were to give notice of the solemnities, and to call together the holy convocation by sound of trumpet. (*Num.* c. x. v. 7—10.)—It would also devolve upon them to calculate the seasons of the annual feasts; that the computation by moons might coincide, as nearly as might be, with the revolutions of the sun, proper intercalations being made from time to time. For twelve revolutions of the moon want between five and six days of one revolution of the sun: in the space therefore of five or six years, a whole moon must be added, to keep the feasts any thing near

11 And he shall wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted for you: on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.

12 And ye shall offer that day when ye wave the sheaf an he-lamb without blemish of the first year for a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

13 And the meat-offering thereof *shall be* two tenth-deals of fine flour mingled with oil, an offering made by fire unto the LORD *for* a sweet savour: and the drink-offering thereof *shall be* of wine, the fourth *part* of an hin.

14 And ye shall eat neither bread, nor parched corn, nor green ears, until the self-same day that ye have brought an offering unto your God: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

15 And ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven sabbaths shall be complete:

16 Even unto the morrow after the seventh sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the LORD.

17 Ye shall bring out of your habitations two wave-loaves of two tenth-deals: they shall be of fine flour; they shall be baken with leaven; *they are* the first-fruits unto the LORD.

18 And ye shall offer with the bread seven lambs without blemish, of the first year, and one young bullock, and two rams: they shall be *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD, with their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, *even* an offering made by fire, of sweet savour unto the LORD.

19 Then ye shall sacrifice one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year for a sacrifice of peace-offerings.

20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the first-fruits *for* a wave-offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest.

21 And ye shall proclaim on the self-same day, *that* it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work *therein: it shall be* a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

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the same season of the year; as the offering of the first-fruits, &c, would require. And when the people were settled in Canaan, proclamation must, by one means or other, be sent into all their tribes; that there might be no error, or disunion amongst them.

V. 11. *After the Sabbath*, &c.] That is the day of holy convocation, or the first day of unleavened bread: which might, or might not be the weekly sabbath. When Christ was crucified this day of holy convocation fell upon the sabbath-day, which was therefore an high day: on the day after, that is on the day of offering the first-fruits, Christ arose, the first-fruits from the dead. This at least is the sentiment of many learned men; though there is considerable difficulty, and some difference of opinion respecting it. These first fruits, presented to God with a sacrifice, implied that their title to the fruits of the earth was grounded upon the gift of a reconciled God, through the sacrifice of the Saviour, who was to come; and their comfortable, and sanctified use of them arose from their devoting themselves, and their substance to the service and glory of God, through him. They also prefigured Christ, not only as the first-fruits from the dead, and the earnest of the great harvest of the resurrection to life: but as the first-fruits of all the race of fallen Adam; who in human nature having sanctified, or set himself apart, to be perfectly obedient to the precept, and to endure the penalty of the broken law of God, presented himself unto the Father as the earnest of an innumerable multitude of his brethren, who should be accepted of, and consecrated to God through him: for Christians also themselves are a kind of first-fruits of God's "creatures here below." (*James*, c. i. v. 18.) And whilst they partake of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, as the first-fruits of glory; their feeble worship and adoration are the first-fruits of their eternal hallelujahs.

V. 16. *A new meat-offering*, &c.] By the time of the feast of weeks, or of the Pentecost, the barley harvest, which was eared by the feast of the passover, would be gathered in; and the wheat harvest ripe, and in part reaped. Of this latter they must make another acknowledgment out of their habitations, as the first-fruits were from the field; in fine flour *leavened*, for food, not for sacrifice. This was to be accompanied with burnt-offerings, a sin-offering, and peace-offerings: all denoting their unworthiness in themselves, their acceptance through Christ, their devotedness to God, and their consequent comfortable use of their substance, and their communion with God, and with their brethren. This feast is also supposed to have been held in remembrance of the giving of the law, fifty days after their departure out of Egypt: and to have looked forward to the pouring out of the Holy Ghost fifty days after Christ's resurrection: who having finished and and presented his perfect obedience, and acceptable sacrifice, as the first-fruits unto the Father; through the gift of the Holy Ghost to the apostles, and by the conversion of three thousand souls at once, presented the other first-fruits of the Christian church; as an earnest of that harvest of innumerable multitudes, which hath been gathering, and shall yet be gathered in all ages, and nations to the end of time.

22 And

22 And when ye reap the harveſt of your land, thou ſhalt not make clean riddance of the corners of thy field when thou reapeſt, neither ſhalt thou gather any gleaning of thy harveſt: thou ſhalt leave them unto the poor, and to the ſtranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

23 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

24 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, In the ſeventh month, in the firſt *day* of the month, ſhall ye have a ſabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation.

25 Ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein:* but ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

26 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

27 Alſo on the tenth *day* of this ſeventh month *there ſhall be* a day of atonement, it ſhall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

28 And ye ſhall do no work in that ſame day: for it *is* a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.

29 For whatſoever ſoul *it be* that ſhall not be afflicted in that ſame day, he ſhall be cut off from among his people.

30 And whatſoever ſoul *it be* that doeth any work in that ſame day, the ſame ſoul will I deſtroy from among his people.

31 Ye ſhall do no manner of work: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

32 It *ſhall be* unto you a ſabbath of reſt, and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls: in the ninth *day* of the month at even, from even unto even, ſhall ye celebrate your ſabbath.

33 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

34 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, The fifteenth day of this ſeventh month *ſhall be* the feaſt of tabernacles *for* ſeven days unto the LORD.

35 On the firſt day *ſhall be* an holy convocation: ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein.*

36 Seven days ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: on the eighth day ſhall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye ſhall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD: it *is* a ſolemn aſſembly, *and* ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein.*

37 Theſe *are* the feaſts of the LORD, which ye ſhall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a ſacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon his day:

38 Beſide the ſabbaths of the LORD, and beſide your gifts, and beſide all your vows, and beſide all your free-will offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.

39 Alſo in the fifteenth day of the ſeventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye ſhall keep a feaſt unto the LORD ſeven days: on the firſt day *ſhall be* a ſabbath, and on the eighth day *ſhall be* a ſabbath.

40 And ye ſhall take you on the firſt day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye ſhall rejoice before the LORD your God ſeven days.

41 And ye ſhall keep it a feaſt unto the LORD ſeven days in the year: *it ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever in your generations; ye ſhall celebrate it in the ſeventh month.

42 Ye ſhall dwell in booths ſeven days; all that are Iſraelites born ſhall dwell in booths:

43 That

V. 24. *Blowing of trumpets*, &c.] (*See Num.* c. x.) This feaſt ſeems to have been inſtituted at this time, both becauſe their civil new year then began; and becauſe there were ſo many ſolemnities to be obſerved in this month, which were thus announced. — The blowing of trumpets eſpecially repreſented the preaching of the goſpel; by which men are called to repent of ſin, and accept of the ſalvation of Chriſt, which was ſignified by the day of atonement; and to rejoice in God, and become ſtrangers, and pilgrims upon earth, which was denoted by the feaſt of tabernacles, both obſerved in this month.

V. 26—32. (*See notes, &c. on* c. xvi.) The day of atonement was but five days before the feaſt of tabernacles: and though the Iſraelites were not then required to attend at the tabernacle or temple, as on the three great feaſts: yet it might be expected that many of them would come in time to be preſent at that ſolemnity alſo. All theſe meetings would tend to increaſe their acquaintance, and affectionate intercourſe with each other.

V. 42. *Dwell in booths*, &c.] There was in this obſervation a remembrance of their dwelling in tents in the wilderneſs, as well as of their fathers dwelling in tents in Canaan: both to remind them of the meanneſs of their

43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

44 And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. Laws concerning the lighting of the tabernacle, and the shewbread, v. 1—9. 2d. Shelomith's son stoned to death for blasphemy, with the repetition of some laws on that occasion, v. 10—23.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil-olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.

3 Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations.

4 He shall order the lamps upon the pure candlestick before the LORD continually.

5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth-deals shall be in one cake.

6 And

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origin, and the greatness of their deliverance. Christ tabernacling on earth in human nature might also be prefigured: but especially the believer's life on earth, as a joyful stranger, and pilgrim, whose home is in heaven, whither he is daily tending, is very aptly thereby represented.—I see no certainty, nor precision in the accommodation of these feasts to different periods of the church.

V. 44. *The feasts of the Lord*, &c.] All of them, except that of the new moon, are here enumerated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We should not overlook the admonition of observing the sabbath of the Lord, not only in public ordinances, "but in *all* our dwellings;" both ourselves, and in our families; allowing our domestics all cessation from labour; and teaching them, both by precept, and example, to improve their leisure; in order that their souls may now find rest in Christ, and at length enjoy the rest reserved for the people of God.—We should also learn to consider the time employed in God's service as profitably spent; and to esteem his ordinances as holy feasts, relished more by the heaven-born soul, than all other pleasures, which it willingly renounces for the sake of them: and a day set apart for the business of religion will have so much, and so important a work belonging to it, that other business had need be postponed to make way for it. Let us never forget "to honour the Lord with our substance, and with "the first-fruits of all our increase; so shall our barns be "filled with plenty, and our presses-burst out with new "wine." (*Prov.* c. iii. v. 9, 10.) "And when we give "alms of such things, as we have, behold all things are "clean unto us." (*Luke* c. xi. v. 41.) Nor will ever the husbandman have cause to complain, that he has less profit or comfort from his crop; because, by leaving good gleanings, he hath made a *little harvest* for the poor widow, or the labouring man with a large family, who have no lands, or crop of their own.—In all these solemnities we should look unto Jesus, as the great sacrifice for sin, the true Paschal Lamb, (*See notes*, &c. *Exod.* c. xii.) the first-fruits unto God, our forerunner to glory; the provision for our souls; the fountain of grace, from whose fulness the Holy Spirit flows to all his people; the source of our joy, our heavenly hope, and our victory over the world.—But especially, we have here an abstract of the life of faith, and the walk with God.—Being called of God from the service of satan, and from a worldly sensual life, the true penitent begins his course with the sprinkling of the Saviour's blood, in the exercise, and profession of faith in him—In godly sorrow, and self-denial, and bearing the cross, whilst he purges out the old leaven of malice and wickedness, he feasts upon the passover before God, with the unleavened bread of sincerity, and truth; he tastes the first-fruits of heavenly joy, and offers the first-fruits of heavenly adoration; yea presents himself, and all he has to be as the first-fruits unto God, consecrated to his glory. That law, which was given from mount Sinai, written on tables of stone, and lodged in the ark of the covenant (as an emblem of it's being honoured in the Saviour's life and death) he now desires to have written in his heart, by that Spirit which was given to the apostles and first Christians on the day of Pentecost; and he has his desire granted, and his prayer answered. Still however the trumpet of the gospel, though a joyful sound, oft reminds him to renew his repentance, to afflict his soul, and to apply the atonement. And indeed they, who do not thus afflict their souls for sin, shall be cut off from among the people, notwithstanding the atonement, and their professed belief of it. But mourning for sin makes way for heavenly joy, and from this depth of humiliation, the Christian soars nearer heaven, and leaves the world further, and further beneath. A stranger and pilgrim here below, his home and heart are above; where his Saviour, who once tabernacled on earth, now in human nature dwells in glory: and as his assurance increases of "a building not made with hands eternal, "in the heavens," he becomes willing, yea desirous of departing hence, and being "with Christ, which is far "better:" for though he has holy feasts from time to time on earth, yet they suffer many interruptions, and have much alloy: and he expects fulness of joy at God's right hand for evermore. Now may the God of all grace prepare the heart of the writers and readers of these observations, for this self same thing, and give us the earnest of his Spirit, through Christ Jesus. Amen.

6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD.

7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, *even* an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.

9 And it shall be Aaron's and his sons, and they shall eat it in the holy place: for it *is* most holy unto him, of the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute.

10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this son of the Israelitish *woman* and a man of Israel strove together in the camp;

11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name *of the* LORD, and cursed: and they brought him unto Moses; (and his mother's name *was* Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:)

12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them.

13 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

14 Bring forth him that hath cursed, without the camp; and let all that heard *him* lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

15 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever curseth his God shall bear his sin.

16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name *of the* LORD, shall be put to death.

17 And he that killeth any man shall surely be put to death.

18 And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast.

19 And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him:

20 Breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth: as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him *again*.

21 And he that killeth a beast, he shall restore it: and he that killeth a man, he shall be put to death.

22 Ye shall have one manner of law, as well for the stranger, as for one of your own country: for I *am* the LORD your God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 5—9. These loaves of bread, one for each tribe, thus presented before the Lord every week, and afterwards eaten by the priests, may typify Christ, as the bread of life, and the continual food of the souls of his people, having offered himself unto God for them: or they may denote the services of believers, presented before God through him, and accepted for his sake: or the whole may mean the communion, which there is betwixt our reconciled Father, and his adopted children in Christ Jesus; who, as it were, feast at the same table, whilst he delights in the fruits of his Spirit in their hearts; and they are feasted with his love. The frankincense placed upon each loaf for a memorial, and then burnt upon the altar (c. ii. v. 2.) may denote either the advocacy of Christ, or the sweet influences of his Spirit, which are a memorial to the Lord to ensure the acceptance of the believer's person and services. This would be a sweet savour unto God, whilst the bread would be serviceable to the priests: which applies equally to the sacrifice of Christ, honourable to God, and beneficial to man; and to the good works of his people. (*See Eph.* c. v. ver. 2. *Phil.* c. iv. v. 18.)

V. 11. *Blasphemed the name*, &c.] It is supposed that, by reason of the dispute betwixt this man, and the Israelite, he was brought before the magistrates, and the cause was by the law of God decided against him: and, in consequence, that he blasphemed, or cursed him, before whose tremendous name all heaven adores, and all hell trembles: the words "of the LORD" are added in the translation, but with a sort of solemn reverence are omitted in the original, as if the penman scrupled to mention whose name it was, that he blasphemed. (v. 15, 16). This blasphemer's name is not mentioned; for he, who thus treated the holy name of God, was not distinguished by having his vile name written in the sacred Scriptures.

V. 14. *Lay their hands*, &c.] As solemnly persevering in their testimony, and as devoting him to death, that the guilt of such a crime might not rest on Israel: and as avowing that his blood was upon his own head, and all the rest were clear.

V. 17—22. This whole affair occasioned a third interruption in giving the law, &c.; and these precepts are here repeated on occasion of the contest with this son of a stranger; as the foregoing statute (v. 15, 16.) was enacted on occasion of his blasphemy.

23 And

23 And Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, that they ſhould bring forth him that had curſed out of the camp, and ſtone him with ſtones: and the children of Iſrael did as the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1ſt. The appointment of the ſabbatical year, 1—7. 2d. That of the year of jubilee, with various laws relating thereto, 8—55.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes in mount Sinai, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When ye come into the land which I give you, then ſhall the land keep a ſabbath unto the LORD.

3 Six years thou ſhalt ſow thy field, and ſix years thou ſhalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof;

4 But in the ſeventh year ſhall be a ſabbath of reſt unto the land, a ſabbath for the LORD, thou ſhalt neither ſow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.

5 That which groweth of its own accord of thy harveſt thou ſhalt not reap, neither gather the grapes of thy vine undreſſed: *for* it is a year of reſt unto the land.

6 And the ſabbath of the land ſhall be meat for you; for thee, and for thy ſervant, and for thy maid, and for thy hired ſervant, and for thy ſtranger that ſojourneth with thee,

7 And for thy cattle, and for the beaſt that *are* in thy land, ſhall all the increaſe thereof be meat.

8 And thou ſhalt number ſeven ſabbaths of years unto thee, ſeven times ſeven years, and the ſpace of the ſeven ſabbaths of years ſhall be unto thee forty and nine years.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jeſus Chriſt is the light of his church, yea the light of the world; in and through his word this light ſhines; his miniſters in opening and alleging, in reaſoning, and perſuading from the Scriptures, tend and order this light, which, by the influences of his Spirit, illuminates the minds of men unto ſalvation. But the people, who enjoy, and value this light, muſt defray the expences of it, and contribute chearfully towards its ſhining brighter, and wider, and continuing to future generations: and they muſt be ſpoken to for this purpoſe, if not ready of themſelves. By this light we ſhall diſcern the ſpiritual food prepared for our ſouls, firſt preſented to the Father, and then diſtributed to us: and ſhall daily, but eſpecially from ſabbath to ſabbath, feed thereon in our hearts by faith with thankſgiving: and in conſequence ſhall exerciſe graces, well pleaſing unto the Lord, and perform good works very profitable to his people; which will again abound in many thankſgivings unto God, (ſee 2 *Cor.* c. ix. v. 11—14.) And thus we ſhall have fellowſhip with the Father, with his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and with the brethren, by the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, and at laſt ſhall all be preſented before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy. Unequal marriages produce fatal effects even to poſterity; and contentions betwixt men oft iſſue in blaſphemies againſt God: yet profligate manners give riſe to wholeſome laws. But how wicked ſoever men are, nothing muſt be done againſt them unadviſedly, or without conſulting the mind and will of God, as now completely made known to us in his holy word. His will it is, that ſtrangers, or thoſe of another religion ſhould neither be oppreſſed, nor allowed to commit wickedneſs with impunity; but in this reſpect be treated as other members of ſociety. Blaſphemy againſt God, is in its own nature more heinous than murder; and though it frequently eſcape unpuniſhed by man, yet ſhall by no means eſcape the righteous vengeance of God. The ſolemn, and public execution of daring offenders, not only ſets a ſalutary example, but purges away national guilt; and every member of ſociety is bound to concur in his place in bringing ſuch perſons to juſtice; yet ſo, that it be done with the utmoſt caution, and that they bear no teſtimony which they cannot ſtand to. What enmity againſt God muſt be in the heart of man, when blaſphemies from thence proceed out of his mouth! And if he that deſpiſed Moſes's law died without mercy; of what puniſhment will they be thought worthy, who deſpiſe, and abuſe the goſpel of the Son of God? Let us learn then to watch againſt anger; to do no evil, but only good to all men, eſpecially to the houſhold of faith; to avoid all improper connexions with wicked people, and to reverence habitually, that worthy name which ſinners blaſpheme.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 2. *Shall the land keep a ſabbath*, &c.] The obſervance of this ſabbatical year might impreſs the minds of the people more forcibly with the obligation of their weekly ſabbath; and afford all of them more leiſure for the ſtudy of the law, and the buſineſs of religion; as well as afford the poor a relaxation of their labours, and an acquiſition to their enjoyments. They were alſo taught to live by faith in God's providence, to receive their ſupply from his hand, and to be generous in the uſe of it. They might be reminded of the life of paradiſe, before ſin had laid men under the ſentence of eating bread by the ſweat of their brow; and it might typify the believer's reſt of ſoul in Chriſt by faith on earth, and the reſt of heaven. (See note on *Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 11.)

9 Then

9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound, on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.

10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you: and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.

11 A jubile shall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather *the grapes* in it of thy vine undressed.

12 For it *is* the jubile, it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field.

13 In the year of this jubile ye shall return every man unto his possession.

14 And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest *ought* of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another.

15 According to the number of years after the jubile thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, *and* according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee:

16 According to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt diminish the price of it: for *according* to the number *of the years* of the fruits doth he sell unto thee.

17 Ye shall not therefore oppress one another, but thou shalt fear thy God; for I *am* the LORD your God.

18 Wherefore ye shall do my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; and ye shall dwell in the land in safety.

19 And the land shall yield her fruit, and ye shall eat your fill, and dwell therein in safety.

20 And if ye shall say, What shall we eat the seventh year? behold, we shall not sow, nor gather in our increase:

21 Then I will command my blessing upon you in the sixth year, and it shall bring forth fruit for three years.

22 And ye shall sow the eighth year, and eat *yet* of old fruit until the ninth year; until her fruits come in ye shall eat *of* the old *store*.

23 The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land *is* mine, for ye *are* strangers and sojourners with me.

24 And in all the land of your possession, ye shall grant a redemption for the land.

25 If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away *some* of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.

26 And

V. 9. *Of the jubile*, &c.] The word signifies some peculiar sonorous, or animated sound of the silver trumpets (*Num.* c. x.) This sound was to be made on the evening of the great day of atonement; for the proclamation of gospel liberty and salvation results from the sacrifice of the Redeemer.

V. 10. *Fiftieth year*, &c.] It seems to me, (though some think otherwise,) that this expression absolutely decides, that the year of jubile was not the same with the seventh sabbatical year, but the year afterwards: and that the only objection of any weight, which can be urged against this opinion; namely, the difficulty of the nation subsisting for two years without sowing their ground, is obviated, v. 21, 22. This institution would form a suitable trial of their faith, and afford the Lord a proper occasion of shewing his power, and faithfulness, whenever they observed it: but we have reason to think that this was but seldom; for we read little, or nothing of the year of jubil after it's institution.

V. 13. *Ye shall returr*, &c.] Thus it was provided that their lands should not be alienated from the families, to which they were assigned by lot; for they could only be disposed of by leases, at a proportionable price, until the year of jubile, and were then to return either to the seller, if living, or to his next heir. This would preserve their tribes and families, and consequently their genealogies distinct, until the coming of the Messiah: it would also prevent the amassing of exorbitant wealth by some, and the extreme poverty of others, and promote a brotherly equality amongst them.

V. 20—22. *Fruit for three years*, &c.] The sabbatical year would commence from the finishing of the harvest and vintage in the sixth year: in the close of the eighth year, or the year of jubile, according to their civil computation, when two full years were passed without sowing, or reaping, they were to begin to make preparation for the harvest in the ninth year: and the fruits of the sixth year, it is here promised, should not only suffice for the sabbatical year, but for the year of jubile, and till the crop was ripe in the following year.

V. 25—27. The near relation ought to have the first refusal of the lands, which were to be sold: but if another

26 And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it:

27 Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it, that he may return unto his possession.

28 But if he be not able to restore *it* to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession.

29 And if a man sell a dwelling house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold: *within* a full year may he redeem it.

30 And if it be not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house that *is* in the walled city, shall be established for ever to him that bought it throughout his generations: it shall not go out in the jubile.

31 But the houses of the villages which have no walls round about them shall be counted as the fields of the country; they may be redeemed, and they shall go out in the jubile.

32 Notwithstanding the cities of the Levites, *and* the houses of the cities of their possession, may the Levites redeem at any time.

33 And if a man purchase of the Levites, then the house that was sold, and the city of his possession shall go out in the *year of* jubile: for the houses of the cities of the Levites *are* their possession among the children of Israel.

34 But the field of the suburbs of their cities may not be sold; for it *is* their perpetual possession.

35 And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: *yea, though he be* a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee.

36 Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.

37 Thou shalt not give him thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase.

38 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, *and* to be your God.

39 And if thy brother *that dwelleth* by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bond-servant:

40 *But* as an hired servant, *and* as a sojourner, he shall be with thee, *and* shall serve thee unto the year of jubile.

41 And *then* shall he depart from thee, *both* he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return.

42 For they *are* my servants, which I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: they shall not be sold as bond-men.

43 Thou shalt not rule over him with rigour, but shalt fear thy God.

44 Both

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had bought them, he had a right to redeem them at the same price, deducting for the time, during which the purchaser had enjoyed them: and he was then to keep them for the proprietor till the year of jubile, (*Ruth*, c. iv. 6—9. *Jerem.* c. xxxii. v. 7—14.) Or if the seller afterwards were able, he might redeem his estate: otherwise it continued until the year of jubile, when it returned to him, or his family, freely. This typified Christ, who is our brother, and redeemer, who ransoms our lost inheritance, and will keep it for us till the day of our death, or rather till the day of judgment, when he will restore it free unto us: whereas that of the wicked will be forfeited for ever.

V. 29—30. *In a walled city*, &c.] Such houses marked not the distinction of families, and were built with labour and expence, and were not the inheritance of their fathers; they would also want continual repair, and would undergo great alterations in a little time. Being especially useful for commerce this allowance would encourage strangers to come, and settle amongst them.

V. 35 — 38. (See note *Exod.* c. xxii. v. 25—27.) When an Israelite was reduced to poverty, and lived amongst them, as a stranger and sojourner, without any possession, or inheritance, they must remember to treat him as a brother.

V. 39—40. When a man was sold for some debt, or some fraud, for which he could not make restitution, he was to be liberated at the end of seven years. (*Ex.* c. xxi. v. 1—6.) But if he voluntarily sold himself without limitation of time; or through poverty, love to his master, or his wife and children, had refused liberty at the end of seven years; and perhaps if he was sold for some larger debt, or greater crime; he was to continue a servant for life, unless the year of jubile intervened; when he was both to be set at liberty, and return with his family to his

44 Both thy bond-men, and thy bond-maids, which thou ſhalt have, *ſhall be* of the heathen that are round about you; of them ſhall ye buy bond-men and bond-maids.

45 Moreover of the children of the ſtrangers that do ſojourn among you, of them ſhall ye buy, and of their families that *are* with you, which they begat in your land: and they ſhall be your poſſeſſion.

46 And ye ſhall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them for* a poſſeſſion; they ſhall be your bond-men for ever: but over your brethren, the children of Iſrael, ye ſhall not rule one over another with rigour.

47 And if a ſojourner or ſtranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother *that dwelleth* by him wax poor, and ſell himſelf unto the ſtranger *or* ſojourner by thee, or to the ſtock of the ſtranger's family:

48 After that he is ſold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him:

49 Either his uncle, or his uncle's ſon, may redeem him, or *any* that is nigh of kin unto him, of his family, may redeem him; or, if he be able, he may redeem himſelf.

50 And he ſhall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was ſold to him, unto the year of jubile: and the price of his ſale ſhall be according unto the number of years; according to the time of an hired ſervant ſhall it be with him.

51 If *there be* yet many years *behind*, according unto them he ſhall give again the price of his redemption, out of the money that he was bought for.

52 And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubile, then he ſhall count with him, *and* according unto his years ſhall he give him again the price of his redemption.

53 *And* as a yearly hired ſervant ſhall he be with him: and *the other* ſhall not rule with rigour over him in thy ſight.

54 And if he be not redeemed in theſe *years*, then he ſhall go out in the year of jubile, *both* he, and his children with him.

55 For unto me the children of Iſrael *are* ſervants; they *are* my ſervants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

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his inheritance. But in the mean time he was not to be treated with rigour as a ſlave, but with kindneſs as an hired ſervant.

V. 44—46. This might be permitted to typify, that none but the true Iſrael of God participate of that liberty, with which Chriſt hath made his people free.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is a deſirable privilege to have ſeaſons of relaxation from worldly cares, and employments, that we may have more leiſure for the ſtudy of the Scriptures, and the concerns of our ſouls; and the poor labourer ſhould be allowed them alſo; and our hearts ſhould rejoice to ſee him refreſhed from his toil, and enjoying the fruits of our liberality. All theſe ſtatutes preach to us, "to beware of covet-"ouſneſs; for a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance "of his poſſeſſions;" to exerciſe willing dependance on God's providence for our ſupport; to be contented with, and thankful for food, and raiment; to conſider ourſelves as the Lord's tenants, and ſtewards, if we have lands, or poſſeſſions, and to uſe them accordingly; and not only to be moderate and temperate in our enjoyments, but kind, and gentle to our inferiors, and ready to diſtribute, and willing to communicate to our poor brethren, after his example, "who, though he were rich, yet for our ſakes be-"came poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." —He is our Redeemer, and aſſumed our nature, that therein he might ranſom our ſouls from ſatan's bondage, into which we had been ſold for the debts that we had contracted, and for the crimes which we had committed; nay into which we had fooliſhly ſold ourſelves, through our love of ſinful pleaſures: and that, together with our liberty, he might alſo redeem our forfeited and waſted inheritance; without which we muſt otherwiſe have ſpent eternity in moſt miſerable want. Having paid the ranſom, and entered into poſſeſſion of the inheritance in our behalf, and in virtue of his atonement; he, by the goſpel's joyful ſound, from age to age, proclaims "liberty to the captive, and the "opening of the priſon to thoſe that are bound:" accompanying this proclamation by his powerful grace, he ſets his people at liberty, which they enjoy, together with reſt for their ſouls, and the earneſt of heaven, through faith in, and obedience to him. When they die, their ſouls aſcend to heavenly reſt; and ere long the laſt trump ſhall ſound the jubile of the reſurrection, "the redemption "of the body," (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 23.) and they ſhall be then put in final and eternal poſſeſſion of the purchaſed inheritance to the praiſe of his glory: whilſt the wicked will ſink into the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever. We cannot ranſom our own ſouls, or our forfeited inheritance: but let us not neglect ſuch great ſalvation, ſo freely propoſed, and the fruit of ſuch love, and of ſuch ſufferings. We cannot ranſom our fellow ſinners: but we may point out, and recommend Chriſt to them; and by his grace our holy lives may adorn his goſpel, expreſs our love, and gratitude, and glorify his holy name.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1st. A repetition of the laws prohibiting idolatry, and requiring regard to the Lord's sabbaths, and sanctuary, 1—2. *2d. Promises to the people, whilst they continued obedient,* 3—13. *3d. Judgments threatened in case of their disobedience, and as long as they persisted therein,* 14—39. *4th. Encouraging promises to them, if at length they repented,* 40—46.

YE shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up *any* image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I *am* the Lord your God.

2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the Lord.

3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them;

4 Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.

5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing-time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely.

6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make *you* afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land.

7 And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword.

8 And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight; and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.

9 For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you.

10 And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new.

11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 4. *I will give you rain*, &c.] These promises to Israel in case of their continuing obedient are to be understood, with a special reference to their national covenant; whilst they maintained a *national* regard to God's worship, sabbaths and sanctuary, and did not turn aside to idolatry; the Lord engaged to continue to them these temporal mercies, and distinguishing religious advantages. (V. 11—13.) Even amongst the Israelites individuals were not uniformly prosperous, or afflicted, according to their obedience or disobedience: nay the contrary was so commonly the case, that the prophets, and the Psalmist, in several places, speak of it as their temptation; (*Psl.* lxxiii. *Jer.* c. xii. 1—2.) And the royal preacher declares, "that "all things come alike to all," (*Eccles.* c. ix. v. 1—2.) But uniformly national prosperity was the effect of national obedience, and national judgments were the result of national wickedness. And though we allow Israel to have been under a peculiar covenant, and that no other nation is dealt with exactly according to the same rule, as they were; yet still God deals with nations, as collective bodies; and nothing but national regard to religion, and righteousness, can ensure national prosperity; and national wickedness will end in the ruin of any people, especially where the word of God, and the light of the gospel are afforded. Individuals will exist, and be judged and recompensed in a future world: but bodies politic will have no future existence; and will therefore be recompensed in this world. Concerning individual Christians, it is enough to say that the Lord will afford them as much temporal prosperity, as his infinite wisdom sees good for them: that either from within, or without, their comforts shall be proportioned to the simplicity, and exactness of their obedience, which springs from faith, and love; that they frequently will experience the Lord's care of them, and kindness to them in his providence, and in answer to their prayers, whether according to the letter of such temporal promises, or not: That their obedience has a natural tendency to exempt them from a variety of miseries, which others endure; and to secure them many comforts of body, and mind, and circumstances, which others enjoy not: that their crosses and afflictions are all needful and useful, sanctified to them, and counterbalanced by inward peace: and that, upon the whole, they have even in this world, including their heavenly hope, by far the largest proportion of true felicity, notwithstanding all the tribulation, and persecution, which they endure, the self-denial which they exercise, and the correction of their father's love.—These promises may also be considered as typical of the spiritual prosperity, health, peace, and victory, with which the Lord favours his believing people, when walking in his ways: and of the blessings which his church enjoys.

V. 5. *Your threshing*, &c.] Their good crops should keep them constantly employed, and consequently well provided for, all the year round. This is by some considered as an emblem of the plentiful increase given to the seed of the word, in the days of the apostles, and primitive times of Christianity. To which that of the prophet, "that "the plowman should overtake the reaper," &c, (*Amos*, c. ix. v. 13,) may be referred.

V. 10. *Bring forth the old*, &c.] They were not to build new barns, in which to hoard their plenty, as that rich foolish man, (*Luke*, c. xii. v. 15—21;) but to bring them forth to make room for the new, and so dispose of them cheap, or freely to the poor and needy; having a liberal heart, as well as abundant provision.

12 And

12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

13 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bond-men; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright.

14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments;

15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, *but* that ye break my covenant;

16 I also will do this unto you, I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain; for your enemies shall eat it.

17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you.

18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.

20 And your strength shall be spent in vain: for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the land yield their fruits.

21 And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you, according to your sins.

22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, and destroy your cattle, and make you few in number, and your *high*-ways shall be desolate.

23 And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me,

24 Then will I also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

25 And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of *my* covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.

26 *And* when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver *you* your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.

27 And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me;

28 Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury: and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

29 And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat.

30 And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcases upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you.

31 And

V. 11—12. The continuance of God's ordinances amongst them was the chief of these promises: but it was but a shadow of the privilege of every true believer; (*See* 2 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 18.) The expression "My soul shall "not abhor you," is remarkable; and implies that it was an act of mere mercy that so holy a God did not abhor the fellowship of such sinners, as they were, when most obedient; and that if they were rebellious, he would abhor them.—In the days of Joshua, of some of the judges, of David, and Solomon, and some of their successors, these prophetical promises had their accomplishment: and indeed this chapter, and the 28th of *Deuteronomy*, are a prophetical abstract of the future history of Israel even to this day; and it is not yet fully accomplished.

V. 19. *Your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass*, &c.] The heavens should no more give rain, than if they were iron; nor the earth any more yield corn, than if it were brass: which would effectually break the pride of their power. This had a remarkable accomplishment in the long famine foretold by Elijah, in the time of Ahab, (1 *Kings*, chap. xvii. xviii.)

24. *Yet seven times*, &c.] Making their miseries still more and more dreadful; like Nebuchadnezzar's attempt, by making the furnace seven times hotter than usual, to increase the torture of the objects of his vengeance; (*Dan.* c. iii. v. 19.) But his was a mere impotent foolish effort The Lord was able to accomplish his denunciations however awful.

V. 29. *Ye shall eat the flesh*, &c.] This was literally fulfilled in the siege of Samaria by Benhadad, (2 *Kings*, c. vi. v. 28—29.) In the siege of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans, (*Lam.* c. iv. v. 10.) And in the last siege of Jerusalem by

31 And I will make your cities waſte, and bring your ſanctuaries unto deſolation, and I will not ſmell the ſavour of your ſweet odours.

32 And I will bring the land into deſolation; and your enemies which dwell therein ſhall be aſtoniſhed at it.

33 And I will ſcatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a ſword after you; and your land ſhall be deſolate, and your cities waſte.

34 Then ſhall the land enjoy her ſabbaths as long as it lieth deſolate, and ye *be* in your enemies land; *even* then ſhall the land reſt, and enjoy her ſabbaths.

35 As long as it lieth deſolate, it ſhall reſt; becauſe it did not reſt in your ſabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it.

36 And upon them that are left *alive* of you, I will ſend a faintneſs into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the ſound of a ſhaken leaf ſhall chaſe them; and they ſhall flee, as fleeing from a ſword; and they ſhall fall when none purſueth.

37 And they ſhall fall one upon another, as it were before a ſword, when none purſueth: and ye ſhall have no power to ſtand before your enemies.

38 And ye ſhall periſh among the heathen, and the land of your enemies ſhall eat you up.

39 And they that are left of you ſhall pine away in their iniquity in your enemies lands; and alſo in the iniquities of their fathers ſhall they pine away with them.

40 If they ſhall confeſs their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their treſpaſs which they treſpaſſed againſt me, and that alſo they have walked contrary unto me;

41 And *that* I alſo have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity:

42 Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and alſo my covenant with Iſaac, and alſo my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land.

43 The

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the Romans, as recorded by their own hiſtorian, Joſephus.

V. 31. *I will not ſmell*, &c.] The Lord would no longer regard the burning of their incenſe, or their ſacrifices, though they preſerved the form of godlineſs amongſt them; (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 11—15. c. lxvi. v. 3.)

V. 34—35.] This was fulfilled in the Babyloniſh captivity; and is a prediction of their ſin, as well as of their puniſhment, and ſhews that they ſcarce ever regarded the appointments of the foregoing chapter; (2 *Chron.* c. xxxvi. v. 21.)

V. 39. *In the iniquities of their*, &c.] They would be under the load of guilt, which had been accumulating for ages, ſo long as they continued impenitent in their own tranſgreſſions, but no longer; and would pine away in deſpair of redreſs.

V. 40. *If they ſhall confeſs*, &c.] Thus previous to the deliverance of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity, we find Daniel, in the name of the whole nation, (and doubtleſs numbers concurred with him,) confeſſing their ſins before the Lord in deep humiliation, (*Dan.* c. ix.) And afterwards, previous to their further eſtabliſhment in Judea, we find Ezra, and Nehemiah, and the people with them doing the ſame; and in language which ſeems evidently to refer to this chapter; (*Ezra*, c. ix. *Neh.* c. ix.)

V. 41. *Their uncircumciſed hearts*, &c.] Their pride and impenitency, their love of ſin, and enmity to Jehovah, and his worſhip, proved their hearts uncircumciſed, that is unrenewed by divine grace: when this change took place they would be humbled before God, would acknowledge his juſtice in all their ſufferings; would ſeek forgiveneſs of his mercy, and be diſpoſed to return to their duty: then would he remember and deal with them according to the covenant made with their fathers. This part of the prophecy has a glorious accompliſhment hereafter to be expected, in the converſion of the Jews to Chriſt: (*Rom.* c. xi. v. 25—28.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our true intereſt and happineſs conſiſt in worſhipping the Lord, giving him our hearts, hallowing his ſabbaths, reverencing his ſanctuary; and doing every thing with a believing regard to that Saviour, "in whom dwelleth all "the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily." It is true our obedience cannot juſtify us; but that obedience, which takes its riſe from repentance towards God, and faith in and love to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and conſiſts in an humble attendance on his ordinances, and an unreſerved obedience to his commandments, will both evince that we are juſtified, and have peace with God; and will induce peace and ſpiritual conſolations into our hearts, with the hope of glory, and the bleſſing of God upon our our families, and poſſeſſions: ſo that the moſt afflicted ſtate of ſuch a Chriſtian ſhall be more comfortable, than any ungodly proſperity. This frame of mind is the health of the ſoul, and the antepaſt of heaven; whilſt God ſets up his tabernacle in, and dwells and walks with us, as the ſure pledge of eternal glory. But wilful ſin, even in a believer, will grieve the Spirit, and cloud this bright proſpect, and bring darkneſs and diſtreſs into the ſoul, as well as chaſtiſements from his heavenly Father's rod. Righteouſneſs alſo exalteth a nation,

43 The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sabbaths, while she lieth desolate without them: and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes.

44 And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them: for I *am* the LORD their God.

45 But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I *am* the LORD.

46 These *are* the statutes, and judgments, and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai, by the hand of Moses.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains laws concerning singular vows, or dedicating to God, 1st. Of persons, 1—8. *2d. Of cattle,* 9—13. *3d. Of houses and lands,* 14—25. *4th. That firstlings were not thus to be dedicated,* 26—27. *5th. Of things devoted to destruction,* 28—29. *6th. Concerning tithes, &c.* 30—34.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When a man shall make a singular vow, the persons *shall be* for the LORD by thy estimation.

3 And thy estimation shall be, of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old,

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tion, and amongst other blessings, ensures the continuance of the gospel amongst them. But it is truly wonderful that the Lord hath not long since so abhorred this our sinful land, as to deprive us of our other manifold mercies, and especially to bereave us of his despised and abused word of salvation! Sooner or later, however, sin will be the ruin, as well as reproach of every people: and our *national* violation of God's sabbaths, contempt of his ordinances, opposition to his truths, and abhorrence of his commandments; after our manifold rebukes, dangers, and deliverances, which were intended to bring us to repentance and upright obedience, have a very gloomy aspect on this yet favoured land. If we continue still to walk contrary to God, we may expect that he will punish us seven times, yea seventy times seven, more, than those late checks, of which we so loudly complained; and avenge the quarrel of his gospel upon us: and if he set his face against us, who has all creatures in his hand, as ministers of his vengeance, wherewith to fight against his enemies, who can conjecture where it will end? Oh! that, being humbled for and confessing our sins, we might, by a general revival of religion, and reformation of manners, with the harmonious concurrence of all ranks, and orders of men amongst us, avert the rising storm, before it burst upon us! But though *national* judgments, such as desolating war, pestilence, and famine, be dreadful; yet they are but temporal evils: personal judgments alone are *eternal:* let every sinner then tremble for himself, and take warning, and flee from the wrath to come. The career of iniquity commences in contempt of God's statutes, and hatred of his service. ingratitude for, and abuse of his mercies soon issue in the hardening of the heart under afflictions, and against convictions: such persons walking contrary to God, will find that he walks contrary to them: and as they turn their face from him; he will set his face against them, will abhor them, pursue them with one misery after another, and at length utterly destroy them, if they continue impenitent: and the stoutest of them will find their hearts wax faint, and tremble, and perceive that they have no power to resist, or escape, when he arises to execute vengeance.—But if at length any poor sinner be deeply humbled, and confess his guilt, and cry for mercy through faith in Jesus Christ, and according to the covenant made with sinners in him; God will remember that covenant, and pardon that sinner according to the multitude of his mercies; so that none need despair, and pine away in their iniquities: Whilst we rejoice in, and avail ourselves of such a precious privilege; and are confirmed in our faith by the desolate, and dispersed condition of the disobedient Israelites: let us not abhor, or despise; but compassionate and pray for them; that they may at length be remembered according to the covenant made with their fathers. And let us take warning not to imitate their infidelity, and not to trust in external distinctions. God grant that we may in this our day consider the things, which belong to our eternal peace.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 2. *A singular vow,* &c.] By these vows the Israelites upon many occasions might be disposed to dedicate themselves, or their children, to the immediate service of the Lord, in the sanctuary for life: but as the priests, and Levites, were set apart of God for that service, and none were allowed to interfere with their work, such vows were not much to be encouraged. The Gibeonites were afterwards employed "as hewers of wood, and drawers of water," for the tabernacle: and perhaps some others, who refused to redeem themselves, were employed in menial services, as assistants to the priests and Levites: these were, along with the Gibeonites, probably called "Nethinim," or dedicated persons, of which we shall read hereafter. Samuel was thus dedicated of his mother; (*1 Sam.* c. i. v. 11. 24—28.) but being thus dedicated, and not redeemed, he was employed about the sanctuary from his childhood,

old, even thy estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

4 And if *it be* a female, then thy estimation shall be thirty shekels.

5 And if *it be* from five years old even unto twenty years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male twenty shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

6 And if *it be* from a month old even unto five years old, then thy estimation shall be of the male five shekels of silver, and for the female thy estimation *shall be* three shekels of silver.

7 And if *it be* from sixty years old and above; if *it be* a male, then thy estimation shall be fifteen shekels, and for the female ten shekels.

8 But if he be poorer than thy estimation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall value him: according to his ability that vowed shall the priest value him.

9 And if *it be* a beast, whereof men bring an offering unto the LORD, all that *any man* giveth of such unto the LORD shall be holy.

10 He shall not alter it, nor change it, a good for a bad, or a bad for a good: and if he shall at all change beast for beast; then it and the exchange thereof shall be holy.

11 And if *it be* any unclean beast, of which they do not offer a sacrifice unto the LORD; then he shall present the beast before the priest:

12 And the priest shall value it, whether it be good or bad; as thou valuest it, *who art* the priest, so shall it be.

13 But if he will at all redeem it, then he shall add a fifth *part* thereof unto thy estimation.

14 And when a man shall sanctify his house *to be* holy unto the LORD; then the priest shall estimate it, whether it be good or bad: as the priest shall estimate it, so shall it stand.

15 And if he that sanctified it will redeem his house, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be his.

16 And if a man shall sanctify unto the LORD *some part* of a field of his possession: then thy estimation shall be according to the seed thereof: an homer of barley seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver.

17 If he sanctify his field from the year of jubile, according to thy estimation it shall stand.

18 But if he sanctify his field after the jubile, then the priest shall reckon unto him the money according to the years that remain, even unto the year of the jubile, and it shall be abated from thy estimation.

19 And if he that sanctified the field will in any wise redeem it, then he shall add the fifth *part* of the money of thy estimation unto it, and it shall be assured to him.

20 And if he will not redeem the field, or if

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childhood, long before the age, when the Levites entered upon their office. However, though probably some such persons, as from singular affection to the tabernacle, and the worship of God, thus dedicated themselves or their children to the service thereof, might be employed: yet in general they were allowed, or even ordered to be redeemed, at the valuation here prescribed; which was equitable, and moderate, and was to be reduced still lower in case of poverty.

V. 9—13.] If any particular animal were thus vowed unto the Lord, or dedicated to him, it was to be accounted holy, and must not be exchanged, but must be sacrificed, provided it were fit for sacrifice: otherwise it was to be valued and sold: but at a dearer rate to him, who vowed it, than to another person, as a rebuke for his rashness, and inconstancy. Some suppose that the money was put into the treasury of the sanctuary, to defray the expences thereof: others that the priests had it for their own use. The difference between this singular vow, and ordinary vow, seems to have been this: the ordinary vow was made, when in quest of some blessing, or when some special mercy was received; that the person, who vowed, would offer certain sacrifices of burnt-offerings or peace-offerings unto the Lord; and it included nothing else; but a singular vow was the solemn dedication of a man's person or child, or any part of his property to the immediate use of the sanctuary, or of the priests, *with special designation*, whether fit for sacrifice or not.

V. 16. *Some part of a field*, &c.] A man was not allowed thus to alienate his whole patrimony, but only some part of a field: he might express his good-will for the house of God, but must not impoverish his own family.

An homer, &c.] That is, as much land as required an homer of barley to sow it. An *omer* was only the tenth part of an ephah; an *homer* contained ten ephahs, or about eight bushels Wincheſter measure.

V. 20—21.] If the person, who dedicated his land refused to redeem it, it became the perpetual inheritance of the

if he have sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed any more.

21 But the field, when it goeth out in the jubile, shall be holy unto the LORD, as a field devoted: the possession thereof shall be the priests.

22 And if *a man* sanctify unto the LORD a field which he hath bought, which *is* not of the fields of his possession;

23 Then the priest shall reckon unto him the worth of thy estimation, *even* unto the year of the jubile: and he shall give thine estimation in that day, *as* a holy thing unto the LORD.

24 In the year of the jubile the field shall return unto him of whom it was bought, *even* to him to whom the possession of the land *did belong*.

25 And all thy estimations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: twenty gerahs shall be the shekel.

26 Only the firstling of the beasts, which should be the Lord's firstling, no man shall sanctify it: whether *it be* ox or sheep, it *is* the LORD's.

27 And if *it be* of an unclean beast, then he shall redeem *it* according to thine estimation, and shall add a fifth *part* of it thereto: or if it be not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to thy estimation.

28 Notwithstanding, no devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the LORD, of all that he hath, *both* of man and beast, and of the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing *is* most holy unto the LORD.

29 None devoted, which shall be devoted of men, shall be redeemed; *but* shall surely *be* put to death.

30 And all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land, *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD's: *it is* holy unto the LORD.

31 And

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the priests; and could only be leased out till the year of jubile: consequently a man could not thus alienate that land, which would then belong to another family.

V. 26, 27. *The firstling*, &c.] As this was the Lord's before, it would be a solemn mockery to pretend to make it the matter of a singular vow; for it was to be sacrificed; (*Exod.* c. xiii. v. 15.) But if an unclean firstling were thus dedicated to God, the owner might redeem it, as another unclean firstling, (*Exod.* xiii. v. 13.) though not with a lamb, but with it's estimation in money, adding a fifth part thereto: and if he refused to redeem it, it was not to be killed, but sold for the benefit of the priests, or of the sanctuary.

V. 28. *Devoted*, &c.] This is another kind of vow, by which persons or things were solemnly devoted under a curse to utter destruction, in some way supposed to be for the honour of God. Thus the Lord himself devoted the Canaanites, and Amalekites in general, and Jericho in particular. Thus the Israelites devoted the cities of Arad to utter destruction (*Num.* c. xxi. v. 1—3.). Probably Jephtha's vow, and his performance of it, were a misconstruction of this law; for whatever was thus devoted, was surely to be put to death: yet the people rescued Jonathan, whom his father Saul had thus rashly and unwittingly devoted (1 *Sam.* c. xiv. v. 24—27. 38—45.)

V. 30—34. These laws would prevent the introduction of a modus, in collecting the tithes, and impropriations; and many other methods, which have reduced almost to beggary the clergy in many places, for whose maintenance they were originally appropriated. Whatever may be said for this, where tithes are only an human constitution, it would certainly have been wrong, where they were a divine appointment: and this law evidently teaches, that they, "who *indeed labour* in the word and doctrine," have a right to a maintenance, and ought not to be defrauded of it. (*Numb.* c. xviii. v. 20—32.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is good to be zealously affected, and liberally disposed to the service, and sanctuary of the Lord: but consideration should precede, and prudence should direct the application; or rash vows, and inconstancy in performing them, will dishonour God, and embarrass our own minds. We should dedicate ourselves and our families to the service of God, according to the situation of life, in which the providence of God has placed us: but may we not aptly accommodate these "singular vows of persons," to the case of those, who, perhaps with good intention, but with great impropriety, are determined to leave their proper employments, and to enter into the ministry; or of those, who resolve to bring up their children to that sacred office, before they can know whether they will be properly qualified, or disposed for such a service? Too many seem to forget, that there are other ways of glorifying God and serving his church, besides preaching the gospel: and though no general rules can be prescribed in such cases; yet much caution, deliberation, prayer and patient waiting upon God, and submission to his providence, should precede every person's leaving another calling, to enter into the ministry: nor should any resolutions, or vows be considered binding respecting themselves, or children: unless the Lord allow them, by giving proper qualifications, and dispositions, and opening a regular door of admission in his providence. Otherwise such persons would do better, to endeavour themselves, and to bring up their children, to honour God

31 And if a man will at all redeem *ought* of his tithes, he ſhall add thereto the fifth *part* thereof.

32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, *even* of whatſoever paſſeth under the rod, the tenth ſhall be holy unto the LORD.

33 He ſhall not ſearch whether it be good or bad, neither ſhall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof ſhall be holy: it ſhall not be redeemed.

34 Theſe *are* the commandments which the LORD commanded Moſes for the children of Iſrael in mount Sinai.

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by their example, influence, and ſubſtance in a private character: for the Lord to this day will chuſe his own miniſters, whom he will employ in his ſanctuary, without regarding our deſires, and intentions.—Our houſes, lands, cattle, and ſubſtance, muſt be poſſeſſed, and uſed to the glory of God; and a portion dedicated immediately to the ſupport of his worſhip, and to promote his cauſe, is acceptable to him, if done with a conſtant and willing mind, and in prudence and equity.—But the Lord neither approves of thoſe, who grudge his ſervants their ſupport; nor of thoſe, who injure their families, and perhaps their creditors, by an imprudent, or oſtentatious profuſion in theſe reſpects: nor of thoſe who raſhly engage, and inconſtantly retract their engagements. But let us not forget that we ſinners were devoted to utter deſtruction, as under the curſe of a broken law: and that Jeſus willingly devoted himſelf to be made a curſe for us; and taſted the bitterneſs of death, yea of the wrath of the Father for our redemption. Their doom will be irreverſible, who neglect this great ſalvation; and they will be bid to "depart from him "accurſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and "his angels." Let us then flee to him for refuge; and receiving the atonement, let us yield ourſelves to him, without wiſhing, or deſiring a change, to be unto him a holy people, that his name "may be glorified in us," living, and dying, and for ever, "and we in him, accord-"ing to the grace of our God, and of the Lord Jeſus "Chriſt." (2 *Theſſ.* c. i. v. 11, 12.)

THE FOURTH BOOK OF MOSES

CALLED

NUMBERS.

This book, as well as the preceding ones, had it's name from the authors of the Greek tranſlation, that is called the Septuagint; but the names of the former books ſtand in our Bibles in the original Greek; this is tranſlated into Engliſh. It is called NUMBERS from the ſeveral numberings of the people, of the Levites, &c, which it records. The book begins with an account of the arrangement of the twelve tribes into regular encampments, in four diviſions, under their ſeveral leaders, around the tabernacle; the care of which, and of all it's furniture, was committed to the Levites, in three diviſions, according to their families. The hiſtory of Iſrael afterwards proceeds: and the ſacred penman having recorded that inſtance of rebellion, which provoked God to ſwear in his wrath that they ſhould not enter into his reſt; gives an account of their continuance in the wilderneſs for about thirty-nine years; though very little is related, except of the firſt, and of the laſt year of that period: and the whole is intermixed with many laws, moral and ceremonial. It would not conſiſt with brevity to deſcend to particulars, which will appear at the head of each chapter. Suffice it to obſerve, that the whole is calculated to illuſtrate the Scripture doctrine of the juſtice, holineſs, truth, goodneſs, and mercy of God: and of the rebellion, unbelief, ingratitude, and perverſeneſs of man. The divine diſpenſations towards Iſrael, herein recorded, had a tendency to humble them, and prove them; to diſtinguiſh betwixt the true believer, and the hypocrite amongſt them; to lead them all into an acquaintance with the Lord,

and

and with themſelves; to wean them from ſelf-confidence, and to induce them to truſt in him; to render them watchful, and to fill them with reverential fear of God; and ſo to train them up for the conqueſt of Canaan, and for adhering to their God and religion, when put into poſſeſſion thereof. Theſe and other ſimilar leſſons they might learn from their own rebellions, and ſubmiſſions; and from all the Lord's judgments and mercies towards them: and if we duly attend thereto, we may learn like uſeful leſſons, for our warning, encouragement, and eſtabliſhment in the faith.

Before Chriſt 1490. *Before Chriſt* 1490.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. God's command to number Iſrael, 1—16. *2d. The performance of it; with the number of each tribe, and the ſum total,* 17—46. *3d. The Levites not numbered with the reſt, being to ſerve at the tabernacle,* 47—54.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, in the wilderneſs of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the firſt *day* of the ſecond month, in the ſecond year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, ſaying,

2 Take ye the ſum of all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, with the number of *their* names, every male by their poll;

3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Iſrael: thou and Aaron ſhall number them by their armies.

4 And with you there ſhall be a man of every tribe, every one head of the houſe of his fathers.

5 And theſe *are* the names of the men that ſhall ſtand with you: Of *the tribe of* Reuben; Elizur, the ſon of Shedeur.

6 Of Simeon; Shelumiel, the ſon of Zuriſhaddai.

7 Of Judah; Nahſhon, the ſon of Amminadab.

8 Of Iſſachar; Nathaneel, the ſon of Zuar.

9 Of Zebulun; Eliab, the ſon of Helon.

10 Of the children of Joſeph: of Ephraim; Eliſhama, the ſon of Ammihud: of Manaſſeh; Gamaliel, the ſon of Pedahzur.

11 Of Benjamin; Abidan, the ſon of Gideoni.

12 Of Dan; Ahiezer, the ſon of Ammiſhaddai.

13 Of Aſher; Pagiel, the ſon of Ocran.

14 Of Gad; Eliaſaph, the ſon of Deuel.

15 Of Naphtali; Ahira, the ſon of Enan.

16 Theſe *were* the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of their fathers, heads of thouſands in Iſrael.

17 And Moſes and Aaron took theſe men which are expreſſed by *their* names:

18 And they aſſembled all the congregation together on the firſt *day* of the ſecond month;

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 2. *Take ye the ſum,* &c.] Though the ſum total in this chapter be exactly the ſame with that which is mentioned before, (*Ex.* c. xxxviii. v. 25—28.) the numbering cannot be the ſame: for that was before the conſtruction of the tabernacle, which was ſet up on the firſt day of the firſt month; and the baſes were formed of the ſilver collected upon that occaſion; whereas this was ordered on the firſt day of the ſecond month. The Levites were plainly exempted both from the tribute, and from the war: none were here numbered who were unſerviceable, whether through age, or infirmities; but as "there was "not one feeble perſon among their tribes," when they left Egypt, we may ſuppoſe there were very few at this time. The people are reckoned in even numbers, no leſs ſum than fifty being mentioned, and that but in one inſtance. Probably they either had been before, or were now ranked under rulers of thouſands, of hundreds, and of fifties; and were regiſtered accordingly, with the omiſſion of the odd numbers: and the alterations had been ſo few ſince the former account was taken, that it made no difference in the round ſum of thouſands and hundreds.—They were numbered to illuſtrate the divine faithfulneſs in thus increaſing the ſeed of Jacob: to prepare the way for their regular encampment and government: in order to being trained up for the wars, and conqueſt of Canaan; and to aſcertain their genealogies, in order to the diviſion of the land by lot.

and

and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their poll.

19 As the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo he numbered them in the wilderneſs of Sinai.

20 And the children of Reuben, Iſrael's eldeſt ſon, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, by their poll, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war:

21 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Reuben, *were* forty and ſix thouſand and five hundred.

22 Of the children of Simeon, by their generations after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, thoſe that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their poll, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war:

23 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Simeon *were* fifty and nine thouſand and three hundred.

24 Of the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

25 Thoſe that were numbered of them *even* of the tribe of Gad, *were* forty and five thouſand ſix hundred and fifty.

26 Of the children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

27 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Judah, *were* threeſcore and fourteen thouſand and ſix hundred.

28 Of the children of Iſſachar, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

29 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Iſſachar, *were* fifty and four thouſand and four hundred.

30 Of the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

31 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Zebulun, *were* fifty and ſeven thouſand and four hundred.

32 Of the children of Joſeph, *namely*, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

33 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Ephraim, *were* forty thouſand and five hundred.

34 Of the children of Manaſſeh, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

35 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Manaſſeh, *were* thirty and two thouſand and two hundred.

36 Of the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

37 Thoſe that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Benjamin, *were* thirty and five thouſand and four hundred.

38 Of the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the houſe of

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V. 26, 27.] Jacob had given Judah the pre-eminence in his prophetical bleſſing; and that tribe was now to have the precedency in their encampments: with reference to each of theſe events, God had increaſed them more than any of their brethren: and to more than double the number of ſome of the tribes.—Ephraim, and Manaſſeh, according to the ſame prophecy, were numbered as diſtinct tribes, and Ephraim had the ſuperiority, as was foretold; and Joſeph indeed appears "a fruitful bough:" yet the tribe of Judah was more numerous by one thouſand nine hundred men, than theſe two tribes united.

their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

39 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Dan, *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

40 Of the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

41 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Asher, *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred.

42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war;

43 Those that were numbered of them, *even* of the tribe of Naphtali, *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

44 These *are* those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered, and the princes of Israel, *being* twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.

45 So were all those that were numbered of the children of Israel, by the house of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel;

46 Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty.

47 But the Levites, after the tribe of their fathers, were not numbered among them.

48 For the LORD had spoken unto Moses, saying,

49 Only thou shalt not number the tribe of Levi, neither take the sum of them among the children of Israel;

50 But thou shalt appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of testimony, and over all the vessels thereof, and over all things that *belong* to it: they shall bear the tabernacle, and all the vessels thereof, and they shall minister unto it, and shall encamp round about the tabernacle.

51 And when the tabernacle setteth forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be pitched, the Levites shall set it up: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.

52 And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts.

53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the tabernacle of testimony, that there be no wrath upon the congregation of the children of Israel: and the Levites shall keep the charge of the tabernacle of testimony.

54 And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

CHAP.

V. 53. *No wrath*, &c.] As there would be, if the service of the sanctuary were neglected; or if the people indiscriminately entered into the tabernacle; or attempted to remove it, when they marched.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we observe the faithfulness of God to his promises however large, and however improbable the performance might appear: we may take courage in expecting and praying for the accomplishment of those, which yet remain to be fulfilled to ourselves, and to the church of God. Whilst we reflect with astonishment on the manner in which this immense multitude of men, besides women, children, and strangers, were fed, watered, and provided for in the wilderness: we may learn to trust the Lord for such things, as are needful for us, and our families: and when we recollect how soon, and in what manner their carcases fell in the wilderness; we may be reminded to revere the awful justice of God; to prepare for death, which continually is making such ravages: and to repent of, and depart from sin, which produces such fatal effects.—We here also see, as in a glass, the true Israel of God, a number, which no man can number, yet all known by name, and written in the book of life by the captain of our salvation: who are his willing subjects, nor "despise "dominion," whether of magistrates or ministers, as acting by commission from him: who are men of peace; yet marshalled, armed, and prepared for battle; and are daily assaulted, whilst on earth, by many enemies; but under the command and protection of their captain, shall finally, one after another, be all crowned as conquerors.—Nor are ministers discharged from this war; but must be careful "not "to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, that they "may please him, who hath chosen them to be soldiers," yea officers in his army; and they must learn "to endure "hardship as good soldiers." If they are exempted from

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CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. The divine commandment, concerning the Iſraelites encampments on every ſide of, and their marching before, and behind the tabernacle, in four ſquadrons, each under it's appointed captain, 1—33. *2d. Their ready obedience,* 34.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

2 Every man of the children of Iſrael ſhall pitch by his own ſtandard, with the enſign of their father's houſe: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation ſhall they pitch.

3 And on the eaſt ſide, toward the riſing of the ſun, ſhall they of the ſtandard of the camp of Judah pitch, throughout their armies: and Nahſhon the ſon of Amminadab *ſhall be* captain of the children of Judah.

4 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered of them, *were* threeſcore and fourteen thouſand and ſix hundred.

5 And thoſe that do pitch next unto him *ſhall be* the tribe of Iſſachar: and Nethaneel the ſon of Zuar *ſhall be* captain of the children of Iſſachar.

6 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered thereof, *were* fifty and four thouſand and four hundred.

7 *Then* the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the ſon of Helon *ſhall be* captain of the children of Zebulun.

8 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered thereof, *were* fifty and ſeven thouſand and four hundred.

9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah *were* an hundred thouſand and fourſcore thouſand and ſix thouſand and four hundred throughout their armies: theſe ſhall firſt ſet forth.

10 On the ſouth ſide *ſhall be* the ſtandard of the camp of Reuben, according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben *ſhall be* Elizur, the ſon of Shedeur.

11 And his hoſt, and thoſe that were numbered

ſecular concerns, it is in order that they may be the more given up to the ſtudy and preaching of the word of God, and prayer, which are the chief weapons of their warfare; by means of which they may endeavour to avert the wrath of God from the people. As Chriſtians are ſeparated from the world: ſo miniſters ſhould be ſtill more detached from it's purſuits, and employments, and "examples to the "flock:" "Not," ſays Mr. Henry, "affecting to ſeem "*greater*, but aiming to be really *better*, every way *better* "than others."

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 2. *Far off about the tabernacle,* &c.] They encamped in four grand diviſions with the tabernacle in the centre: yet at ſome diſtance, as a token of their awe and reverence. This was in reality their glory, and defence; and yet they were poſted, as if they were the guardians of it; and no enemy could approach it, without forcing their way through the hoſts of Iſrael. Thus, though our religion be indeed *our* protection: yet our duty is to ſupport *it's* cauſe and intereſt, with our whole power, and ability.—This encampment is computed to have framed a moveable city of twelve miles ſquare: and many think that the door of every tent faced the tabernacle, that thence they might worſhip towards this token of God's preſence upon a mercy ſeat.

V. 3. *Judah,* &c.] The tribe of Judah, from which Chriſt ſprang, was appointed to the higheſt ſtation, and under them were ranked the tribes of Iſſachar and Zebulun, Judah's younger brethren by the ſame mother.—The tribe of Reuben, Jacob's eldeſt ſon, though degraded, was appointed to lead the ſecond ſquadron, under whom ranked the tribe of Simeon his younger brother, and that of Gad, the eldeſt ſon of Zilpah, whom Leah gave to Jacob to wife.—The three tribes deſcended from Rachel formed the third ſquadron: and the three other tribes deſcended from the concubines formed the fourth, under the command of a captain of the tribe of Dan; concerning whom Jacob propheſied; "Dan ſhall judge his people, as one of the "tribes of Iſrael."—Thus the whole arrangement was formed in evident wiſdom, as well as uncontrolable ſovereignty, ſo as to conduce to peace, and perpetuate relative affection.

V. 5. *Nethaneel.*] The remembrance of the God of their fathers, which many of the Iſraelites retained, during their bondage in Egypt, appears from the names, which they gave their children: As *Nethaneel,* which ſignifies, *the gift of God: Eliab, my God a father: Elizur, my God a rock: Shelumiel, God my peace: Eliaſaph, my God hath added: Eliſhamah, my God hath heard,* &c.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord by his over-ruling providence, doth as certainly, though with leſs obſervation, appoint the bounds of our habitation, and our rank in life; as he did the encampments of Iſrael in the wilderneſs. It is therefore our duty, and intereſt, to be contented with our place, and to endeavour to occupy it in a proper manner; without attempting to deſert it, or wiſhing to change it; without envying, or murmuring: without ambition, or covetouſneſs.—And if he, "who ordereth all things after the counſel of his own "will," hath allotted our ſtation near to his word and ordinances; and if moreover he has given us precious faith in the divine Redeemer, we have abundant reaſon to be thankful

bered thereof, *were* forty and six thousand and five hundred.

12 And those which pitch by him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

13 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.

14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Reuel.

15 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty.

16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben *were* an hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies: and they shall set forth in the second rank.

17 Then the tabernacle of the congregation shall set forward, with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp so shall they set forward, every man in his place, by their standards.

18 On the west side *shall be* the standard of the camp of Ephraim, according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud.

19 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* forty thousand and five hundred.

20 And by him *shall be* the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pelahzur.

21 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* thirty and two thousand and two hundred.

22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

23 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* thirty and five thousand and four hundred.

24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim *were* an hundred thousand and eight thousand and an hundred, throughout their armies: and they shall go forward in the third rank.

25 The standard of the camp of Dan *shall be* on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

26 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred.

27 And those that encamp by him *shall be* the tribe of Asher: and the captain of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran.

28 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred.

29 Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira, the son of Enan.

30 And his host, and those that were numbered of them, *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

31 All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan *were* an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred:

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thankful for such distinguishing grace; and though in a wilderness, in a cottage, in poverty, we have no reason, and surely we shall have no disposition, to envy those, who possess stately mansions, elegant gardens, or cultivated estates; but have no lot in Israel, no inheritance in Canaan.—Our God is a God of order, and a God of peace: and commands that all things in his church should be done "decently, and in order;" and "that all be done "in peace."—It would be well if in attempting to accomplish the former purpose, according to their own idea of decency, and order, all denominations of Christians had not too much lost sight of the latter injunction. It is desirable that all true Christians should be of one judgment: but if that cannot be obtained, it is of great importance that they be of *one heart:* and that, like these four squadrons of Israel, they live at peace with one another; and in their different encampments surround the ark, as all of one family, all embarked in one common interest, and all marching to the same heavenly Canaan: and that they be upon their guard against the suggestions of those enemies, who would persuade them to quarrel about their different ensigns, and to draw the sword of war against their brethren; instead of being valiant for the truth, and against the common enemies of their religion.—Then would the church be both comely, and also terrible as an army with banners; and not the less so, for being divided into different squadrons, encamped or marching separately; provided each division vied with all the others, which should be most zealous

hundred: they ſhall go hindmoſt with their ſtandards.

32 Theſe *are* thoſe which were numbered of the children of Iſrael, by the houſe of their fathers: all thoſe that were numbered of the camps, throughout their hoſts, *were* ſix hundred thouſand and three thouſand and five hundred and fifty.

33 But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Iſrael; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

34 And the children of Iſrael did according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes: ſo they pitched by their ſtandards, and ſo they ſet forward, every one after their families, according to the houſe of their fathers.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1ſt. Some particulars concerning Aaron and his ſons, 1—4. 2d. The tribe of Levi given them for aſſiſtants, inſtead of the firſt-born, 5—13. 3d. The Levites numbered, and their ſeveral poſts and charges aſſigned them by the command of God, 14—39. 4th. The actual exchange of the Levites, and the redemption of the ſupernumerary firſt-born, 40—51.

THESE alſo *are* the generations of Aaron and Moſes, in the day *that* the LORD ſpake with Moſes in mount Sinai.

2 And theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Aaron; Nadab the firſt-born, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

3 Theſe *are* the names of the ſons of Aaron, the prieſts which were anointed, whom he conſecrated to miniſter in the prieſt's office.

4 And Nadab and Abihu died before the LORD, when they offered ſtrange fire before the LORD in the wilderneſs of Sinai, and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar miniſtered in the prieſt's office in the ſight of Aaron their father.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

6 Bring the tribe of Levi near, and preſent them before Aaron the prieſt, that they may miniſter unto him.

7 And they ſhall keep his charge, and the charge of the whole congregation, before the tabernacle of the congregation, to do the ſervice of the tabernacle.

8 And they ſhall keep all the inſtruments of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the children of Iſrael, to do the ſervice of the tabernacle.

9 And thou ſhalt give the Levites unto Aaron, and to his ſons: they *are* wholly given unto him out of the children of Iſrael.

10 And thou ſhalt appoint Aaron and his ſons, and they ſhall wait on their prieſt's office: and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death.

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zealous for the ark, and for the cauſe of God, and truth; and moſt careful to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—Let then brotherly love continue: and may the Lord proſper the attempts, and increaſe the numbers of thoſe, who endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *The generations*, &c.] Moſes' ſons are not at all mentioned, being numbered amongſt the ordinary Levites; by a ſingular inſtance of diſintereſted moderation, and ſubmiſſion to the appointment of God: who, in proof of the divine legation of his ſervant, willed him to act in a manner ſo contrary to all other eminent men, who almoſt univerſally ſeek the advancement of their poſterity. Aaron is here firſt mentioned, becauſe the honour of the prieſthood was conferred upon him.

V. 4. *In the ſight*, &c.] That is according to his direction, that, by attending to his prudent counſel, they might be preſerved from the ſin, and puniſhment of their brethren: and their regular, and reverential miniſtrations would afford much conſolation to Aaron, after his affliction.

V. 5—10.] There was now much work to be done, and only three prieſts to perform the whole: ſome aſſiſtants they muſt have to attend to the more ordinary ſervices, whilſt *they* ſprinkled the blood, burnt the fat, offered incenſe, &c: eſpecially when the tabernacle was to be taken down, and carried with them in their march. That no improper perſons, none, who were not called of God, might be ſet to work, the tribe of Levi was on this occaſion ſet apart for this ſervice. To this tribe Moſes and Aaron belonged: it had been ſignalized by it's zeal againſt idolatry in the matter of the golden calf: and was by far the ſmalleſt tribe of all: and in ſhort it ſeemed good in the ſight of God to chooſe this tribe to approach to him, in preference to the others. Several intimations had before been given of this purpoſe of God: and the Levites ſeem not to have been included amongſt thoſe, who paid the half ſhekel, any more than amongſt thoſe, who were numbered for ſoldiers; but at this time it was more fully, and expreſsly declared.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
12 And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel, instead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel; therefore the Levites shall be mine,
13 Because all the first-born *are* mine; *for*, on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast; mine they shall be: I *am* the LORD.
14 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying,
15 Number the children of Levi, after the house of their fathers, by their families: every male from a month old and upward shalt thou number them.
16 And Moses numbered them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.
17 And these were the sons of Levi, by their names; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari.
18 And these *are* the names of the sons of Gershon, by their families; Libni, and Shimei.
19 And the sons of Kohath, by their families; Amram, and Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel.
20 And the sons of Merari, by their families; Mahli, and Mushi: these *are* the families of the Levites, according to the house of their fathers.
21 Of Gershon *was* the family of the Libnites, and the family of the Shimites: these *are* the families of the Gershonites.
22 Those that were numbered of them according to the number of all the males from a month old and upward, *even* those that were numbered of them, *were* seven thousand and five hundred.
23 The families of the Gershonites shall pitch behind the tabernacle westward.
24 And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites *shall be* Eliasaph the son of Lael.
25 And the charge of the sons of Gershon, in the tabernacle of the congregation, *shall be* the tabernacle, and the tent, the covering thereof, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.
26 And the hangings of the court, and the curtain for the door of the court, which *is* by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and the cords of it, for all the service thereof.
27 And of Kohath *was* the family of the Amramites, and the family of the Izeharites, and the family of the Hebronites: and the family of the Uzzielites: these *are* the families of the Kohathites.
28 In the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* eight thousand and six hundred, keeping the charge of the sanctuary.

V. 12, 13.] The first-born in any company of people must in general amount to the proportion of one in eight or ten at least; whereas the number mentioned, (v. 42.) probably was not one in fifty of all the males young and old. For there were above 600,000 adults, and perhaps as many under age. Some therefore suppose that none were numbered, but such as were unmarried, and so not become heads of families themselves; and that the first-born Egyptians also, who were destroyed, were thus accounted: but even these must have formed a much larger portion. I rather accede to their sentiment, who suppose that none were numbered, but those, who had been born, after the destruction of the first-born of Egypt: and this indeed seems the meaning of the law, (*Ex.* c. xiii. v. 2.) which referred to the future, and not to the past; and it is evident that the firstlings of the cattle were thus reckoned. Indeed 45,000 of both sexes is a vast number of first-born children within the space of one year: but we shall find it no ways improbable that amongst 1,200,000 persons of both sexes, who were above twenty years of age, (and many might marry much younger than that age,) there should be within that time near 50,000 marriages; that is about the twelfth part of the company of marriageable persons. Especially when we consider that multitudes might be inclined to marry, when they found they were about to enjoy liberty: and that the promises made to Israel especially respected a very rapid increase of their numbers, and that there would be a very great blessing upon them in this respect in consequence of it. If we admit of this solution, the first born Israelites were all unfit for service, on this emergency; and as they were the heirs of their several families; when they were grown up, they would not probably have been very willing to be servants to the priests: and consequently the change would be as acceptable to the relations of those, who were set aside, as to those, who were substituted in their stead, (ch. xviii. v. 2.)

Yet it seems, that, though the Levites, and their posterity were thus dedicated to God, it was only in lieu of the first-born at that time amongst them: and that the law concerning the presentation and redemption of the first born was in force through all succeeding generations, until the days of Christ, (*Luke*, c. ii. v. 23.)

29 The families of the ſons of Kohath ſhall pitch on the ſide of the tabernacle ſouthward.

30 And the chief of the houſe of the father of the families of the Kohathites *ſhall be* Elizaphan the ſon of Uzziel.

31 And their charge *ſhall be* the ark, and the table, and the candleſtick, and the altars, and the veſſels of the ſanctuary wherewith they miniſter, and the hanging, and all the ſervice thereof.

32 And Eleazar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt *ſhall be* chief over the chief of the Levites, *and have* the overſight of them that keep the charge of the ſanctuary.

33 Of Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites, and the family of the Muſhites: theſe *are* the families of Merari.

34 And thoſe that were numbered of them, according to the number of all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* ſix thouſand and two hundred.

35 And the chief of the houſe of the father of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel, the ſon of Abihail: *theſe* ſhall pitch on the ſide of the tabernacle northward.

36 And *under* the cuſtody and charge of the ſons of Merari *ſhall be* the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and the ſockets thereof, and all the veſſels thereof, and all that ſerveth thereto,

37 And the pillars of the court round about, and their ſockets, and their pins, and their cords.

38 But thoſe that encamp before the tabernacle toward the eaſt, *even* before the tabernacle of the congregation eaſtward, *ſhall be* Moſes, and Aaron, and his ſons, keeping the charge of the ſanctuary for the charge of the children of Iſrael: and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death.

39 All that were numbered of the Levites, which Moſes and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, throughout their families, all the males, from a month old and upward, *were* twenty and two thouſand.

40 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Number all the firſt-born of the males of the children of Iſrael, from a month old and upward, and take the number of their names.

41 And thou ſhalt take the Levites for me, (I *am* the LORD,) inſtead of all the firſt-born

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V. 39.] The ſum total was 22,300: but the 300 are ſuppoſed to have been the firſt-born of the Levites, who were already devoted to the Lord: and we muſt acknowledge a peculiar interpoſition of Providence in this near coincidence in the numbers of the Levites, and of the firſt-born. Either they determined by lot, who were to pay the redemption-money, and for whom the Levites were to be accepted: or it was paid by a common tax: or, as ſome think, they began with the eldeſt, and ſo the youngeſt, not being changed, paid the money.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt we conſider Jeſus, our great High Prieſt, appointed of the Father, and entruſted with the charge of the ſanctuary, and of the whole congregation; and keeping that charge with unremitting attention, entire faithfulneſs, love, and power: we ſhould recollect, that his miniſters, as preſented unto him, and miniſtering before him, have under him a ſolemn charge committed to them alſo: they are called upon to wait in their office; to ſerve the Lord therein with reverence, to offer no ſtrange fire, doing nothing of their own head, or in their own ſpirit; and with all diligence and fidelity to follow the inſtructions, and copy the example of their Lord. But it is of the utmoſt importance that each ſhould know his own poſt, and duty; that there may no part of the work be neglected, no interference, and no occaſion for envy, ambition, or diſcontent. Nor can any ſervice required by ſuch a maſter be either mean, or hard: for he will put honour upon the faithful in the loweſt ſituation; and will provide aſſiſtance, where the work is too laborious. They alſo, who are not engaged in the miniſtry, have a work to do, and a charge to keep; and muſt remember that all men are the Lord's by creation; and all true Chriſtians are his by redemption: and that, as the miniſtry was appointed for their benefit, they are required to ſtrengthen the hands, and to encourage the hearts of thoſe, who miniſter before the Lord in their behalf. Bleſſed be God we may all at preſent come even into the holieſt without danger of death; nay with aſſurance of acceptance and life eternal, if we come by faith in Jeſus Chriſt. Still however we muſt regret that the Lord's people form ſo ſmall a proportion of the whole multitude of mankind; and ſhould be reminded to pray for the ſending forth of more faithful miniſters; for when they are increaſed it is a hopeful ſign, that the Lord has much work to do, in increaſing his church. Nor let us forget, that the children, though unfit for ſervice, were numbered as part of this holy tribe; "for of ſuch is the kingdom of God:" but whilſt we deſire that our offſpring ſhould be numbered amongſt the Lord's peculiar people, and excel in holineſs; let us, after the example of Moſes, be indifferent about every other diſtinction, either for them, or for ourſelves.

among

among the children of Israel; and the cattle of the Levites, instead of all the firstlings among the cattle of the children of Israel.

42 And Moses numbered, as the LORD commanded him, all the first-born among the children of Israel.

43 And all the first-born males, by the number of names, from a month old and upward, of those that were numbered of them, were twenty and two thousand two hundred and threescore and thirteen.

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45 Take the Levites instead of all the first-born among the children of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle, and the Levites shall be mine: I *am* the LORD.

46 And for those that are to be redeemed of the two hundred and threescore and thirteen of the first-born of the children of Israel, which are more than the Levites;

47 Thou shalt even take five shekels apiece by the poll; after the shekel of the sanctuary shalt thou take *them:* (the shekel *is* twenty gerahs:)

48 And thou shalt give the money wherewith the odd number of them is to be redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons.

49 And Moses took the redemption-money of them that were over and above them that were redeemed by the Levites.

50 Of the first-born of the children of Israel took he the money; a thousand three hundred and threescore and five *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

51 And Moses gave the money of them that were redeemed unto Aaron and to his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. God's command to number those Levites, who were fit for service, and to assign them their several offices in the removal of the tabernacle, with special directions relative thereto, 1—33. *2d. The performance of this command,* 34—49.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

2 Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers;

3 From thirty years old and upward, even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 This *shall be* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation *about* the most holy things.

5 And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come, and his sons, and they shall take down the covering vail, and cover the ark of testimony with it;

6 And shall put thereon the covering of badgers skins, and shall spread over *it* a cloth wholly of blue, and shall put in the staves thereof.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 3. *From thirty years*, &c.] The people were numbered for war from twenty years of age; but the Levites were not numbered for the service of the sanctuary, till they were thirty years of age. Yet this had special reference to the charge, and burden of removing the tabernacle: for they were admitted as probationers at twenty-five, (ch. viii. v. 24—26.) and in David's time, when the work was more extensive, but not so heavy, they were admitted at twenty years old (1 *Chron.* c. xxiii. v. 24—28.) Jesus Christ, and probably John the Baptist, deferred entering on their public work, till they were thirty years of age. The Levites were also to have an honourable exemption from this employment after twenty years service, though they were still to be occupied in one way or other, (ch. viii. v. 26.) Neither of these laws are binding in the letter of them upon the ministers of the gospel, but both afford much useful *practical* instruction, as will be seen in its proper place.

V. 5. *When the camp setteth forward*, &c.] The law, prohibiting any but the High Priest, one day in the year, to enter into the most holy place, must needs admit of an exception, whilst they were continually removing in the wilderness: that exception therefore was expressly appointed; and the directions given, relating thereto, must be religiously observed, or it could not be safely done. Uzzah lost his life, and David was greatly discomposed in spirit, through inattention in this matter long after, (2 *Sam.* c. vi. v. 6—11. 1 *Chron.* c. xiii. v. 9—14. ch. xv. v. 1, 2. 12—15.)

V. 6. *The covering*, &c.] These coverings were not only for security, and decent respect; but for concealment: and not only marked the reverence due to holy things, but the mysteriousness of the things signified by those types, and the darkness of that dispensation. Some suppose that the cloth of blue represented the azure firmament, which interposes betwixt us and the majesty of heaven.

7 And upon the table of ſhew-bread they ſhall ſpread a cloth of blue, and put thereon the diſhes, and the ſpoons, and the bowls, and covers to cover withal: and the continual bread ſhall be thereon.

8 And they ſhall ſpread upon them a cloth of ſcarlet, and cover the ſame with a covering of badgers ſkins, and ſhall put in the ſtaves thereof.

9 And they ſhall take a cloth of blue, and cover the candleſtick of the light, and his lamps, and his tongs, and his ſnuff-diſhes, and all the oil-veſſels thereof, wherewith they miniſter unto it.

10 And they ſhall put it, and all the veſſels thereof, within a covering of badgers ſkins, and ſhall put *it* upon a bar.

11 And upon the golden altar they ſhall ſpread a cloth of blue, and cover it with a covering of badgers ſkins, and ſhall put to the ſtaves thereof.

12 And they ſhall take all the inſtruments of miniſtry, wherewith they miniſter in the ſanctuary, and put *them* in a cloth of blue, and cover them with a covering of badgers ſkins, and ſhall put *them* on a bar.

13 And they ſhall take away the aſhes from the altar, and ſpread a purple cloth thereon:

14 And they ſhall put upon it all the veſſels thereof, wherewith they miniſter about it, *even* the cenſers, the fleſh-hooks, and the ſhovels, and the baſons, all the veſſels of the altar; and they ſhall ſpread upon it a covering of badgers ſkins, and put to the ſtaves of it.

15 And when Aaron and his ſons have made an end of covering the ſanctuary, and all the veſſels of the ſanctuary, as the camp is to ſet forward; after that, the ſons of Kohath ſhall come to bear *it:* but they ſhall not touch *any* holy thing, leſt they die. Theſe *things are* the burden of the ſons of Kohath in the tabernacle of the congregation.

16 And to the office of Eleazar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt *pertaineth* the oil for the light, and the ſweet incenſe, and the daily meat-offering, and the anointing oil, *and* the overſight of all the tabernacle, and of all that therein *is*, in the ſanctuary, and in the veſſels thereof.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

18 Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites:

19 But thus do unto them, that they may live, and not die, when they approach unto the moſt holy things; Aaron and his ſons ſhall go in, and appoint them every one to his ſervice, and to his burden.

20 But they ſhall not go in to ſee when the holy things are covered leſt they die.

21 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

22 Take alſo the ſum of the ſons of Gerſhon, throughout the houſes of their fathers, by their families:

23 From thirty years old and upward unto fifty years old ſhalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the ſervice, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation.

24 This *is* the ſervice of the families of the Gerſhonites, to ſerve, and for burdens.

25 And they ſhall bear the curtains of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle of the congregation, his covering, and the covering of the badgers ſkins that *is* above upon it, and the hanging for the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

26 And the hangings of the court, and the hanging for the door of the gate of the court, which *is* by the tabernacle, and by the altar round about, and their cords, and all the inſtruments of their ſervice, and all that is made for them; ſo ſhall they ſerve.

27 At the appointment of Aaron and his ſons ſhall be all the ſervice of the ſons of the Gerſhonites, in all their burdens, and in all

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V. 13, 14.] The ſacred fire was thus taken care of, and removed, as well as the brazen altar, both being thus covered from view by this purple cloth.

V. 18. *Cut ye not off*, &c.] Eleazar, and the prieſts, would be chargeable with the death of the Kohathites, if they failed to give them proper cautions and directions; or permitted them to gaze irreverently or curiouſly upon the holy things: which they might carry, but muſt not ſee. V. 25. (*See* ch. iii. v. 25.)

their

their ſervice: and ye ſhall appoint unto them in charge all their burdens.

28 This *is* the ſervice of the families of the ſons of Gerſhon in the tabernacle of the congregation: and their charge *ſhall be* under the hand of Ithamar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt.

29 As for the ſons of Merari, thou ſhalt number them after their families, by the houſe of their fathers:

30 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old ſhalt thou number them, every one that entereth into the ſervice to do the work of the tabernacle of the congregation.

31 And this *is* the charge of their burden according to all their ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation; the boards of the tabernacle, and the bars thereof, and the pillars thereof, and ſockets thereof,

32 And the pillars of the court round about, and their ſockets, and their pins, and their cords, with all their inſtruments, and with all their ſervice: and by name ye ſhall reckon the inſtruments of the charge of their burden.

33 This *is* the ſervice of the families of the ſons of Merari, according to all their ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation, under the hand of Ithamar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt.

34 And Moſes and Aaron, and the chief of the congregation, numbered the ſons of the Kohathites, after their families, and after the houſe of their fathers;

35 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the ſervice for the work in the tabernacle in the congregation.

36 And thoſe that were numbered of them, by their families, were two thouſand ſeven hundred and fifty.

37 Theſe *were* they that were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all that might do ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation, which Moſes and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moſes.

38 And thoſe that were numbered of the ſons of Gerſhon, throughout their families, and by the houſe of their fathers,

39 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the ſervice for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation;

40 Even thoſe that were numbered of them, throughout their families, by the houſe of their fathers, were two thouſand and ſix hundred and thirty.

41 Theſe *are* they that were numbered of the families of the ſons of Gerſhon, of all that might do ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation, whom Moſes and Aaron did number, according to the commandment of the LORD.

42 And thoſe that were numbered of the families of the ſons of Merari, throughout their families, by the houſe of their fathers,

43 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that entereth into the ſervice, for the work in the tabernacle of the congregation;

44 Even thoſe that were numbered of them, after

V. 44. *Three thouſand*, &c.] The family of Merari contained a leſs number in the whole, than either of the other families in the tribe of Levi; yet there was amongſt them the moſt effective men, and they were charged with the heavieſt part of the ſanctuary. The ſum total of the effective Levites was very ſmall, compared with that of the other tribes; yet there would be more by far than could at once be employed in this ſervice. But they might carry in turns, and eaſe one another, and thus do the whole expeditiouſly, and chearfully. They would alſo have their own tents to remove, and their own families to take care of.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though the miniſter of the Lord muſt not ſtrive, or war with carnal weapons, yet he muſt enter into "the hoſt of the Lord," and both in his perſonal conflict againſt ſin, and ſatan, and in doing the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, muſt boldly fight the good fight of faith, with the proper weapons of his warfare, ſound doctrine, fervent prayer, and an holy example. So much gravity, prudence, humility, ripeneſs of judgment, and experience; ſo much meekneſs and patience are neceſſary for the proper performance of the miniſterial duty, to the glory of God, to the edification of the church, and to the ſilencing of gainſayers: and miniſters are expoſed to ſo many temptations from the ſmiles, and from the frowns of men; from popularity, and from oppoſition: that it is much more adviſeable for thoſe, who are intended for this ſacred ſervice, to ſpend much previous time in retirement, ſtudy, meditation, and communion with God; that they may come forth well prepared

after their families, were three thouſand and two hundred.

45 Theſe *be* thoſe that were numbered of the families of the ſons of Merari, whom Moſes and Aaron numbered, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moſes.

46 All thoſe that were numbered of the Levites, whom Moſes and Aaron and the chief of Iſrael numbered, after their families, and after the houſe of their fathers;

47 From thirty years old and upward even unto fifty years old, every one that came to do the ſervice of the miniſtry, and the ſervice of the burden in the tabernacle of the congregation;

48 Even thoſe that were numbered of them, were eight thouſand and five hundred and fourſcore.

49 According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moſes, every one according to his ſervice, and according to his burden: thus were they numbered of him, as the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. A command to exclude the lepers, and unclean from the camp, v. 1—4. 2d. The law of reſtitution repeated, and enlarged upon, v. 5—10. 3d. The law for the trial of a woman ſuſpected by her huſband of adultery, v. 11—31.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Command the children of Iſrael, that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an iſſue, and whoſoever is defiled by the dead:

3 Both male and female ſhall ye put out, without the camp ſhall ye put them; that

prepared and furniſhed for uſefulneſs, when a proper occaſion is afforded; than that they ſhould, by an indiſcreet, and hurtful zeal be allowed, or encouraged to violate the apoſtle's rule; (1 *Tim.* c. iii. v. 6.) From the neglect of attending to this caution, many miſchiefs have ariſen both to individuals, and to the cauſe of God; nor is that time loſt, which is ſpent in preparation for this important ſervice. However when men are entered, and have health and ſtrength, and work aſſigned them, they ſhould loſe no time, nor miſs any opportunities of uſefulneſs; for ſuch loſt opportunities may be regretted, but cannot be recalled. But when the faithful ſervants of God grow in years, and their natural vigour abates, they muſt not be cenſured, if they labour not ſo much as they formerly did, eſpecially in thoſe ſervices which require bodily exertion: and if it pleaſe God to lay them quite aſide by ſickneſs, and infirmity; yet as they ſtill ſerve the church of God by their prayers, and examples of faith, patience and obedience, they are ſtill entitled to reſpect, and maintenance from it: they ought not indeed, and will not deſire to ceaſe from labour, whilſt they are capable of it: but they muſt not murmur, if they are thus diſcharged, or if they ſee others "increaſe whilſt "they decreaſe:" for the Lord will do his work by a ſucceſſion of ſervants; will ſhew them all in their turns, that he can do without them; and that, the work is all in his hand; and that when he employs them, he does not ſtand in need of them, but can eaſily ſend out others in their ſtead, when they are no longer ſerviceable. Though we are not under the comparative obſcurity, and ſeverity of the Moſaic diſpenſation; yet we ſhould remember that heavenly things muſt be treated with reverence; and muſt not be curiouſly, contemptuouſly, or preſumptuouſly inquired into: nor is this only to be noted, in regard to the greater, and more awful myſteries of religion, but with reſpect to every thing thereto pertaining; for it is very dangerous to attempt being wiſe above what is written, or to intrude into thoſe things, over which God hath purpoſely thrown a vail; and the miniſters of God, and thoſe who have attained to a ſuperior degree of influence, or authority, ſhould caution, and hinder their juniors, or the people from ſuch intruſion. Indeed the rule holds good in all things, and we ought to prevent others from committing ſin to the utmoſt of our ability, and as far as conſiſts with other relative duties; and are acceſſary to the guilt, and to the ruin of thoſe, who periſh through our neglect. But though the Lord is great, and holy, and though vengeance belongeth unto him; and though we are mean, polluted, and guilty creatures; we may yet approach him with ſafety, comfort, and confidence, in the way, which he hath opened, in the means, which he hath appointed, and according to the directions, which he hath preſcribed: but not otherwiſe. In this moveable world changes await us; but wherever we remove, we muſt be ſure to take our God, and our religion with us, to prefer his houſe, and worſhip, to our temporal intereſts, and to ſerve him with the prime of our health and ſtrength. Ere long this earthly houſe of our tabernacle will be taken down: but if it hath been an habitation of God through the Spirit; this great and ſolemn removal will be all under the hand of Jeſus, our merciful High Prieſt; he will give his angels a charge to convey our ſouls inviſibly to glory; and all the conſtituent parts of the tabernacle ſhall, by his power, be brought together to heaven, and there raiſed up again incorruptible, immortal, and glorious, and ſo ſhall we be ever with the Lord; therefore let us quicken, and comfort ourſelves, and each other with theſe words. (1 *Theſ.* c. iv. v. 17, 18. *Rom.* c. viii. v. 11.)

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—4.] The camps of Iſrael being now formed, with the ſanctuary of the Lord in the centre of them; in honour of him, who thus dwelt amongſt them, the laws before given, (*Lev.* c. xiii. xiv. xv.) were ordered to be put in immediate execution.

they defile not their camps, in the midſt whereof I dwell.

4 And the children of Iſrael did ſo, and put them out without the camp: as the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſo did the children of Iſrael.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

6 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, When a man or woman ſhall commit any ſin that men commit, to do a treſpaſs againſt the LORD, and that perſon be guilty;

7 Then they ſhall confeſs their ſin which they have done: and he ſhall recompenſe his treſpaſs with the principal thereof, and add unto it the fifth *part* thereof, and give *it* unto *him* againſt whom he hath treſpaſſed.

8 But if the man have no kinſman to recompenſe the treſpaſs unto, let the treſpaſs be recompenſed unto the LORD, *even* to the prieſt, beſide the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement ſhall be made for him.

9 And every offering of all the holy things of the children of Iſrael, which they bring unto the prieſt, ſhall be his.

10 And every man's hallowed things ſhall be his: whatſoever any man giveth the prieſt, it ſhall be his.

11 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

12 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, If any man's wife go aſide, and commit a treſpaſs againſt him,

13 And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her huſband, and be kept cloſe, and ſhe be defiled, and *there be* no witneſs againſt her, neither ſhe be taken *with the manner*;

14 And the ſpirit of jealouſy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and ſhe be defiled; or if the ſpirit of jealouſy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and ſhe be not defiled;

15 Then ſhall the man bring his wife unto the prieſt, and he ſhall bring her offering for her, the tenth *part* of an ephah of barley-meal;

V. 6. *When a man*, &c.] Theſe words intimate that men are very prone to ſuch frauds, and that they are very common amongſt them; though every one of them be "a "treſpaſs againſt the Lord," (*Lev.* c. vi. v. 1—7.)

V. 8. *If the man*, &c.] If the perſon injured were dead, or removed to a great diſtance, and had left no near relation, to whom the reſtitution might properly be made; the prieſt was to receive it, when he offered the treſpaſs-offering. Doubtleſs real poverty would excuſe a man from making reſtitution; yet this exception is not made; for men are ready enough to find out excuſes for themſelves, where their own intereſt is concerned. They therefore are not cenſurable, who eſtabliſh general Scripture rules of duty, though they mention not every particular exception; for they are warranted in doing ſo by the word of God. This law ſhews the abſolute neceſſity of reſtitution in one form or other, to the injured perſon, to his relation, to the poor, or to pious uſes; for, as Mr. Henry obſerves, "'tis certain, "while that, which is got by injuſtice, is knowingly re-"tained in the hands, the guilt of the injuſtice remains "upon the conſcience, and is not purged by ſacrifice, or "offering, prayers, or tears; for it is *one*, and the *ſame* "continued act of ſin *perſiſted* in." Some ſay, that this doctrine tends to embarraſs tender conſciences: but be that as it will, it is the doctrine of right reaſon, and of the *word of God*; and ſeems rather calculated to detect hypocrites, and to direct the tender conſcience to a proper conduct, which ſpringing from faith in Chriſt, will make way for inward peace.

V. 9, 10.] This would encourage, and recompenſe the prieſt's conſtant attendance on their work: for it is God's command, though ſeldom man's rule, that the miniſter, who does the moſt work in due manner, ſhould have the beſt maintenance.

V. 12. *If any man's wife*, &c.] This remarkable law would be a powerful preſervative to the wives in Iſrael in the hour of temptation, when opportunity, importunity, and ſecrecy were combined: and would alſo induce them to watch againſt all occaſions of exciting ſuſpicion in the huſband's breaſt. On the other hand it would prevent that cruel treatment, which ſuch ſuſpicions might occaſion, "through the hardneſs of their hearts," when the crime could not be proved, nor the rage of jealouſy allayed: and it would leſſen the number of haſty divorces. It would alſo prevent the guilty from eſcaping with impunity, and the innocent from continuing under injurious ſuſpicions; and in many ways ſubſerve the intereſts of purity and of domeſtic peace, both by always hanging over their heads, as it were, for their warning; and by being at ſome times carried into execution.

V. 13. *No witneſs againſt her*, &c.] When they were detected, and the fact was proved, both the adulterer, and the adultereſs were to be put to death; (*Lev.* c. xx. v. 10.) but when the huſband entertained ſuſpicions, and could not bring proof, he was allowed, and the wife was called upon to make this ſolemn appeal to an heart-ſearching God.

V. 15. *Barley meal*, &c.] This coarſe offering without oil or frankincenſe implied the baſeneſs of the crime, of which the woman was ſuſpected, and the mournful ſtate of the family. It was a memorial, as ſolemnly referring the deciſion to the Lord, and calling upon him to bring the culprit's iniquity to remembrance, and to puniſh it in caſe ſhe were guilty.

meal;

meal; he ſhall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincenſe thereon; for it *is* an offering of jealouſy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 And the prieſt ſhall bring her near, and ſet her before the LORD.

17 And the prieſt ſhall take holy water in an earthen veſſel; and of the duſt that is in the floor of the tabernacle the prieſt ſhall take, and put *it* into the water.

18 And the prieſt ſhall ſet the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which *is* the jealouſy-offering: and the prieſt ſhall have in his hand the bitter water that cauſeth the curſe.

19 And the prieſt ſhall charge her by an oath, and ſay unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou haſt not gone aſide to uncleanneſs *with another*, inſtead of thy huſband, be thou free from this bitter water that cauſeth the curſe:

20 But if thou haſt gone aſide *to another* inſtead of thy huſband, and if thou be defiled, and ſome man hath lain with thee beſide thine huſband;

21 Then the prieſt ſhall charge the woman with an oath of curſing; and the prieſt ſhall ſay unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curſe and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to ſwell:

22 And this water that cauſeth the curſe ſhall go into thy bowels, to make *thy* belly to ſwell, and *thy* thigh to rot. And the woman ſhall ſay, Amen, amen.

23 And the prieſt ſhall write theſe curſes in a book, and he ſhall blot *them* out with the bitter water;

24 And he ſhall cauſe the woman to drink the bitter water that cauſeth the curſe: and the water that cauſeth the curſe ſhall enter into her, *and become* bitter.

25 Then the prieſt ſhall take the jealouſy-offering out of the woman's hand, and ſhall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar.

26 And the prieſt ſhall take an handful of the offering, *even* the memorial thereof, and burn *it* upon the altar, and afterward ſhall cauſe the woman to drink the water.

27 And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it ſhall come to paſs, *that* if ſhe be defiled, and have done treſpaſs againſt her huſband, that the water that cauſeth the curſe ſhall enter into her, *and become* bitter, and her belly ſhall ſwell, and her thigh ſhall rot: and the woman ſhall be a curſe among her people.

28 And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then ſhe ſhall be free, and ſhall conceive ſeed.

29 This *is* the law of jealouſies, when a wife goeth aſide *to another* inſtead of her huſband, and is defiled;

30 Or when the ſpirit of jealouſy cometh upon

V. 17. *Holy water*, &c.] The water, in which the prieſts were uſed to waſh, was to be put into a *mean* earthen veſſel, with duſt of the tabernacle therein, in order for the woman to drink. This implied the diſgrace, which ſhe lay under, and the ſhame to which ſhe would be expoſed, if guilty, as well as the puniſhment, that ſhe would juſtly endure: in which every thing relating to the worſhip of a holy God would, as it were, combine together for her deſtruction, and enter into her bowels with an awful curſe. —This water was called the bitter water, from the bitter effects, which would follow when drank by a guilty perſon.

V. 19. *Inſtead of*, &c.] Or being under the power of thy huſband, that is being a married woman, which formed an aggravation of the crime.

V. 22. *Amen, amen.*] This two-fold ſolemn conſent to this awful appeal to God, referred to both parts of it, and implied a hearty deſire to be dealt with according to her guilt or innocence, and an acknowledgment of the righteouſneſs of God in inflicting this dreadful vengeance upon thoſe, who were guilty. Such an appeal to God could not be made by a guilty perſon, without the moſt infidel hardneſs of heart, and preſumptuous defiance of him. The Jewiſh writers ſay, that if the woman refuſed the oath, and confeſſed her guilt, ſhe was not put to death, but only divorced without a dowry.

V. 23. *In a book*, &c.] That is on a piece of parchment, or ſomewhat uſed for writing on; the writing was waſhed off into the water, as if the curſe were thus transferred to the water, and infuſed therein.

V. 27.] This water could produce no harm by its own natural efficacy, or hurt any innocent perſon. But if any woman added the awful guilt of ſuch perjury to adultery, God would ſupernaturally thus puniſh her. The Jews have a tradition that the adulterer would alſo be ſeized with, and die of a ſimilar diſeaſe; which probably was not unlike in its nature to, though more immediate in its effect than, that

upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and ſhall ſet the woman before the LORD, and the prieſt ſhall execute upon her all this law:

31 Then ſhall the man be guiltleſs from iniquity, and this woman ſhall bear her iniquity.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. The Nazarite's vow, v. 1—8. 2d. The rule of his conduct, in caſe he inadvertently contracted uncleanneſs, v. 9—12. 3d. The ſacrifices to be offered, and the rites to be obſerved at the expiration of his vow, v. 13—21. 4th. The form, in which the prieſts were to bleſs the people, v. 22—27.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

2 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When either man or woman ſhall ſeparate *themſelves* to vow a vow of a Nazarite, to ſeparate *themſelves* unto the LORD;

3 He

that lotheſome diſeaſe, with which God in theſe latter ages has ſhewn his abhorrence of lewdneſs.

V. 31. *Guiltleſs*, &c.] Though the huſband's jealouſy were groundleſs, yet he ſhould not be accounted guilty, if he took this method of clearing up the matter: but otherwiſe it would lead him to do thoſe things, which would bring guilt upon him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The people of God ſhould withdraw, and be ſeparate from ſuch as are unclean, through the dominion of indulged iniquity, and exclude them, as far as they are able, from their fellowſhip: and if, under the maſk of hypocriſy, they will affront the Lord, and profane his holy ordinances, by an unhallowed intruſion, they do it at their peril: aſſuredly ſuch ſhall never enter "that holy city, where the taber-"nacle of God ſhall be with men, and he will dwell with "them;" (*Rev.* c. xxi. v. 3. 27.) but will be without, "where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of "teeth." Amongſt them will moſt certainly be found thoſe *unrighteous* perſons, who have *unjuſtly* obtained, and as *unjuſtly* keep poſſeſſion of their neighbour's property: and the man who pretends piety, and profeſſes faith in the atonement of Chriſt, and thereby encourages himſelf in ſuch diſhoneſty, as groſsly affronts the Lord, as he, who ſubſtitutes his honeſty, or morality in the ſtead of the Redeemer's merits and ſacrifice, and in contempt of them, as the price of his acceptance with God. The confeſſion, the reſtitution, and the treſpaſs-offering muſt always go together. God's abhorrence of, and vengeance againſt adultery appear conſpicuous in this chapter: and though we have no law of a jealouſy offering to detect, nor any other law to execute puniſhment upon adulterers, and adultereſſes: and they may either conceal, or glory in their ſhame, and the impunity, with which they tranſgreſs; yet be ſure their ſin will at laſt find them out; God himſelf will detect the moſt ſecret, and confound the moſt daring offenders: and as his providence ſtamps infamy upon ſinners of this claſs, in thoſe dreadful diſeaſes, with which he viſits them, and with which they infect, plague, and curſe one another in this world: ſo his word denounces the ſevereſt vengeance againſt them in the world to come. But all approaches to, and occaſions, and appearances of this horrid crime muſt be ſtudiouſly avoided: and married perſons eſpecially ſhould act in ſuch a manner, as to inſpire mutual confidence in each other; and ſhould avoid every intimacy, and every word, and look, which may excite uneaſineſs in the other's breaſt. For conjugal affection is prone to jealouſy, and ſatan delights in exciting "a ſpirit of jealouſy" in the hearts of huſbands and wives; knowing that it is alike tormenting to ſuſpect, or to be ſuſpected: and not only ſo, but he knows that ſuch ſuſpicions ſubvert domeſtic peace, ſet aſide family religion, and the proper education of children, and expoſe to manifold temptations, to every kind of ſin, on each ſide: ſo that what begun with heedleſs imprudence, and groundleſs jealouſy, often terminates in deep criminality, and the moſt fatal conſequences. We ſhould therefore watch and pray, and avoid the appearances, and beginnings of evil; and be careful that we neither heedleſsly excite, nor cauſeleſsly entertain thoſe tormenting ſuſpicions, which lead to ſuch direful evils. However, if we have a clear conſcience, and a true faith, we may bear up under the vileſt aſperſions; and God in due time will clear up our characters by one means or other, if we thus commit them to his keeping; and he will convert our affliction into a bleſſing: and whether it be our croſs to ſuſpect, or to be cauſeleſsly ſuſpected, in this, or any other caſe, Chriſtianity will teach us how to obtain comfort under, and extract good from it. But how ſhould men tremble at the thoughts of appealing to God, when their own hearts condemn them! for God is greater than their hearts, and knoweth all things, and will be ſure one day tremendouſly to revenge ſuch a daring affront. Senſual luſts will ſurely end in bitterneſs: and they who delight in curſing ſhall be filled therewith. Finally they, who allow hypocriſy and iniquity in their hearts, under a profeſſion of faith, will find, that all the truths of God's word, (whereby the true believer becomes joyful and fruitful in the works of righteouſneſs;) all the ordinances of his houſe, and all the diſpenſations of his providence will concur to increaſe their guilt, obduracy, and condemnation.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *Vow of a Nazarite*, &c.] The word Nazarite ſignifies ſeparation. Some were appointed of God before their birth, to be Nazarites all their days, as Sampſon, (*Jud.* c. xiii. v. 7.) and John the Baptiſt, (*Luke*, c. i. v. 15.) Samuel was devoted by his mother to be a perpetual Nazarite, when he was "aſked of the Lord," before his conception, (1 *Sam.* c. i. v. 11.) And the family of the Rechabites were a ſort of Nazarites from one generation to another, by the injunction of Jonadab, their progenitor (*Jer.* c. xxxv.). But in general it was a voluntary vow, which any perſon might make, of peculiar ſeparation

3 He shall separate *himself* from wine, and strong drink, and shall drink no vinegar of wine, or vinegar of strong drink, neither shall he drink any liquor of grapes, nor eat moist grapes, or dried.

4 All the days of his separation shall he eat nothing that is made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk.

5 All the days of the vow of his separation there shall no razor come upon his head; until the days be fulfilled, in the which he separateth *himself* unto the LORD, he shall be holy, *and* shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow.

6 All the days that he separateth *himself* unto the LORD, he shall come at no dead body.

7 He shall not make himself unclean for his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, when they die; because the consecration of his God *is* upon his head.

8 All the days of his separation he *is* holy unto the LORD.

9 And if any man die very suddenly by him, and he hath defiled the head of his consecration; then he shall shave his head in the day of his cleansing, on the seventh day shall he shave it.

10 And on the eighth day he shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons, to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin-offering, and the other for a burnt-offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the dead, and shall hallow his head that same day.

12 And he shall consecrate unto the LORD the days of his separation, and shall bring a lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering: but the days that were before shall be lost, because his separation was defiled.

13 And

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from the world, and devotedness to the exercises of religion, for a limited time; and under certain regulations. (c. xxx.) It is numbered amongst the distinguishing favours, which God conferred on Israel, "that he raised up of their young "men for Nazarites," (*Amos*, c. ii. v. 11.) whence we may infer that their prayers, examples, and instructions were considered as a public blessing. Christ was called a Nazarene, out of reproach, as having lived at Nazareth; yet the Scripture was thereby fulfilled, that he should be so called: but it is not agreed what Scripture foretold this. He was no Nazarene, according to the letter of this law, but he was the substance of this shadow: separated of the Father, and by his own voluntary undertaking, to glorify God in the redemption of his church: he would have nothing to do with the intoxicating pleasures of the world, and sin: he touched no unclean thing, and was separate from sinners, and persevered in his purpose, till he had fulfilled his appointed time of tribulation, self-abasement, and suffering on earth; then, though perfectly obedient to the law, he finished the whole of his engagement by his sacrifice on the cross; and rising from the dead, ascended into heaven, to drink with his redeemed people in his Father's kingdom, the new wine of heavenly joy, (*Matt.* c. xxvi. v. 29.) His disciples also, are Nazarites, separated from the world, abstaining from worldly lusts, and given up to serve God, and their generation.

V. 3, 4.] The drinking of wine was an emblem both in it's nature, and effects, of the intoxicating pleasures of sin, and sense; from this in every form, and from all approaches to it, the Nazarites were to abstain. There is nothing in Scripture, which bears the most remote affinity to the religious orders of the church of Rome, except these Nazarites: but mark the difference, or rather the contrariety. The religious in that church are forbidden to marry; but no such restriction is laid upon the Nazarites: they are commanded to abstain from meats; but the Nazarites might eat any food allowed the other Israelites; they are not generally prohibited from wine, not even on fasting days; but the Nazarites might not drink any at any time: their vow is perpetual to the end of their lives; the Nazarites vow, only for a limited time, at their own discretion: and in certain cases not unless allowed by husbands, or parents. Much of the same contrariety is observable in other rules of men's invention for fasting, and for singular sanctity.

V. 5. By this growth of hair the Nazarites were known in the streets, (*Lam.* c. iv. v. 7, 8.) and it had a singular appearance of mortification to the world, and disregard to the body. It might also denote their peculiar subjection to the Lord, (*see* 1 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 10—15.)

V. 7. *Unclean*, &c.] That is, he must not attend their funerals; thus they ranked with the High Priest; (*see notes Lev.* c. xxi.)

V. 9—12. There is no penalty appointed, which was to be inflicted upon, nor any sacrifice, which was to be offered for, those, who wilfully violated their vow of being Nazarites: they must answer for such profane trifling with the Lord another day. But if, by the sudden death of any person near them, they contracted uncleanness, they would not only be unclean seven days, and require purifying, as other Israelites did, (xix. v. 11, 12.) but must offer several sacrifices of atonement for sin, must lose all the past time, and begin over again to consecrate their appointed season of separation to the Lord. No ceremonial uncleanness caused this interruption, except the touch of the dead body of man: whose death came in by sin, and was thus accounted

13 And this *is* the law of the Nazarite: When the days of his ſeparation are fulfilled, he ſhall be brought unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;

14 And he ſhall offer his offering unto the LORD, one he-lamb of the firſt year without blemiſh for a burnt-offering, and one ewe-lamb of the firſt year without blemiſh for a ſin-offering, and one ram without blemiſh for peace-offerings,

15 And a baſket of unleavened bread, cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, and wafers of unleavened bread anointed with oil, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings.

16 And the prieſt ſhall bring *them* before the LORD, and ſhall offer his ſin-offering, and his burnt-offering.

17 And he ſhall offer the ram *for* a ſacrifice of peace-offerings unto the LORD, with the baſket of unleavened bread: the prieſt ſhall offer alſo his meat offering, and his drink-offering.

18 And the Nazarite ſhall ſhave the head of his ſeparation *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation; and ſhall take the hair of the head of his ſeparation, and put *it* in the fire which *is* under the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings.

19 And the prieſt ſhall take the ſodden ſhoulder of the ram, and one unleavened cake out of the baſket, and one unleavened wafer, and ſhall put *them* upon the hands of the Nazarite, after *the hair of* his ſeparation is ſhaven.

20 And the prieſt ſhall wave them *for* a wave-offering before the LORD: this *is* holy for the prieſt, with the wave-breaſt, and heave-ſhoulder: and after that the Nazarite may drink wine.

21 This *is* the law of the Nazarite who hath vowed, *and of* his offering unto the LORD for his ſeparation, beſides *that* that his hand ſhall get: according to the vow which he vowed, ſo he muſt do after the law of his ſeparation.

22 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

23 Speak unto Aaron, and unto his ſons, ſaying, On this wiſe ye ſhall bleſs the children of Iſrael, ſaying unto them,

24 The LORD bleſs thee, and keep thee;

25 The LORD make his face ſhine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

26 The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

27 And

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accounted unclean, till the death, and burial, and reſurrection of Chriſt, as it were ſanctified death and the grave to his people. But the ſoul dead in ſin, and the dead works, attending that ſtate, are ſtill as polluted, and polluting as ever.

V. 13—20. By theſe ſacrifices, and ceremonies at the expiration of his term, the Nazarite was taught to confeſs that his performance of his vow needed atonement and forgiveneſs, being mixed with ſin; to acknowledge that the honour of all, which was done well, belonged to the Lord; and that, though he were no longer a Nazarite, he was ſtill by duty, and by choice the devoted ſervant of the Lord, and conſidered communion with a reconciled God, as the delight of his ſoul. The hair was ſhaven off, as a token that the vow was accompliſhed; and was burnt, not on the altar, as if it could make atonement, but under the peace-offerings, implying the gracious acceptance of his ſervice, by a God of peace and love.

V. 21. *Beſides that*, &c.] If the Nazarite were poor this ſacrifice would be accepted: but if he had it in his power, it would be proper to offer free-will offerings alſo. It ſeems their pious friends were oft at charges with them on theſe occaſions, and they feaſted together on their joint ſacrifices, (*Acts*, c. xxi. v. 23, 24—26.)

V. 23. *Ye ſhall bleſs*, &c.] The prieſts in this action typified him, who came to bleſs us, "and whilſt he was "bleſſing his diſciples, was parted from them, and was "taken up into heaven." As the miniſters of the Lord, they alſo prayed for, and pronounced a bleſſing upon the people, in a ſolemn manner. The apoſtolical epiſtles are moſt of them cloſed with a ſimilar benediction: and it has been a common, and very proper cuſtom for the miniſter, in Chriſtian aſſemblies, to diſmiſs the congregation in the ſame manner; both as expreſſing his affectionate good-will to them, and his fervent prayers for them; and as aſſuring them in the Name of God, that a bleſſing will attend on thoſe, who are indeed the Lord's believing people; for hypocrites have no ſhare therein.

V. 24—26.] The word JEHOVAH is three times ſolemnly repeated, and the Jews have ſuppoſed that there is ſome great myſtery contained in that repetition. When we compare it with the form of Chriſtian baptiſm, "Into the "name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt:" with the bleſſing, which St. Paul pronounces on the Corinthians, and which is in common uſe amongſt them (2 *Cor.* c. xiii. v. 14.): and with St. John's ſalutation of the churches (*Rev.* c. i. v. 4, 5.); we can be at no loſs to determine what that myſtery is. Sinners are bleſſed with ſpiritual bleſſings by the triune God of our ſalvation, the Father, who choſe, the Son, who redeemed, and the Holy Ghoſt, who ſanctifieth all the elect people of God.—To be

in

27 And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. The heads of the tribes of Israel presenting for the service of the sanctuary six covered waggons, and twelve oxen: and the Lord's acceptance, and disposal of them, 1—9. *2d. Each of them on his day presenting oblations, and sacrifices in behalf of himself, and his tribe,* 10—88. *3d. The Lord speaking to Moses from above the mercy-seat,* 89.

AND it came to pass on the day that Moses had fully set up the tabernacle, and had anointed it, and sanctified it, and all the instruments thereof, both the altar, and all the vessels thereof, and had anointed them, and sanctified them,

2 That the princes of Israel, heads of the house of their fathers, (who *were* the princes of the tribes, and were over them that were numbered) offered.

3 And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered waggons, and twelve oxen; a waggon for two of the princes, and for each one an ox: and they brought them before the tabernacle.

4 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

5 Take *it* of them, that they may be to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; and thou shalt give them unto the Levites, to every man according to his service.

6 And Moses took the waggons and the oxen, and gave them unto the Levites.

7 Two waggons and four oxen he gave unto

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in body and soul under the almighty protection of God our Saviour; to enjoy his favour, as the smile of a loving father, or as the enlightening chearing beams of the sun; whilst he mercifully forgives our sins, pities our sorrows, supplies our wants, satisfies our desires, and communicates sweet peace to the conscience, and consolation to the heart: and whilst he graciously accepts our persons and services, and prepares us by his grace for eternal glory: these things form the substance of this blessing, and the sum total of all blessings; and in such a rich inventory, wordly joys are not worthy to be mentioned.

V. 27. *Put my name*, &c.] That is, bless them in my name, as my people; as such pray for them; and direct them to expect and ask all their blessings from me; and so doing they shall not be disappointed; for my name shall be their honour, security, confidence, and comfort.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst we rejoice in Christ Jesus, as undertaking and persevering in the work, for which he had separated, and sanctified himself, without contracting any defilement, or shrinking from any self-denial, or suffering, till he had completed his design, and arrived with honour and glory unspeakable at the joy set before him: let us not forget, that he is not only our surety, but also our example. For his sake we must renounce wordly pleasures, abstain from fleshly lusts, separate from sinners, touch no unclean thing, be indifferent about the outward indulgence or adorning of our bodies, be intent about the inward feeding, and adorning of our souls, make an open profession of our faith, moderate our natural affections, be abstracted from worldly cares, be spiritually minded, and devoted to God's service, zealous for his glory, and desirous to be an example, and a blessing to his people, and all around us.—If after profession of faith in Christ, any wilfully apostatize, and return to wickedness, there remains no other sacrifice: but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation (*Heb.* c. x. v. 26, 27.). But the true Nazarite will never thus deliberately, and entirely renounce his vow of separation: but he may, and will inadvertently commit sin, and contract defilement; and then must he renew his repentance, exercise faith in the one great sacrifice of Christ, and begin all over again, as when he first fled for refuge to the hope set before him. And when the Christian is finishing his course of faith, and holiness, of self denial, and bearing the cross daily, and is about to close his eyes in death, and open them in the realms of uninterrupted joy: he will still acknowledge that he has nothing to trust to, but the blood of Christ our great sacrifice for sin; as the best which he hath done has been mixed with sin, and needs forgiveness: he will give all the glory to the Lord of all, that he hath done in any measure well; will value reconciliation to, and communion with God, as his only confidence and comfort: and will depart with thankful acknowledgments for the past; perhaps with joyful, at least with peaceful expectations for the future, to go and drink the new wine of the kingdom with his beloved Redeemer in the realms of bliss. Then indeed will the great High Priest pronounce him blessed in the name of the triune Jehovah, which is put upon him; then will he shine, and smile upon him ineffable joys; then will he wipe all tears from his eyes, and be gracious to him for ever. In hopes of this immortal crown, let us here chearfully endure the cross: let us only fear dishonouring our profession: let us ever be prepared for the approach of death, which oft comes so "very suddenly:" let us be very watchful in a world so full of pollutions; let us remember, that the higher we stand in profession of holiness, the lesser inadvertency will disgrace us, and dishonour our God: and may the Lord keep, and bless and comfort in life, and at death, and for ever with all the blessings of salvation, the writer and every reader of these remarks, Amen!

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *Fully set up the tabernacle*, &c.] Those things, which were expressly commanded, were first performed, before these voluntary oblations were presented, as expressions of their good will to the service of God. There is

unto the ſons of Gerſhon, according to their ſervice.

8 And four waggons and eight oxen he gave unto the ſons of Merari, according unto their ſervice, under the hand of Ithamar the ſon of Aaron the prieſt.

9 But unto the ſons of Kohath he gave none; becauſe the ſervice of the ſanctuary belonging unto them *was*, *that* they ſhould bear upon their ſhoulders.

10 And the princes offered for dedicating of the altar, in the day that it was anointed, even the princes offered their offering before the altar.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, They ſhall offer their offering, each prince on his day, for the dedicating of the altar.

12 And he that offered his offering the firſt day was Nahſhon the ſon of Amminadab, of the tribe of Judah.

13 And his offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them *were* full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

14 One ſpoon of ten *ſhekels* of gold, full of incenſe:

15 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

16 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

17 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Nahſhon, the ſon of Amminadab.

18 On the ſecond day Nethaneel the ſon of Zuar, prince of Iſſachar, did offer.

19 He offered *for* his offering one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy

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is ſome difficulty in ſettling the date of this chapter; whether it comes in here in its proper order; or whether the things therein recorded were antecedent to ſeveral of the tranſactions before related. But it ſeems ſufficient for all uſeful purpoſes to obſerve, that the tabernacle was erected, the prieſts conſecrated, the camp formed, the Levites appointed to their work, and all things put into a regular train for carrying on the ſervice of the ſanctuary, before theſe oblations were made. And as the Scripture is not, it is not neceſſary that we ſhould be, very exact in aſcertaining dates. Some ſuppoſe that the twelve days, afterwards mentioned for the oblation of the princes, were coincident with the giving of many of the laws already mentioned, and ſucceeded ſoon after the conſecration of the ſanctuary, and of the prieſts.

V. 8. The ſockets of ſilver, and braſs alone are computed to have weighed more than eight tons, which would be fully ſufficient to load theſe four waggons: ſo that the ſons of Merari would ſtill have much to carry upon their ſhoulders; as probably the ſons of Gerſhon alſo had. The Kohathites had in all but a moderate weight to carry; and in reverence to the ſacred things, ſuch as the ark, &c. they were ordered to be carried at all times upon the ſhoulders of the Levites, or prieſts, who were of the family of Kohath. The neglect of this rule was David's firſt and chief miſtake, when Uzzah was ſmitten.

V. 10. *And the princes*, &c.] It is probable that there was difference of rank, and of poſſeſſions amongſt the Iſraelites, even in their Egyptian bondage: and conſequently at their departure, their chief men would obtain a larger portion of the ſpoil of Egypt; by which means they were enabled to preſent theſe oblations: though ſome perſons conjecture, that the princes not only offered in the behalf, but at the expence of their ſeveral tribes.

V. 11. *The Lord ſaid*, &c.] As they were preparing in a body to bring their oblations all together, the Lord gave this order, both to prevent confuſion; to increaſe the ſolemnity; that his prieſts might not be over-burdened with work, and that they might have leiſure to grow more expert, therein by daily practice. And, as much of the ſacrifices would be feaſted upon both by the prieſts, and the people, it would alſo prevent exceſs, and waſte and promote hoſpitality, to have only one oblation at a time. The princes offered in the ſame order, in which the tribes had been arranged in the encampment, (which is an argument that they offered after the camp was formed:) and, though one tribe was more numerous, and wealthy than another, they all offered exactly the ſame oblations, and ſacrifices: for they were all equally intereſted in, and were all willing to expreſs an equal affection for the ſanctuary, and worſhip of God. Every one's offering is nevertheleſs particularly mentioned; for the Lord takes pleaſure in accepting and recording the willing ſervices of his people.

V. 12. *Nahſhon*, &c.] He is the only one, who is not called a prince in the hiſtory of this tranſaction: ſome ſuppoſe that this was an humiliating circumſtance intended to counterbalance his pre-eminence; that he might not be exalted above meaſure: others conjecture, that this title was omitted, becauſe it was reſerved for Chriſt, who was to deſcend from this tribe.

V. 13, 14.] The ſilver chargers or diſhes might be uſeful for the meat-offerings, and to contain the fleſh of the ſacrifices, when the prieſts feaſted thereon. The ſilver bowls would be uſeful for the drink-offerings; and to receive the blood for ſprinkling: and the golden ſpoons, were ſuited in ſome way or other for the ſervice of the altar of incenſe. Probably the princes had noticed, that the furniture for the tabernacle was not, in theſe particulars, ſuited to the reſt, or was not ſufficient for their occaſions.

ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

20 One ſpoon of gold of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

21 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

22 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

23 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Nethaneel the ſon of Zuar.

24 On the third day Eliab the ſon of Helon, prince of the children of Zebulun, *did offer*.

25 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

26 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

27 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

28 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

29 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Eliab the ſon of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur the ſon of Shedeur, prince of the children of Reuben, *did offer*.

31 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

32 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

33 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

34 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

35 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Elizur the ſon of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel the ſon of Zuriſhaddai, prince of the children of Simeon, *did offer*.

37 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

38 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

39 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

40 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

41 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Shelumiel the ſon of Zuriſhaddai.

42 On the ſixth day Eliaſaph the ſon of Deuel, prince of the children of Gad, *offered*.

43 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, a ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

44 One golden ſpoon of ten *ſhekels*, full of incenſe:

45 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

46 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

47 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the firſt year. This *was* the offering of Eliaſaph the ſon of Deuel.

48 On the ſeventh day Eliſhama the ſon of Ammihud, prince of the children of Ephraim, *offered*.

49 His offering *was* one ſilver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *ſhekels*, one ſilver bowl of ſeventy ſhekels, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

50 One golden ſpoon of ten ſhekels, full of incenſe:

51 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the firſt year, for a burnt-offering:

52 One kid of the goats for a ſin-offering:

53 And for a ſacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of

of the first year. This *was* the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day *offered* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, prince of the children of Manasseh.

55 His offering *was* one silver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

56 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

57 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

58 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

59 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day Abidan, the son of Gideoni, prince of the children of Benjamin, *offered*.

61 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, a silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

62 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

63 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

64 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

65 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, prince of the children of Dan, *offered*.

67 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

68 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

69 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

70 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

71 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day Pagiel the son of Ocran, prince of the children of Asher, *offered*.

73 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

74 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

75 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

76 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

77 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the twelfth day Ahira, the son of Enan, prince of the children of Naphtali, *offered*.

79 His offering *was* one silver charger, the weight whereof *was* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat-offering:

80 One golden spoon of ten *shekels*, full of incense:

81 One young bullock, one ram, one lamb of the first year, for a burnt-offering:

82 One kid of the goats for a sin-offering:

83 And for a sacrifice of peace-offerings, two oxen, five rams, five he-goats, five lambs of the first year. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This *was* the dedication of the altar, in the day when it was anointed by the princes of Israel: twelve chargers of silver, twelve silver bowls, twelve spoons of gold;

85 Each charger of silver *weighing* an hundred and thirty *shekels*, each bowl seventy: all the silver vessels *weighed* two thousand and four hundred *shekels*, after the shekel of the sanctuary.

86 The

86 The golden ſpoons *were* twelve, full of incenſe, *weighing* ten *ſhekels* apiece, after the ſhekel of the ſanctuary: all the gold of the ſpoons *was* an hundred and twenty *ſhekels*.

87 All the oxen for the burnt-offering *were* twelve bullocks, the rams twelve, the lambs of the firſt year twelve, with their meat-offering: and the kids of the goats, for ſin-offering, twelve.

88 And all the oxen for the ſacrifice of the peace-offerings *were* twenty and four bullocks, the rams ſixty, the he-goats ſixty, the lambs of the firſt year ſixty. This *was* the dedication of the altar, after that it was anointed.

89 And when Moſes was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to ſpeak with him, then he heard the voice of one ſpeaking unto him from off the mercy-ſeat that *was* upon the ark of teſtimony, from between the two cherubims: and he ſpake unto him.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The lamps of the golden candleſtick lighted at God's command, v. 1—4. 2d. The Levites ordained to their office, v. 5—22. 3d. The time of their ſervice preſcribed, v. 23—26.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
2 Speak unto Aaron, and ſay unto him, When thou lighteſt the lamps, the ſeven lamps ſhall give light over againſt the candleſtick.

3 And Aaron did ſo: he lighted the lamps thereof over againſt the candleſtick; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

4 And this work of the candleſtick *was of* beaten gold; unto the ſhaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, *was* beaten work: according unto the pattern which the LORD had ſhewed Moſes, ſo he made the candleſtick.

5 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,
6 Take the Levites from among the children of Iſrael, and cleanſe them.

7 And thus ſhalt thou do unto them, to cleanſe them: Sprinkle water of purifying upon them, and let them ſhave all their fleſh, and let them waſh their clothes, and *ſo* make themſelves clean.

V. 89. *With him*, &c.] That is with the Lord, who ſpake to him in an audible voice; as he had done oft before, and as he probably ſpake to the High Prieſts afterwards, when they inquired of him by Urim and Thummim.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, whom the providence of God hath diſtinguiſhed as princes, nobles, or wealthy perſons, ſhould diſtinguiſh themſelves by taking the lead in, and ſetting an example of every good work; with liberal hearts deviſing liberal things: for this is the proper improvement of their talents. It is alſo very deſirable that a liberal mind ſhould be under the direction of prudence and diſcretion: and that ſuch perſons ſhould advert to the circumſtances of the times, the ſtate of the church, and its miniſters, and to the neceſſities of thoſe around them; that none of their bounty may be waſted in uſeleſs expence, but all wiſely directed to the ſubſtantial benefit of thoſe, who need it. The people of God have no occaſion to be diſcouraged in the proſpect either of heavy ſervices, or of heavy trials: for he can ſend them ſeaſonable, and unexpected relief, whenever he pleaſes; and will be ſure to proportion their aſſiſtance to their neceſſities. Every thing in the worſhip of God ſhould be done decently, and in order, as may beſt promote edification: and on ſome occaſions it may be proper to employ much time, and expend much money in his ſervice; of which the growing Chriſtian will not be weary, or complain; but will account it his gain, his pleaſure, and his honour to be thus occupied. All our works of piety, and charity muſt be accompanied with an humble acknowledgment of our ſinfulneſs, and a believing dependance on the ſacrifice of Chriſt; they muſt ſpring from love to our reconciled God, gratitude for the bleſſings of redemption, an unreſerved ſurrender of ourſelves unto him; and a diſpoſition to delight in doing his will, and in rendering him all the praiſe. Such good works are ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to God, through Jeſus Chriſt: the Lord will delight to honour thoſe, who thus honour him: he will remember and record ſuch expreſſions of faith and love: he will in this world commune with ſuch diſciples from his mercy-ſeat, between the cherubims, by anſwering their prayers, and counſelling, and comforting their hearts: and he will at the day of judgment *particularly* publiſh to the whole aſſembled world, the fruits of holineſs, which by his grace they produced on earth, as *evincing* them the heirs of the kingdom prepared for his people, from before the foundation of the world. (*Matt.* c. xxv. v. 31—46.)

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 2. *Over againſt the candleſtick*, &c.] The candleſtick was all in one piece: but the ſeven lamps were formed ſeparate, and might be taken off, and fixed upon the candleſtick, as occaſion required. It is a tradition of the Jews, that the middle lamp was lighted from the altar of burnt-offering, and the other lamps from it: which being done, each lamp gave light to that part of the ſanctuary, that was "over againſt it," and the whole was lighted. Thus the light which comes from Chriſt by his word, and Spirit, is *inſtrumentally* communicated from one to another in the church of God, and every true miniſter, and member thereof in his place gives light over againſt him: and the light is diffuſed wider and wider: (*Matt.* c. v. v. 14—16. *Phil.* c. ii. v. 15.

V. 7. *Cleanſe them*, &c.] The Levites were not dif-

8 Then let them take a young bullock with his meat-offering, *even* fine flour mingled with oil and another young bullock shalt thou take for a sin-offering.

9 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt gather the whole assembly of the children of Israel together.

10 And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites:

11 And Aaron shall offer the Levites before the LORD, *for* an offering of the children of Israel, that they may execute the service of the LORD.

12 And the Levites shall lay their hands upon the heads of the bullocks: and thou shalt offer the one *for* a sin-offering, and the other *for* a burnt-offering, unto the LORD, to make an atonement for the Levites.

13 And thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron, and before his sons, and offer them *for* an offering unto the LORD.

14 Thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine.

15 And after that shall the Levites go in to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation: and thou shalt cleanse them, and offer them *for* an offering.

16 For they *are* wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel; instead of such as open every womb, *even instead of* the first-born of all the children of Israel, have I taken them unto me.

17 For all the first-born of the children of Israel *are* mine, *both* man and beast: on the day that I smote every first-born of the land of Egypt I sanctified them for myself.

18 And I have taken the Levites for all the first-born of the children of Israel.

19 And I have given the Levites *as* a gift to Aaron, and to his sons, from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel; that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.

20 And Moses, and Aaron, and all the congregation of the children of Israel, did to the Levites according unto all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did the children of Israel unto them.

21 And the Levites were purified, and they washed their clothes: and Aaron offered them *as* an offering before the LORD; and Aaron made an atonement for them to cleanse them.

22 And after that went the Levites in to do their service in the tabernacle of the congregation before Aaron, and before his sons: as the LORD had commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so did they unto them.

23 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

24 This *is it* that *belongeth* unto the Le-

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tinguished from the other Israelites by any prescribed garments, nor were they washed, or anointed, &c. in the manner, that the priests were; but though they were set apart with less solemnity; to mark the inferiority of their office, and because they were not so *expressly*, typical of Christ, as the priests were: yet there was equally a remembrance of sin, both in the guilt, and defilement thereof; and of the need of atonement and sanctification. Their clothes were to be washed, they were to be sprinkled with the water of purifying, (*see* c. xix. and *Ezek.* c. xxxvi. v. 25—27.) a sin-offering, and a burnt-offering were to be sacrificed in their behalf; and they were to shave all their flesh, according to the ceremony of the leper's purification, (*Lev.* xiv. 8.) which might denote the "laying apart all filthi-"ness, and *superfluity* of naughtiness." (*Jam.* c. i. v. 21:) the mortification of natural depravity, and the renouncing of all unnecessary worldly avocations, and employments, that they might more entirely give their time, and attention to their ministry.

V. 10. *Shall put their hands*, &c.] By this ceremony they were to express their ready consent to the substitution of the Levites in the stead of the first-born, and their surrender of them to the Lord for the purpose of serving at the sanctuary.

V. 19. *A gift to Aaron*, &c.] When Aaron had offered them for an offering unto the Lord; the Lord gave them back as a gift to Aaron, who might now with comfort make use of their assistance.

In the tabernacle, &c.] Or, "*at* the tabernacle;" that is in the court thereof: or "about the tabernacle;" that is, when they assisted in removing it.

To make atonement, &c.] They assisted in the offering of those sacrifices, by which atonement was made. This, and the other services being duly performed, without any unallowed intrusion of the people, would preserve them from those terrible effects of the divine displeasure, which they might otherwise apprehend.

V. 24. *From twenty and five*, &c.] From this age the Le-

vites; from twenty and five years old and upward they ſhall go in to wait upon the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation:

25 And from the age of fifty years they ſhall ceaſe waiting upon the ſervice *thereof*, and ſhall ſerve no more;

26 But ſhall miniſter with their brethren in the tabernacle of the congregation, to keep the charge, and ſhall do no ſervice. Thus ſhalt thou do unto the Levites touching their charge.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. Some explanatory additions reſpecting the obſervance of the Paſſover, v. 1—14. 2d. The cloud directing the marches, and encampments of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, v. 15—23.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes in the wilderneſs of Sinai, in the firſt month of the ſecond year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, ſaying,

2 Let the children of Iſrael alſo keep the paſſover at his appointed ſeaſon.

3 In the fourteenth day of this month at even ye ſhall keep it in his appointed ſeaſon: according to all the rites of it, and according to all the ceremonies thereof, ſhall ye keep it.

4 And Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, that they ſhould keep the paſſover.

5 And they kept the paſſover on the fourteenth day of the firſt month at even in the wilderneſs of Sinai: according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo did the children of Iſrael.

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vites attended upon the ordinary ſervices of the tabernacle; but were neither required, nor allowed to aſſiſt in it's removal, till they were thirty years old. Probably at the age of twenty-five the Levites were in after-ages ſolemnly admitted to their office, according to the preſcribed order of this chapter.

V. 26. *Shall miniſter*, &c.] It appears that they then might ſuperintend and aſſiſt their junior brethren in their ordinary offices; and give them, and the people counſel and inſtruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Jeſus Chriſt is the only light of our dark ſinful world: and in virtue of his atonement, he diffuſes by his holy word, divine light around. And all, which is called illumination, that is not derived from, or does not accord to that light, is but the greater, and more dangerous darkneſs; (*Iſaiah*, c. viii. v. 20. *Matt.* c. vi. v. 22, 23.) Miniſters, in ſearching the Scriptures, and comparing one part of them with another, and the whole with what they experience within themſelves, and obſerve around them: and in imparting the knowledge thus acquired by preaching the goſpel, &c. are in their ſeveral places, "burning and ſhining "lights," communicating the light, which they have received from Chriſt, to thoſe over againſt them, in their congregations, and neighbourhoods: the ſame may private Chriſtians do in their ſeveral connexions: eſpecially if their knowledge, and profeſſion of the truth be accompanied with the ornament, and light of an holy, and exemplary converſation. In this way one is enlightened from another, and the light of truth and righteouſneſs will be diffuſed ere long through all the nations of the earth.—But ſo depraved, and polluted is every one, born of Adam's fallen race, that none can in any way approach unto, or ſerve God, except he, as a humble penitent, plead guilty, depend upon the Saviour's atoning blood, and be ſanctified by the participation of his Holy Spirit, poured upon him, as purifying water. And if the heart be cleanſed by divine grace, the outward conduct, and converſation will be clean likewiſe.—The Lord himſelf hath provided for, and appointed the method, and means of our cleanſing; and given us "exceeding great and precious promiſes," for our encouragement in uſing thoſe means. But having theſe promiſes, we are exhorted "to cleanſe ourſelves from all filthi- "neſs of fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of "God," (2 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 1.) and to lay aſide, and put off our ſinful purſuits, and indulgences, that we may ſerve God with our bodies, and our ſouls, which are his, being bought with a price. Every Chriſtian ſhould be thus cleanſed from ſin, ſeparated from the world, and preſented to the Lord, as a living ſacrifice holy and acceptable to him: but the miniſters of Chriſt eſpecially. When they are regularly appointed to their ſacred office, with the approbation of their brethren, and of the church of God: and when they are faithful, and diligent therein; ſo far from being profanely conſidered as an uſeleſs part of the community, they may fairly be ſhewn to be the moſt uſeful members of ſociety, by their examples, labours, and prayers, in repreſſing ſin, which is the ruin of, and in promoting righteouſneſs, which exalteth any people: and in making known that great atonement, whereby the wrath of God is averted from our guilty ſouls, and from guilty nations. Perſons of another ſtamp, called miniſters, are not to be pleaded for: but thoſe who act up to their character ſhould never be deſerted of men, and will never be forſaken of God in their old age: as they will be uſeful by their counſel, and influence, when they can no longer labour; and "when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, they "ſhall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away." (1 Pet. c. v. ver. 1—4.)

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *In the firſt month*, &c.] This chapter is dated before any other of the events recorded in this book. Some ſuppoſe that the Paſſover was no more celebrated, till the people arrived in Canaan, (*Joſh.* c. v. 10. v.) and that the law, (*Exod.* c. xii. v. 25.) did not require that it ſhould. And that this interruption intimated that theſe ordinances were only a ſhadow of good things to

6 And

6 And there were certain men who were defiled by the dead body of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day; and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day.

7 And those men said unto him, We *are* defiled by the dead body of a man; wherefore are we kept back, that we may not offer an offering of the LORD in his appointed season among the children of Israel?

8 And Moses said unto them, Stand still, and I will hear what the LORD will command concerning you.

9 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

10 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If any man of you, or of your posterity, shall be unclean by reason of a dead body, or *be* in a journey afar off, yet he shall keep the passover unto the LORD.

11 The fourteenth day of the second month at even they shall keep it, *and* eat it with unleavened bread and bitter *herbs*.

12 They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it: according to all the ordinances of the passover they shall keep it.

13 But the man that *is* clean, and is not in a journey, and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from his people; because he brought not the offering of the LORD in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin.

14 And if a stranger shall sojourn among you, and will keep the passover unto the LORD; according to the ordinance of the passover, and according to the manner thereof, so shall he do: ye shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger, and for him that was born in the land.

15 And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, *namely*, the tent of the testimony: and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire until the morning.

16 So it was alway: the cloud covered it *by day*, and the appearance of fire by night.

17 And when the cloud was taken up from the tabernacle, then after that the children of Israel journeyed: and in the place where the cloud abode, there the children of Israel pitched their tents.

18 At the commandment of the LORD the children of Israel journeyed, and at the commandment of the LORD they pitched: as long as the cloud abode upon the tabernacle they rested in the tents.

19 And when the cloud tarried long upon the tabernacle many days, then the children of Israel kept the charge of the LORD, and journeyed not.

20 And *so* it was when the cloud was a few days upon the tabernacle; according to the commandment of the LORD they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the LORD they journeyed.

21 And *so* it was when the cloud abode from even unto the morning, and *that* the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they journeyed: whether *it was* by day or by night that the cloud was taken up they journeyed.

22 Or *whether it were* two days, or a month, or a year, that the cloud tarried upon the tabernacle, remaining thereon, the chil-

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come, and were not intended for perpetuity in the church. And indeed it is remarkable that many parts of the ceremonial law, notwithstanding the precision, with which they were delivered, were but little attended to by the people of Israel. Upon this supposition, there was occasion for this renewed commandment, if the Passover was again to be celebrated in the wilderness, in order to its being observed more properly after their arrival in Canaan. (*See notes on Exod.* c. xii.)

V. 6. *Defiled*, &c.] Though the laws respecting ceremonial defilement had not hitherto been explicitly given, yet several intimations had been made, which created scruples in the consciences of these persons; they counted it their duty, and privilege to eat the Passover; but feared to eat it with their uncleanness upon them: they were desirous of knowing the Lord's will, that they might do it; and therefore very properly referred the case to the decision of Moses; who with equal propriety declined the determination of it by his own judgment, and applied for direction to the Lord: who provided as follows for this case, and some other unavoidable hindrances.

V. 15. *Tent of the testimony*, &c.] That is the west end of the tabernacle over the most holy place, where was the ark of the covenant, with the tables of the law therein, which testified Israel to be the Lord's people, and him to be their God. (*See note on Exod.* c. xxv. v. 16.)

dren of Israel abode in their tents, and journeyed not: but when it was taken up they journeyed.

23 At the commandment of the LORD they rested in their tents, and at the commandment of the LORD they journeyed: they kept the charge of the LORD, at the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. The command for making, and using the silver trumpets, v. 1—10. 2d. The march of the Israelites from mount Sinai to the wilderness of Paran, v. 11—28. 3d. Moses' intreaty of Hobab to continue with them, v. 29—32. 4th. His prayer at the removal, and at the resting of the ark, v. 33—36.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps.

3 And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

4 And if they blow *but* with one *trumpet*, then the princes, *which are* heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee.

V. 23. (*See notes Exod.* c. xl. v. 34—37.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are so immersed in the things of time, and sense, that the most pure minds have need to be stirred up by way of remembrance, to perform such things, as they have before been instructed in, and attended to, (2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 12—15. c. iii. v. 1.) But when such reminding has it's proper effect; when men consider the attendance on the ordinances of God as their privilege, and every impediment as their affliction, it is a very hopeful token. Alas! in what a sad dilemma are multitudes of professing Christians! they are *habitually unclean* through indulged lusts, and unrepented sins; and cannot approach the Lord's table, without a presumptuous profanation. Yet in staying away they neglect "their bounden duty and service," confess that they have no part in Christ, are liable to bear the heavy load of their own iniquity, and to be cut off by the righteous judgment of God, not so much for disregarding the outward sign of salvation, as for neglecting the great salvation itself. But when their uncleanness becomes their burden, and they sincerely inquire what they must do? the case grows more hopeful. For they are directed to the fountain opened for sin, and for uncleanness; and having been "washed; and sanctified, and justified in the name of "the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God," they may, when occasion is again afforded them, approach with comfort to partake of that holy ordinance. But all should reflect, that if they are not prepared for the Lord's table, they are not fit for death, and judgment; and if they are, it is very sinful to neglect this profession of our faith in, and love and obligations to him, who loved us, and gave himself for our sins: and with his dying lips bid his disciples, "do this "in remembrance of him." Under difficulties, and distress of conscience it is very proper to consult pious and faithful ministers, and plainly to state the case unto them: Who should be accessible, and tender to such conscientious inquirers; and not only give them the best counsel they can; but in doubtful cases they should take time for deliberation, and consulting the word of God, in order to give them a satisfactory solution: and as the Lord makes a difference between occasional defilements, and presumptuous disobedience; they should do the same. We may oft, without our own fault, be deprived of the opportunity of attending on God's ordinances; but we shall not lose the blessing, if our hearts be right with God: and when we have necessarily been kept away at one time, we should be doubly careful to improve the next opportunity. Blessed be God, that we strangers of the Gentiles are admitted to participate in the blessings of Christ our passover, who is sanctified for us: but let us be careful to celebrate the sacred feast after the prescribed manner; as true penitents, and spiritual pilgrims, with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And even they, who have inadvertently and sinfully hitherto neglected the salvation of the gospel, may yet be admitted, if they truly desire it, and diligently seek it without further delay. Though we are not under the miraculous direction of the cloud: yet God's providence appoints the bounds of our habitation, and God's word is the perfect and sufficient rule of our conduct. Wherever our lot is cast, let us study contentment there. Whenever we are called upon to remove, let us be careful that we act according to God's commandment, and in dependance on his promises: and when we pass through temptation, and tribulation, or the gloomy vale of death, if his presence go with us, we must be safe, and shall be happy. Let us beg of *Him*, therefore, to chuse for us our places of abode in this world, our time of removal out of it, and our everlasting inheritance; who never chose amiss for those, that were enabled to refer such matters to his decision.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 2—10.] These trumpets, besides their external usefulness, were evidently intended to typify the preached gospel. The priests alone were to blow them; and as there were at that time but two priests, the sons of Aaron the High Priest; but two trumpets were ordered to be made: but we read afterwards, (2 *Chron.* c. v. 12. v.) "of "one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets." In allusion to the uses assigned to them in this, and other places, (*Lev.* c. xxiii. v. 24. c. xxv. v. 9. *Joel*, c. ii. v. 15, 16.) we may observe that the preached gospel sounds the alarm to sinners; calls them to repent of their sins; proclaims liberty to the captives, and the slaves of satan; collects together the spiritual worshippers of God in all ages, and nations, to keep their solemn fasts of godly sorrow, and feasts of holy joy; summons them to become strangers, and pilgrims upon earth, and both directs and encourages their heavenly journey; excites them to the combat against

5 When

5 When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the eaſt parts ſhall go forward.

6 When ye blow an alarm the ſecond time, then the camps that lie on the ſouth ſide ſhall take their journey: they ſhall blow an alarm for their journeys.

7 But when the congregation is to be gathered together ye ſhall blow, but ye ſhall not ſound an alarm.

8 And the ſons of Aaron the prieſts ſhall blow with the trumpets: and they ſhall be to you for an ordinance for ever throughout your generations.

9 And if ye go to war in your land againſt the enemy that oppreſſeth you, then ye ſhall blow an alarm with the trumpets: and ye ſhall be remembered before the LORD your God, and ye ſhall be ſaved from your enemies.

10 Alſo in the day of your gladneſs, and in your ſolemn days, and in the beginnings of your months, ye ſhall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the ſacrifices of your peace-offerings; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

11 And it came to paſs, on the twentieth *day* of the ſecond month, in the ſecond year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the teſtimony.

12 And the children of Iſrael took their journeys out of the wilderneſs of Sinai; and the cloud reſted in the wilderneſs of Paran.

13 And they firſt took their journey, according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moſes.

14 In the firſt *place* went the ſtandard of the camp of the children of Judah, according to their armies: and over his hoſt *was* Nahſhon the ſon of Amminadab.

15 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Iſſachar *was* Nethaneel the ſon of Zuar.

16 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the ſon of Helon.

17 And the tabernacle was taken down: and the ſons of Gerſhon and the ſons of Merari ſet forward, bearing the tabernacle.

18 And the ſtandard of the camp of Reuben ſet forward, according to their armies: and over his hoſt *was* Elizur the ſon of Shedeur.

19 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the ſon of Zuriſhaddai.

20 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliaſaph the ſon of Deuel.

21 And the Kohathites ſet forward, bearing the ſanctuary; and *the other* did ſet up the tabernacle againſt they came.

22 And the ſtandard of the camp of the children of Ephraim ſet forward, according to their armies: and over his hoſt *was* Eliſhama the ſon of Ammihud.

23 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Manaſſeh *was* Gamaliel the ſon of Pedahzur.

24 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the ſon of Gideoni.

25 And the ſtandard of the camp of the children of Dan ſet forward, *which was* the

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ſatan, the world, and ſin; and animates them with the aſſurance of victory: leads their attention to, explains, and ſuitably affects them with the doctrine of the ſacrifice of Chriſt; and is a conſtant memorial of the Lord's gracious preſence with them, for their encouragement and protection; and for a terror, and diſmay to their enemies; (2 *Chron.* c. xiii. v. 12. *Iſaiah*, c. xxvii. v. 13. c. lviii. v. 1.). It is alſo neceſſary that it give a diſtinct, preciſe, and intelligible ſound, according to the perſons addreſſed, or the end propoſed, whether for conviction, humiliation, conſolation, exhortation, reproof, or inſtruction; for if "the "trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare "himſelf for the battle?" (1 *Cor.* c. xiv. v. 7—9.)

V. 11—13.] After the Iſraelites had continued near a year at mount Sinai, (*Ex.* c. xix. v. 1.) to ſettle every thing reſpecting their future worſhip, they began their march to Canaan; whither they might ſpeedily have arrived, had they not renewed their rebellions. This may typify, that though true religion often begin with the knowledge of the holy law of God, and that knowledge of, and humiliation for ſin, which thence reſults: yet we muſt not always abide there, but go on towards perfection, in an acquaintance with Chriſt and his goſpel, and thoſe effectual encouragements, motives, and aſſiſtances to holineſs, which it propoſes, (*Heb.* c. vi. v. 1, 2.) Previous to the removal of the cloud they had had an expreſs command to ſet out on their journey, (*Deut.* c. i. v. 6—8.) In conſequence of which, we may ſuppoſe, that they got all ready for their march; when the moving of the cloud gave the ſignal for their actual ſetting off.

V. 21. *Did ſet up the tabernacle*, &c.] That is, the Gerſhonites, and Merarites, who marched before the reſt for that purpoſe, (v. 17.)

V. 25. *The rereward*, &c.] This diviſion not only

rereward of all the camps throughout their hoſts: and over his hoſt *was* Ahiezer the ſon of Ammiſhaddai.

26 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Aſher *was* Pagiel the ſon of Ocran.

27 And over the hoſt of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the ſon of Enan.

28 Thus *were* the journeyings of the children of Iſrael, according to their armies, when they ſet forward.

29 And Moſes ſaid unto Hobab, the ſon of Raguel the Midianite, Moſes' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD ſaid, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the LORD hath ſpoken good concerning Iſrael.

30 And he ſaid unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

31 And he ſaid, Leave us not, I pray thee; foraſmuch as thou knoweſt how we are to encamp in the wilderneſs, and thou mayeſt be to us inſtead of eyes.

32 And it ſhall be, if thou go with us, yea, it ſhall be, that what goodneſs the LORD ſhall do unto us, the ſame will we do unto thee.

33 And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days journey, to ſearch out a reſting-place for them.

34 And the cloud of the LORD *was* upon them by day when they went out of the camp.

35 And it came to paſs, when the ark ſet forward, that Moſes ſaid, Riſe up, LORD, and let thine enemies be ſcattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

36 And when it reſted he ſaid, Return, O LORD, unto the many thouſands of Iſrael.

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brought up the rere of Iſrael, but gathered under it, the mixt multitude which followed them.

V. 29. *Hobab, the ſon of Raguel*, &c.] It is moſt probable that Jethro was the ſame perſon with Reuel, (*Ex.* c. ii. v. 18.) or Raguel: and that Hobab was his ſon, and Moſes' brother-in-law; who had remained with them when, or come to them ſince, his father had departed from them, (*Ex.* c. xviii. v. 27.)

V. 31. *Inſtead of eyes*, &c.] Though they were under the immediate direction of God in their march: yet in reſpect of the conveniences, or inconveniences of the places, through which they paſſed, they might receive profitable cautions, and inſtructions, from a perſon acquainted with the deſert. Some however refer this to the paſt time, and interpret it as a thankful acknowledgment of the advantages, which Iſrael had derived from Hobab's counſel, and direction; for which they could make him no amends, except he would go with them, and ſhare the kindneſs, which the Lord had in reſerve for them. We may ſuppoſe that Hobab was withdrawn from his firſt purpoſe, and accompanied them. We ſhall hereafter read of his poſterity.

V. 33. *The ark of the covenant*, &c.] It is doubtful whether the ark was carried ſeparately before the camp, or with the other ſacred things in the midſt of it. The thirty-fifth and thirty-ſixth verſes ſeem to imply the former; the twenty-firſt verſe ſeems to favour the latter ſuppoſition. However the cloud which *above* was diffuſed as a canopy over their heads in the day, and afforded light to them all by night, ſo reſted beneath upon the ark; that in directing their march, the ark, on which it reſted, might very properly be ſaid to go before them, to ſingle out the particular ſpot, on which they were to halt for refreſhment; and after three days, the ſpot on which they were to encamp.

V. 35, 36.] Moſes, as the leader, though Aaron were the High Prieſt, ſolemnly addreſſed the Lord in this emphatic prayer; which David uſes, probably on a ſimilar occaſion; (*Pſalm* lxviii. v. 1.) The expreſſion, "the many "thouſands of Iſrael," is in the original, "the thouſand, "thouſands of Iſrael," amongſt whom Moſes beſeeches the Lord, again to manifeſt his preſence, and take up his reſidence.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſounding of the trumpet of the goſpel, being God's appointed ordinance, demands the ſerious attention of all men, to whom it is ſent; whatever be the peculiar ſignal, which it gives. Whatever be our character, experience, ſituation, duty, or trials, this trumpet, when properly uſed by the miniſters of Chriſt, will give ſuch a certain, diſtinct ſound, as at one time, or other, to ſuit exactly our caſe; and to afford us that warning, direction, encouragement, or exhortation, of which we ſtand in need; and *by means thereof* we are to expect to be taught, counſelled, and comforted of the Lord. But they have need to be very ſkilful, experienced, faithful, tender, and obſervant, both of the word of God, of their own hearts, and of the ſituations of the people, who ſound this trumpet; leſt they give falſe alarms, or neglect to give the alarm, when it is neceſſary, (*Ezek.* c. xxxiii. v. 2—9;) leſt by an uncertain ſound they encourage thoſe, who need reproof; or make the hearts of thoſe to be diſcouraged, who ſhould be comforted; or in any other way defeat thoſe ends, for which the preaching of the word is intended. "Bleſſed is the people who know "this joyful ſound," (*Pſalm* lxxxix. v. 15—18,) and underſtand it's diſtinct meaning, whether it call them to watch and pray; to weep, or to rejoice; to attack their enemies, or to reſiſt their aſſaults; to march forwards with alacrity or to endure the labours of the way with patient perſeverance: and who ſo underſtand it's ſound, as to pay it that prompt, and implicit obedience, which the diſciplined ſoldier doth to the ſound of the trumpet; yet exactly diſtinguiſhing the true ſignal, from every kind of falſe alarm. Such perſons will never want warning, encouragement, guidance, inſtruction, or counſel, through the whole of their journey:

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. The Israelites complaining; and the fire of the Lord burning amongst them, but quenched through Moses' prayer, 1—3. *2d. The people weary of the manna; and lusting after flesh; the Lord displeased; Moses grievously complaining of his burden; provision promised to Israel, and assistance afforded to Moses, with some concurring circumstances,* 4—30. *3d. The quails sent in vast abundance, but accompanied with a terrible plague, as the effect of the divine displeasure,* 31—35.

AND *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled: and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp.

2 And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched.

3 And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them.

4 And the mixt multitude that *was* among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat?

5 We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the

although in this world they have no continuing city, but are always removing from one wilderness to another; they will still by hearkening to the sound of the gospel, follow the ark in all their removals: they will be taught habitually to depend on the promises, the power, faithfulness, love, and meritorious mediation of the son of God; and to obey his commands, and imitate his example in their proper place and station: and they will ever abide under the care of his providence, enjoy the comforts of his Spirit, and have fellowship with him in his ordinances. He will then go before them to find them out resting places from time to time by the way; he will give them rest to their souls on earth, until he bring them to his heavenly rest: he will arise to scatter his, and their enemies, and all that hate him, shall flee before him; and he will return into, and continue with every individual, and with all the thousands of Israel, always even unto the end of the world: for his promise is, and their prayers are, that he will never leave them, nor forsake them. Whilst we are thus journeying to the place, of which the Lord has spoken to us, and hath promised to give us; we should endeavour, both by our general good behaviour, and tranquil chearfulness; and by special acts of kindness; and by pressing exhortations, and persuasions, to induce our relatives, friends, and neighbours to attend us in our pilgrimage: endeavouring to convince them, that the Lord is with us, that he hath spoken good concerning us, that he hath good in reserve for us, and that it is for their true advantage to accompany us: and frankly proposing to them a participation in all our privileges, and comforts; and assuring them of all the kindness, which God shall enable us to do unto them. By persevering attempts of this kind, and by fervent prayers for them, we may frequently overcome the reluctancy of those, who at first were unwilling to renounce the pleasures of sin, or the interests of the world; were loth to encounter the hardships of the journey, or valued not the promised inheritance. Though in every thing our dependance must be ultimately placed upon the Lord, yet we may use the services of men as instruments of good to us; and should in our turn aim to be instrumental to the good of others: and thus we may be as eyes, and ears, and hands to each other, for our mutual comfort, and to the glory of our common Lord. We should also be careful, that we begin every undertaking, especially those, in which the public, and the church of God are concerned, with earnest prayer for direction, assistance, and success: and not only should ministers, but magistrates, and princes also, be men of prayer, as well as men of activity, integrity, and ability: for whatever talents, and instruments are employed, the Lord alone sends prosperity. Finally in all our supplications at the throne of grace, the many thousands of Israel should be remembered by us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] *The people complained*, &c. ("*Were as complainers.*") They secretly murmured against Moses, and against the Lord. When we consider the wonderful works wrought for them before their eyes; the excellent laws, which they had received; the mild government, under which they lived; the manner in which their camp was victualled, watered, guarded, and guided; and the tokens which they enjoyed of the Lord's special presence, and favour; we are ready to inquire, what they had to complain of? But some would complain, that they and their friends were excluded from the government, and the priesthood: some would fret at being kept so long in the wilderness: others would be weary, (though their foot did not swell,) with marching for three days together, without resting: and some on other accounts. Since the affair of the golden calf the people had appeared obedient, and tractable; and the rulers liberal, and chearful in affording their assistance: But their evil dispositions, though overawed, were not slain; soon therefore they revived, and produced more fatal effects than ever.

The fire of the Lord, &c.] That is, they were slain, as Nadab, and Abihu had been, by fire from the Lord, by flashes of lightning, probably from the fiery pillar. Though they had several times before murmured against the Lord, they had not been thus punished; for not having known so much of the Lord's will, nor seen so much of his glory, nor experienced so much of his kindness, they were more excusable before, than at this time. — Yet even now the fire only consumed some of those, who resorted to the uttermost parts of the camp, to associate with the mixt multude, that followed them.

V. 3. *Taberah* ("which signifies burning.")

V. 4. *The mixt multitude*, &c.] This lusting for other food began amongst the mixt multitude, but speedily spread amongst the Israelites; who were not only guilty of dis-

melons,

melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick:

6 But now our ſoul *is* dried away: *there is* nothing at all, beſides this manna, *before* our eyes.

7 And the manna *was* as coriander-ſeed, and the colour thereof as the colour of bdellium.

8 *And* the people went about, and gathered *it*, and ground *it* in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taſte of it was as the taſte of freſh oil.

9 And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it.

10 Then Moſes heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent: and the anger of the LORD was kindled greatly; Moſes alſo was diſpleaſed.

11 And Moſes ſaid unto the LORD, Wherefore haſt thou afflicted thy ſervant? and wherefore have I not found favour in thy ſight, that thou layeſt the burden of all this people upon me?

12 Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay unto me, Carry them in thy boſom (as a nurſing father beareth the ſucking child) unto the land which thou ſwareſt unto their fathers?

13 Whence ſhould I have fleſh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, ſaying, Give us fleſh, that we may eat.

14 I am not able to bear all this people alone, becauſe *it is* too heavy for me.

15 And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favour in thy ſight; and let me not ſee my wretchedneſs.

16 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Gather unto me ſeventy men of the elders of Iſrael, whom thou knoweſt to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may ſtand there with thee.

17 And I will come down, and talk with thee there; and I will take of the Spirit which *is* upon thee, and will put *it* upon them; and they ſhall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear *it* not thyſelf alone.

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content, and inordinate deſire for fleſh to eat; but limited the power of God, as if it were impoſſible for him to give them it, (*Pſalm* lxxviii. v. 19—31.)

V. 7—9. Theſe particulars are here mentioned concerning the manna, in order to illuſtrate the goodneſs of the Lord to Iſrael in giving them, without trouble or expence, ſo ſuitable, nouriſhing, and palatable a food; and which afforded them variety alſo, by the different ways, in which it might be prepared: and in conſequence the ingratitude, and unreaſonableneſs of the people in their luſtings.—We never read that they were ſickly, or feeble, through feeding continually upon manna: though the greedineſs of their appetite for other food drank up their ſpirits, and cauſed "their ſoul to dry away."—And, though it would not have been right to have ſlain all their numerous flocks, and herds; nor would the whole have ſatisfied their luſtings: yet, had they not been too covetous, or too deſirous of dainty meats; by preſenting in turns peace-offerings to the Lord, they might from time to time have feaſted upon fleſh, though they did not daily riot upon it. But to their diſſatisfied mind every thing appeared worthleſs in compariſon of their Egyptian diet, which yet was probably nothing but the ordinary food of the pooreſt people.

V. 10. *Every man*, &c.] The former complaining was only a ſecret diſcontent, but this broke out into an open, and general diſſatisfaction, and portended a revolt.

V. 11—15.] We muſt allow that Moſes had a very difficult, and troubleſome work aſſigned him: but he cannot be excuſed in imitating the people in their murmurs againſt the Lord; in complaining of the honours, and favours beſtowed upon him, as an affliction; in expoſtulating with him, as if he dealt unkindly, and unjuſtly with him; in magnifying too much his own ſervices, and ſpeaking as if *he* were required to ſupply the people with fleſh; and above all in begging for immediate death, as the only poſſible relief from his wretchedneſs, and the greateſt inſtance of favour, which the Lord could ſhew him: theſe things were not written for our imitation; but for our warning, and humiliation, and to teach us what is in the heart of man.

V. 16. *Whom thou knoweſt*, &c.] Moſes had ſaid, that "he was not able to bear all the people *alone*." (v. 14.) The Lord therefore graciouſly condeſcended to aſſign him helpers, whom he might chooſe for himſelf, out of ſuch perſons, as he knew to be not only *elders*, in reſpect of years, but in wiſdom and ability, and in the influence and authority, which they poſſeſſed in their ſeveral tribes, and diviſions. It is moſt probable, that in conſequence of Jethro's advice, (*Ex.* c. xviii. 17—26.) Moſes had before this aſſiſtants in the adminiſtration of juſtice, and in the affairs of civil government. But it had been reſerved to him "to be for the people to Godward." In this department the Lord, on this occaſion, appoints him co-adjutors, endued with ſpecial wiſdom and grace for that ſervice, whoſe aſſiſtance, counſel, influence, and authority, he might uſe in allaying the tumults, quieting the minds, or oppoſing the violence of the people when rebellious. The Sanhedrim, or council of ſeventy perſons, in the after-ages of the Jewiſh nation, ſeems to have been a continuance, or imitation of this council aſſigned to Moſes.

V. 17. *I will take of the Spirit*, &c.] Not that Moſes

18 And

18 And ſay thou unto the people, Sanctify yourſelves againſt to-morrow, and ye ſhall eat fleſh: (for ye have wept in the ears of the LORD, ſaying, Who ſhall give us fleſh to eat? for *it was* well with us in Egypt:) therefore the LORD will give you fleſh, and ye ſhall eat.

19 Ye ſhall not eat one day, nor two days, nor five days, neither ten days, nor twenty days;

20 *But* even a whole month, until it come out at your noſtrils, and it be lothſome unto you: becauſe that ye have deſpiſed the LORD which *is* among you, and have wept before him, ſaying, Why came we forth out of Egypt?

21 And Moſes ſaid, The people among whom I *am are* ſix hundred thouſand footmen; and thou haſt ſaid, I will give them fleſh, that they may eat a whole month.

22 Shall the flocks and the herds be ſlain for them, to ſuffice them? or ſhall all the fiſh of the ſea be gathered together for them, to ſuffice them?

23 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Is the LORD's hand waxed ſhort? thou ſhalt ſee now whether my word ſhall come to paſs unto thee, or not.

24 And Moſes went out, and told the people the words of the LORD, and gathered the ſeventy men of the elders of the people, and ſet them round about the tabernacle.

25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and ſpake unto him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and gave *it* unto the ſeventy elders: and it came to paſs *that*, when the Spirit reſted upon them, they propheſied, and did not ceaſe.

26 But there remained two *of the* men in the camp, the name of the one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the Spirit reſted upon them, (and they *were* of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle,) and they propheſied in the camp.

27 And there ran a young man, and told Moſes, and ſaid, Eldad and Medad do propheſy in the camp.

28 And Joſhua the ſon of Nun, the ſervant of Moſes, *one* of his young men, anſwered, and ſaid, My lord Moſes, forbid them.

29 And Moſes ſaid unto him, Envieſt thou for my ſake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, *and* that the LORD would put his Spirit upon them.

30 And Moſes gat him into the camp, he and the elders of Iſrael.

31 And there went forth a wind from the LORD, and brought quails from the ſea, and let *them* fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this ſide, and as it were a day's journey on the other ſide, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits *high* upon the face of the earth.

32 And the people ſtood up all that day, and all *that* night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered leaſt

would on that account have leſs of the influences of the Spirit of truth, wiſdom, boldneſs, power, and holineſs: but that they ſhould be endued with a meaſure of the ſame Spirit, that they might be enabled, and diſpoſed cordially to concur with him in ſalutary meaſures, for the people's good.

V. 18. *Sanctify yourſelves*, &c.] The people were to witneſs an extraordinary manifeſtation of the divine power in ſending them fleſh to eat: but as they had greatly diſpleaſed the Lord by luſting for it, and tempting him, they might expect a diſplay alſo of his righteous indignation; except, by humbling themſelves before him, and ſeeking forgiveneſs of their ſins, and being found in a better frame of ſpirit, they averted the impending ſtorm.

V. 20. *Until*, &c.] That is, until they perfectly lothed that, which now they ſo inordinately craved. This is the nature of all ſenſual indulgences; they ſatiate and cloy, but never ſatisfy.

V. 21—23.] Some ſuppoſe that this was only the language of Moſes' admiration, and inquiry into the method, how this wonderful proviſion was to be furniſhed; (*Luke*, c. i. v. 34.) But the Lord's anſwer implies that there was ſome mixture of unbelief in it; (*Luke*, c. i. v. 18. *Mark*, c. vi. v. 37, c. viii. v. 4,) which was the more faulty, when he had ſeen ſuch effects of the divine power in Egypt, and at the Red Sea; nor was the Lord's hand ſhortened.

V. 25. *They propheſied*, &c.] They ſpake in ſo fluent and edifying a manner in exhorting the people, and in praiſing God; and were ſo raiſed above themſelves in wiſdom, and utterance; that all around them were ſenſible, that they ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt: which was a divine ſanction given to their appointment, as Moſes' helpers.

V. 26. *There remained two*, &c.] Some ſuppoſe that theſe two perſons were ceremonially unclean; others, that they humbly declined ſo arduous an office, or were loth to engage in it: but in the camp the Spirit of God ſingled them out, and they propheſied.

V. 28. *My lord Moſes, forbid them*, &c.] Joſhua would have them ſilenced leſt they ſhould occaſion a ſchiſm, or rival Moſes: but Moſes was not afraid of ſuch effects from that Spirit, which God had put upon him.

V. 32. *Ten homers.*] An homer contained near eight

gathered ten homers; and they spread *them* all abroad for themselves round about the camp.

33 And while the flesh *was* yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was kindled against the people; and the LORD smote the people with a very great plague.

34 And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.

bushels: this is therefore an immense proportion for every individual, or even for every head of a family, and various conjectures have been framed to reduce the quantity. But the whole was intended to illustrate the power of God, and the eagerness, with which the people seized upon this provision.

V. 34. *Kibroth-Hattaavah*,] Or "the graves of lust." Their sin was not, that they desired suitable food, or that they eat such, as the Lord sent them: but that they inordinately desired unnecessary indulgence, and intemperately gratified their appetites, when it was put in their way. The Lord having therefore shewn his power by sending this immense supply, punished their discontent, ingratitude, and lust, and by a pestilence executed immediate vengeance on the ringleaders of this rebellion, (*Psalm* cvi. v. 14, 15. *Deut.* c. ix. v. 22.) What multitudes are there in all places, who shorten their lives by excess of one kind or other; and whose sepulchres might justly be called "Kibroth-Hattaavah; because there they buried the people "that lusted!"

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Fallen man is a discontented creature: having forsaken his proper rest, no wonder that he feels himself uneasy, and wretched, how much soever he be prospered, or distinguished. Pride, ambition, sensuality, covetousness, and malice are diseases of the soul, which cannot be abated, but will be increased by indulgence; and they who are under the power of them, like a person in a fever, will ever be desirous of changing their place, or posture; as if *that* were the cause of the disquietude, which springs merely from distemper. Whilst this is the case, every providence, and appointment of God will excite the secret, or the open complaint: and though discontent may, and will have it's degrees, and paroxisms; yet there is no cure, till the soul return into its rest in the knowledge, love, and favour of God; and in a cordial reliance on his wisdom, and acquiescence in his will. The Lord sees, and hears, and is displeased at our murmurs, though concealed from men: and the greater kindness we have received from him, the severer correction we may expect when we thus offend: and they, who at present escape his chastening rod, will at length experience the dreadful effects of his fiery indignation. Indeed we all have been, and are so culpable in this respect, as well as in others, that we have reason to admire, and adore his patience with us; that we have been spared, whilst others have been punished. Sinners are under much greater obligations to their praying friends, than they are aware of; and many will cry to them to advise with, and pray for them in their distresses, and dangers, who despised and hated them before. But it is especially happy for us, that Jesus ever liveth to make intercession for us, when in our troubles we cry unto him for help, and to quench the fire of divine wrath, which our sins have kindled. Yet alas! how soon do we forget the smart, and terror of our chastisements, and relapse into our former offences, with still deeper aggravation; and when we are surrounded with mercies, we are capable of overlooking them all, and of deeming one slight inconvenience an intolerable grievance; on the other hand, forgetting the anguish, under which we have groaned in some former situation, from which we are now delivered (*Ex.* c. i. v. 14. c. ii. v. 23, 24. c. iii. v. 7—9,) we can murmur and fret at the absence of one imaginary, or worthless advantage, which we then possessed: and scarce any of our repinings arise from the want of things really needful, and proper for us; but from the want of such things, as are one way, or other fuel to our lusts. Nay the very choicest blessings, which God can bestow, even the very gospel of our salvation, will be slighted, and despised by us, if we have not every thing exactly to our mind; when we are under the influence of this evil disease. We can readily blame, and express our astonishment at the perverseness of the Israelites: but their conduct is only a picture of our heart, a fair specimen of human nature: and we have every one of us murmured, and complained, before now, with as little reason, and with as much folly and ingratitude, as they did. Let us then watch our own hearts, let us repress the first emotions of discontent, and inordinate desire; let us consider frequently how many unmerited mercies we worthless sinners enjoy; let us pray earnestly for grace to teach us, "to be satisfied with such things as "we have;" and refer to the wisdom, love and faithfulness of God the choice of the kind, measure, time, and manner of receiving all our temporal supplies. In general the Lord sees it best for those, whom he loves, to be confined to the necessaries of life, to be poor, to fare hard, and to receive their supply from day to day. And whatever the world, or the mixed multitude of mere professors may think; an inheritance in heaven, and provision by the way, sought daily by prayer, and received in gratitude from our heavenly Father's love, though mean and scanty, is "better than the "riches of many wicked:" has in it more sweetness, and less vexation, and temptation. But if the Lord sometimes surround his people with plenty, it is not for an occasion of excess, but for a trial of their temperance, and moderation; and that they may have a sufficiency for every good work: and to abuse such abundance proves a carnal sensual mind, and will alone expose a man to the heavy wrath of God, (*Luke*, c. xvi. v. 19—26.) Against such luxury and excess every true Christian should, by his example *at least*, enter his protest: but alas! too many are more apt to catch the infection of lusting, and self-indulgence, from the world around them, or from the more worthless kind of professors, than to manifest a decided disapprobation of it: and many of us, though surrounded with greater variety, than the Israelites were, are ready to complain, that we are out done in wealth, splendour, and the pride of life by our neighbours: and perhaps at some times are ready even to grow weary of our pilgrimage; to think that it was well with us when we were in Egypt; to allow a hankering after for-

35 *And*

35 *And* the people journeyed from Kibroth-hattaavah unto Hazeroth; and abode at Hazeroth.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1st. Miriam, and Aaron speaking against Moses, with his meekness on the occasion, v. 1—3. *2d. God vindicating Moses, and punishing Miriam with a leprosy, v.* 4—10. *3d. Aaron submitting, Moses interceding for Miriam, and the Lord healing her, after putting her to shame, v.* 11—16.

AND Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses, because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

2 And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard *it*.

3 (Now the man Moses *was* very meek, above all the men which *were* upon the face of the earth.)

4 And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

5 And the LORD came down *in* the pillar of the cloud, and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, *I* the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream.

7 My servant Moses *is* not so, who *is* faithful in all mine house.

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saken pleasures; almost to covet our former bondage; and to inquire why we came forth thence? if we are conscious that this hath been the secret thought of our heart, let us repent without delay, and intreat God that it may be forgiven; lest he send us those things which we have inordinately desired, and with his heavy indignation render them a curse to us: (1 *Cor.* c. x. v. 6. 10—13.) it is not for want of power, or love, that he doth not at all times indulge the desires of his people; but because his wisdom sees that that would be hurtful to them, which they desire as a blessing: in which, if they do not acquiesce, he will perhaps be induced to convince them by their bitter experience, that it was so. But we have continually cause to observe that the most eminent saints were evidently defective in the exercise of their strongest graces: and even the meek, and patient Moses manifested a distrust, peevishness, and want of submission, which can by no means be excused, though it may easily be accounted for. Hence may we learn what the heart of man is: and that none have any thing to trust in but the mercy of God, and the merits of Christ: hence let us learn to watch, and pray, lest we enter into temptation: and seeing eminent posts are confessedly such heavy burdens; let us learn to be contentedly obscure, and quietly to bear our lighter cross: nor let us forget that death is seldom wished for, but at a time, when we are least in a frame to meet it properly, and comfortably. But the Lord is very gracious; he considers the trials, and the weakness of his people; and will both forgive their sins, commune with them, and send them help in their troubles: and they will find that he can out-do their largest hopes, and expectations. He can easily multiply the numbers, as well as increase the ability of his ministers: and though the spirit, which *naturally* is in us lusteth to envy, both in behalf of ourselves, of our friends, and of our party, and disposes us, to wish to silence those, who follow not with us, (*Luke*, c. ix. v. 49, 50.) yet the Lord gives more grace: and they who wisely are zealous for his glory, and truly love the souls of men, will rejoice in the increase of useful instruments, though they should rival, and eclipse themselves, (*John*, c. iii. v. 26—30.) for if all the present number of the Lord's people were rendered prophets; (real able authorized ministers of Christ, though not all exactly agreed in externals, and circumstantials,) by the supply of the Spirit of Christ; the world is wide enough, and there might be work enough for them all in calling sinners to repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus. Finally let us seek for those pleasures, which satisfy, but never surfeit, and which will indure, and encrease for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. Miriam is mentioned first; because probably she was the first, and the most criminal in this transgression. There are two Ethiopias mentioned in Scripture; the one in Africa, south of Egypt; the other in Asia, which is the same with some part of Arabia. Zipporah being a Midianite, is called an Ethi pian, perhaps by way of contempt. It is probable that they thought that Zipporah had too much influence with Moses, and were piqued, that they had not been consulted in the choice of the elders; and it is not unlikely that there had been some private jar between Miriam and Zipporah; which had contributed to this dissatisfaction.

V. 3. *Was very meek*, &c.] Moses, writing as moved by the Holy Ghost, impartially records his own faults, and unreservedly speaks of the grace of God bestowed upon him. Being thus singularly meek, he took no notice of the affair, to resent it, or to punish them for their misconduct.

V. 6—8.] They had been summoned to the tabernacle, probably by an audible voice from the cloud, where the Lord thus expostulated with them. Occasionally by dreams and visions the Lord made himself known, and revealed his will to other prophets: but to Moses, he spake openly, and constantly, as a man with his friend. He also was admitted to "behold the similitude of the Lord;" the expres image of his person, even his eternal Son, appearing in visible glory. This Aaron and Miriam knew, and could not deny: and as Moses had been honoured, and favoured so far above them; they should have been afraid of opposing him.

8 With him will I ſpeak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark ſpeeches; and the ſimilitude of the LORD ſhall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to ſpeak againſt my ſervant Moſes?

9 And the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt them, and he departed.

10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as ſnow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, *ſhe was* leprous.

11 And Aaron ſaid unto Moſes, Alas! my lord, I beſeech thee, lay not the ſin upon us, wherein we have done fooliſhly, and wherein we have ſinned.

12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the fleſh is half conſumed, when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

13 And Moſes cried unto the LORD, ſaying, Heal her now, O God, I beſeech thee.

14 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, If her father had but ſpit in her face, ſhould ſhe not be aſhamed ſeven days? Let her be ſhut out from the camp ſeven days, and after that let her be received in *again*.

15 And Miriam was ſhut out from the camp ſeven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in *again*.

16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderneſs of Paran.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes by divine command inſtructing, and ſending ſpies, to ſearch out the land, 1—20. *2d. Their expedition, and return; with the evil report of ten of them, and the encouraging one of Caleb, and Joſhua,* 20—33.

AND the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, 2 Send thou men, that they may ſearch the land of Canaan, which I give

V. 9, 10.] The removal of the cloud expreſſed the Lord's diſpleaſure, as if he would leave ſuch a provoking people: and Miriam, as the ringleader became leprous; though Aaron, in honour of the prieſthood was ſpared: being ſeverely rebuked in her puniſhment, and in being the prieſt appointed to examine, and pronounce her leprous.

V. 14. *If her father*, &c.] If ſhe had provoked her father thus to diſgrace her, ſhe would have expreſſed her ſorrow and ſhame on the occaſion, by a temporary ſolitude. Thus ſhe was to expreſs her ſorrow and ſhame for ſome time, and then to be received again into the camp. And, as when ſhe honoured God in leading the praiſes of Iſrael, (*Ex.* c. xv,) ſhe was honoured as one of the chief ornaments of the nation: ſo now for her contempt of God ſhe is lightly eſteemed, and even expelled the camp, as if ſhe were a diſgrace to it. In the mean time the people tarried for her; both as a rebuke to them, who were diſpoſed to join ſuch oppoſition to Moſes, and the Lord; and as a decent reſpect for her, though under the reproof of God for her ſin.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who are eſpecially honoured of God, muſt expect the ſevereſt, and moſt repeated trials from men; and even from thoſe, whom they moſt love, and to whom they have been moſt uſeful: and the contentions amongſt brethren, and amongſt believers are not only the effects of their remaining pride, ambition, envy, and ſelfiſhneſs; but are to be traced back to the malicious policy of ſatan, who thus deviſes to diſgrace the goſpel, and to weaken the hands, and diſcourage the hearts of it's beſt friends: and when the mind is diſpoſed for ſuch conteſts, the moſt frivolous, and groundleſs pretences will ſuffice to excite, or to vindicate them. They, who are expoſed to ſuch provocations, will need much meekneſs; and waiting ſimply upon the Lord, will from him receive it: and the leſs anxious we are to juſtify, or avenge ourſelves, the more certainly will the Lord plead our cauſe, and clear our character from every unjuſt aſperſion. If it were ſo criminal, and dangerous to oppoſe the faithful, and honoured ſervant of the Lord: how dreadful will be their doom who diſhonour, deſpiſe, or oppoſe "his beloved ſon, in whom he is well pleaſed:" (*Heb.* c. iii. v. 1—6.) They, who exalt themſelves, and ambitiouſly purſue honours, will be abaſed, and fall into diſgrace, if not into deſtruction: and they, who ſpeak againſt the Lord's ſervants, may ſoon be conſtrained to make the moſt humiliating ſubmiſſions, and ſupplications to them; and to confer on them the moſt honourable titles, and commendations. But it is well when rebukes produce penitent confeſſions, and retractations: ſuch offenders, though corrected, and diſgraced, ſhall be pardoned: the Lord's people, though they have been injured by them, will readily pray for them, with all earneſtneſs: Jeſus himſelf will intercede for them: they ſhall in due time be reſtored to their comfortable fellowſhip with God, and his church, and with renewed ſtrength purſue their heavenly pilgrimage. And it was happy for Aaron, and it is well for us that the church of God hath ſuch an High Prieſt as became us, who is "holy, harmleſs, and undefiled, ſeparate "from ſinners, and made higher than the heavens, &c." (*Heb.* c. vii. v. 25—27.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 2. *Send thou men*, &c.] The Iſraelites were arrived at the ſouthern border of the land; and might have gone up, and taken immediate poſſeſſion, had not this breach intervened. We find elſewhere, (*Deut.* c. i. v. 20—23.) that the people firſt propoſed this deſign of ſpying out the land to Moſes; who, not ſuſpecting the diſtruſt, and unbelief, which had ſuggeſted it, was pleaſed with the propoſal, and conſulted the Lord about it. He permitted it to be ſo, and gave orders for the ſpies to be ſent; becauſe he had been provoked by their former rebellions, and in order to a further diſcovery of their wicked-

unto

unto the children of Israel: of every tribe of their fathers shall ye send a man, every one a ruler among them.

3 And Moses, by the commandment of the LORD, sent them from the wilderness of Paran: all those men *were* heads of the children of Israel.

4 And these *were* their names: Of the tribe of Reuben; Shammua, the son of Zaccur.

5 Of the tribe of Simeon; Shaphat, the son of Hori.

6 Of the tribe of Judah; Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.

7 Of the tribe of Issachar; Igal, the son of Joseph.

8 Of the tribe of Ephraim; Oshea, the son of Nun.

9 Of the tribe of Benjamin; Palti, the son of Raphu.

10 Of the tribe of Zebulun; Gaddiel, the son of Sodi.

11 Of the tribe of Joseph, *namely*, of the tribe of Manasseh; Gaddi, the son of Susi.

12 Of the tribe of Dan; Ammiel, the son of Gemalli.

13 Of the tribe of Asher; Sethur, the son of Michael.

14 Of the tribe of Naphtali; Nahbi, the son of Vophsi.

15 Of the tribe of Gad; Geuel, the son of Machi.

16 These *are* the names of the men which Moses sent to spy out the land. And Moses called Oshea the son of Nun, Jehoshua.

17 And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this *way* southward, and go up into the mountain;

18 And see the land what it *is*; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they *be* strong or weak, few or many;

19 And what the land *is* that they dwell in, whether it *be* good or bad; and what cities *they be* that they dwell in, whether in tents, or in strong holds;

20 And what the land *is*, whether it *be* fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not: and be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land. (Now the time *was* the time of the first-ripe grapes.)

21 So they went up, and searched the land from the wilderness of Zin unto Rehob, as men come to Hamath.

22 And they ascended by the south, and came unto Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, *were*. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.)

23 And they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff; and *they*

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ness, and display of his justice and holiness, for his own glory, and for the future instruction of his church in all ages. It is true there was no need for them to search out a land, which the Lord had searched out for them, and into which he had undertaken to lead them: but there was no evil in the thing itself; and had it not been for the prevailing iniquity in the hearts of both the spies, and the people, the report might have been as effectual to increase and encourage their faith and hope, as it proved eventually to the contrary. (*See Joshua*, c. ii. v. 23, 24.) In like manner the number, and rank of these spies had a direct contrary effect, to what it would have had, if they had all been of the spirit of Caleb and Joshua.

V. 16. *Oshea — Jehoshua.*] Oshea may signify, "Save "thou," being a prayer for salvation: Jehoshua may signify, "He will save," being an assurance of salvation in answer to prayer. But very able critics seem very conclusively to support their opinion, that the former name denotes "salvation," the latter (being an addition of part of the name Jehovah) signifies "the Lord our salvation." The change of his name on this occasion seems to have been intended as an encouragement to him, and to the other spies, confidently to expect protection, and safety from the Lord. It is well known that Jesus is the same name formed to a Greek termination; who is the Lord our salvation, of whom Joshua was an eminent type.

V. 20. *Be ye of good courage*, &c.] The service, in which they were employed would require courage; for they could expect no favour from the Canaanites, in case they were detected, and apprehended, and must therefore go forth at the hazard of their lives. But courage also would be necessary for them, that by their example, and report, they might encourage the people. This courage *in their circumstances* could only spring from strong faith; which Caleb, and Joshua possessed, but the rest lacked.

V. 21, 22.] Entering at the southern border they surveyed the whole land even to the northern extremities; and returned back by Hebron, which was then called Kirsath-Arba, and was one of the most ancient cities in the world, and in the possession of a family of gigantic stature, which especially attracted their attention.

V. 23. *The brook of Eshcol*, &c.] Or "the brook of the "cluster," called so from the one extraordinary large cluster of grapes, which they cut down, with the branch, on

brought of the pomegranates, and of the figs.

24 The place was called the brook Eshcol, because of the cluster of grapes which the children of Israel cut down from thence.

25 And they returned from searching of the land after forty days.

26 And they went and came to Moses, and to Aaron, and to all the congregation of the children of Israel, unto the wilderness of Paran, to Kadesh; and brought back word unto them, and unto all the congregation, and shewed them the fruit of the land.

27 And they told him, and said, We came unto the land whither thou sentest us, and surely it floweth with milk and honey; and this *is* the fruit of it.

28 Nevertheless, the people *be* strong that dwell in the land, and the cities *are* walled, *and* very great: and, moreover, we saw the children of Anak there.

29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south; and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan.

30 And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.

31 But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they *are* stronger than we.

32 And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, *is* a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof: and all the people that we saw in it *are* men of a great stature.

33 And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, *which come* of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grashoppers, and so we were in their sight.

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which it grew, and carried upon a staff between two of them, as a specimen of Canaan's fruits, into the wilderness to their brethren: an apt emblem of the earnests, and anticipations of heavenly joys, with which believers are favoured on earth, in the consolations of the Holy Spirit. Some suppose that Caleb and Joshua alone brought this cluster; the others being neither so favourably disposed towards Canaan, nor so willing to labour in order to recommend it.

V. 30. *Caleb stilled*, &c.] Caleb signifies "all heart;" and he was evidently a man of true courage, stedfastly facing danger in the path of duty, in the exercise of a vigorous faith, and entire dependance upon the Lord. When the report of the other spies, by a misrepresentation of the truth, had excited a tumult amongst the people, he stood forth to still them, (doubtless with the concurrence of Joshua:) and he doth not say, "let us go, and attack "the Canaanites;" but "let us go up at once, and pos- "sess their land:" as if he thought the forty days spent in searching the land had been too long a delay, and were impatient to take possession.

V. 31. *We be not able*, &c.] We must conclude the Israelites to have been very deficient in courage, in thus fearing the Canaanites, when such a multitude were all engaged to fight for themselves, and their families: but when we consider the mighty works of the Lord, which they had witnessed in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, even to that present day, we shall be more surprised at their unbelief. Had the Canaanites been stronger than Israel, they were not stronger than Israel's God, as Pharaoh had found to his cost. But such is the heart of man, when left to himself!

V. 32. *Eateth up*, &c.] Some suppose that there was a great mortality in the land just at that time, by which the Lord was weakening the enemies of Israel, and fighting for them: but which they perversely ascribed to an unwholesome climate; and at the same time, that they represented the country fruitful and populous, and the people powerful, and prosperous; they inconsistently speak of the land as eating up it's inhabitants!

V. 33. *As grashoppers*, &c.] That is, they despised us as puny creatures, and we, conscious of our insignificancy and feebleness, trembled before them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The righteous Lord frequently gives up to their unbelieving devices such persons, as confide in their own wisdom, policy, and vain reasonings, in preference, or in opposition to his express word of promise: and even obedience to the commandments of God, if formal, and hypocritical, may prove an occasion of men's falling into delusion, sin, and misery: we have need therefore, both to take heed what we do; and in what manner and with what spirit we do it: as the same action may spring from contrary motives; and will certainly be productive of contrary effects to ourselves, according to the intention and disposition of our hearts. Of those numbers, whose names crowd the page of history; nay even of those, whose names are written in the Scriptures; the greater part are only recorded to their perpetual disgrace: happy they, and they only, whose names are written in the book of life, in the registers of eternity, as the people of the Lord our salvation. In the exercise of faith and hope, and careful investigation of the sacred word, we may profitably search out the heavenly country, and hear a good report concerning it; and take encouragement to go up in the strength of the Lord, and possess it at once. But carnal sense, and carnal preachers and professors, are not spies, to be trusted in this business: and unbelief overlooks the promises, and power of God, magnifies every danger,

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. The congregation murmuring, and proposing to return to Egypt: whilst Moses, and Aaron, Caleb, and Joshua, in vain, attempt to pacify them, v. 1—10. *2d. The Lord threatening their destruction, Moses interceding, and prevailing for their being spared from immediate death: and that generation doomed to fall in the wilderness, Caleb and Joshua alone excepted, v.* 11—35. *3d. The spies, who brought up the evil report, destroyed by a plague, v.* 36—38. *4th. The people attempting to march towards Canaan, though warned to the contrary by Moses, and smitten by their enemies, v.* 39—45.

AND all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.

2 And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or, would God we had died in this wilderness!

3 And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?

4 And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *which were* of them that searched the land, rent their clothes.

7 And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, *is* an exceeding good land.

8 If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey.

9 Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they *are* bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD *is* with us; fear them not.

10 But all the congregation bade stone them with stones. And the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation, before all the children of Israel.

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and difficulty, and fills the heart with overwhelming discouragement.—May God help us to believe, and we shall then find all things possible: faith will still the tumult of our passions; and inform us far beyond the report of either sense or reason; whilst earnests of heavenly joys, will form a witness within "ourselves," that will confute the falshood of their testimony, who deny the reality, or the excellency of such spiritual blessings; and so animate us in seeking those things, which are above, as to render us willing to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better than all things here below.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1. *Cried*, &c.] They vented their discontent, and despondency, as children are apt to do, in clamorous lamentations.

V. 2—4.] Nothing can be conceived more absurd, as well as rebellious, than the whole conduct of Israel on this occasion. It had been at least as eligible to have fallen soldier like, sword in hand, attempting to conquer Canaan, as to have died slaves in Egypt, or by famine, or pestilence in the wilderness. Had it been possible for them to have reached Egypt, they might have expected much more severe treatment, than that, which had formerly extorted their doleful groans. But that had been absolutely impracticable; for could they expect to be miraculously guided, victualled, and watered in their retrogade march? And yet otherwise, such a company could never have traversed that waste howling wilderness, but, without any immediate judgment from God, must inevitably have perished. The whole was also a combination of the most horrible ingratitude, blasphemy, and rebellion. The Lord was directly charged with an intention of bringing them out of Egypt, by alluring them with the most encouraging promises, on purpose to destroy them, and their families: and the whole present government, of God's appointment, was intended to be set aside, and a new leader chosen, in opposition to, and in defiance of him. Such is human nature! And such counsellors are discontent and passion!

V. 5. *Fell on their faces*, &c.] Being shocked at the blasphemy and rebellion of the people, expecting some terrible judgment upon them, perhaps intreating the people to desist from their fatal purpose (*Deut.* c. i. v. 27—31;) and deprecating the divine displeasure by their prayers.

V. 6. *Rent their clothes*, &c.] This was a common expression of intense grief, or deep abhorrence: (*Josh.* c. vii. v. 6. 2 *Sam.* c. iii. v. 31. 2 *Kings*, c. xviii. v. 37. c. xix. v. 1. *Matth.* c. xxvi. v. 65.)

V. 9. *Bread for us*, &c.] He means, that all the wealth and prosperity of the Canaanites would afford Israel the more suitable present support, and future accommodation: for as the measure of their iniquities was now filled up, and the protection of God's providence was removed from them; and as the Lord had engaged to fight for Israel; their victory must be certain, easy, and cheap; more like taking possession of an estate, that conflicting with a powerful enemy. The whole of this address may be aptly accommodated to our spiritual and eternal concerns, as will appear in the practical observations.

V. 10. *All the congregation*, &c.] Perhaps the rulers of the tribes, and families first gave the word, and it soon be-

11 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the ſigns which I have ſhewed among them?

12 I will ſmite them with the peſtilence, and diſinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they.

13 And Moſes ſaid unto the LORD, Then the Egyptians ſhall hear *it*, (for thou broughteſt up this people in thy might from among them,)

14 And they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land: *for* they have heard that thou, LORD, *art* among this people; that thou, LORD, art ſeen face to face; and *that* thy cloud ſtandeth over them; and that thou goeſt before them, by day-time in a pillar of a cloud, and in a pillar of fire by night.

15 Now *if* thou ſhalt kill *all* this people as one man, then the nations, which have heard the fame of thee, will ſpeak, ſaying,

16 Becauſe the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land which he ſware unto them, therefore he hath ſlain them in the wilderneſs.

17 And now, I beſeech thee, let the power of my LORD be great, according as thou haſt ſpoken, ſaying,

18 The LORD *is* long-ſuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and tranſgreſſion, and by no means clearing the *guilty*; viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth *generation:*

19 Pardon, I beſeech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatneſs of thy mercy, and as thou haſt forgiven this people from Egypt even until now.

20 And the LORD ſaid, I have pardoned, according to thy word:

21 But *as* truly *as* I live, all the earth ſhall be filled with the glory of the LORD.

22 Becauſe all thoſe men which have ſeen my glory, and my miracles which I did in

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came the general outcry through the whole multitude, that they, who were neareſt to them, ſhould immediately ſtone them; that is not only Caleb and Joſhua, but Moſes and Aaron alſo, as appears from the narration. And now dreadful deeds had been done, had not the Lord interpoſed to calm this tumult of the people, by a viſible diſplay of his glory, which intimidated them for the preſent.

V. 11, 12.] This is the abrupt language of aſtoniſhment, and indignation: they had been tried and ſpared ſo long to no purpoſe, and ſtill proceeded in their unbelief and provocations to ſuch a degree, that it was in vain to bear with them any longer: (*Mark*, c. ix. v. 19.) The Lord therefore declares *their deſervings*, in this threatening to deſtroy them at once, and his faithfulneſs, in expreſſing his intention to fulfil his promiſes to the poſterity of Moſes, (*Ex.* c. xxxii. v. 10.)

V. 13—19.] In this ſupplication Moſes does not in the leaſt excuſe the ſin of Iſrael, object to the juſtice of the awful ſentence, or argue, that ſuch a conduct would not conſiſt with the divine truth, and goodneſs: but he pleads *the appearance*, which it would have, and the conſtruction, which the Egyptians, and neighbouring nations would put upon it; who had witneſſed, or heard of the miracles which God had wrought for, and the promiſes which he had made to Iſrael; and who would never think of aſcribing their deſtruction to the true cauſe; but would conclude that he was unable to fulfil his engagements. He therefore prays that the Lord would ſhew his great power, not in their immediate deſtruction, but in ſparing them, and in performing his promiſes to them; (*Ezek.* c. xx. v. 14—22.) He further urges in his plea the name of the Lord, which had been proclaimed before him (*ſee notes Exod.* c. xxxiv. v. 5—7.) and the examples of his former forgiveneſſes, from their leaving Egypt to the preſent time: thus he argued that conſiſtent with his character, in his abundant mercies, he could do it; and that their former experience encouraged him ſtill to expect it.

V. 18. *Will by no means clear*, &c.] As the word "*guilty*" is not in the original, many commentators put a different interpretation on this paſſage, both, here, and in *Exodus*, c. xxxiv. v. 7. than our tranſlation doth; as if it meant, that in executing judgment God would not proceed to extremities, but would ſoften the rigour of it with mercy. It doth not however appear, but that our tranſlation is equally juſt: and the meaning of the paſſage thus tranſlated is ſo important; ſo eſſential to the perfection of the divine character; ſo conſiſtent with the general ſcope of Scripture; and ſo connected with the Lord's method of ſhewing mercy, only to the penitent and believing, through the atonement of Chriſt; that there ſhould be very cogent reaſons to induce us to depart from it, (*Nah.* c. i. v. 2, 3. 6, 7, 8.) And it comported very well with Moſes' deſign to plead that the Lord could ſhew mercy in the largeſt meaſure, without acting inconſiſtent with his juſtice and holineſs.

V. 21. *But as truly*, &c.] The Lord granted the prayer of Moſes ſo far, as not immediately to deſtroy the whole congregation, as he declared himſelf otherwiſe prepared to do: but whilſt he thus conſents to glorify his power in ſhewing mercy, rather than in executing vengeance; he declares that he would ſpare them in ſuch a manner, and attended with ſuch circumſtances of his indignation, as ſhould make all ages and nations perceive the glory of his juſtice, and holineſs, (v. 18.)

V. 22. *Theſe ten times*, &c.] Many times had they put the Lord's power, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs to a needleſs trial: and even acted as if they would prove whether he could, or would puniſh them for their crimes: a definite is put for an indefinite number, (*Gen.* c. xxxi. v. 41.)

Egypt,

Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, and have tempted me now theſe ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice;

23 Surely they ſhall not ſee the land which I ſware unto their fathers, neither ſhall any of them that provoked me ſee it:

24 But my ſervant Caleb, becauſe he had another Spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his ſeed ſhall poſſeſs it.

(25 Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwelt in the valley.) To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderneſs, by the way of the Red ſea.

26 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

27 How long *ſhall I bear with* this evil congregation, which murmur againſt me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Iſrael, which they murmur againſt me.

28 Say unto them, *As truly as* I live, ſaith the LORD, as ye have ſpoken in my ears, ſo will I do to you:

29 Your carcaſes ſhall fall in this wilderneſs; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured againſt me,

30 Doubtleſs ye ſhall not come into the land *concerning* which I ſware to make you dwell therein, ſave Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun.

31 But your little ones, which ye ſaid ſhould be a prey, them will I bring in, and they ſhall know the land which ye have deſpiſed.

32 But, as *for* you, your carcaſes, they ſhall fall in this wilderneſs.

33 And your children ſhall wander in the wilderneſs forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcaſes be waſted in the wilderneſs.

34 After the number of the days in which ye ſearched the land, *even* forty days, (each day for a year,) ſhall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years; and ye ſhall know my breach of promiſe.

35 I the LORD have ſaid, I will ſurely do

V. 24. *Had another Spirit*, &c.] Caleb ſeems to have taken the more active part in this buſineſs: and Joſhua was intended Moſes' ſucceſſor; therefore the former is more frequently mentioned, though the latter was as evidently intended, and is alſo mentioned, (v. 30.) Caleb had another Spirit with him, even the Spirit of God, as a Spirit of faith, and holineſs: therefore he *followed* the Lord *fully*: that is, he ſimply believed his word; embraced his promiſes; obſerved his directions; obeyed his commandments; depended on his faithfulneſs, power, and goodneſs; and confidently expected that matters would eventually ſucceed exactly as the Lord had ſpoken, notwithſtanding all difficulties, oppoſitions, or apparent improbabilities: and this he did with perſeverance, patience, and courage; notwithſtanding influence, example, authority, terrors, ſufferings, &c. combined to divert him from his ſteady courſe: and he was willing to venture, endure, reject, or renounce whatever was neceſſary in ſo doing. In conſequence of thus fully following the Lord, he at firſt met with hatred, reproaches, threats, and dangers: but he ſurvived his enemies, and their oppoſition; and at length had honour from God and man, much comfort, and a valuable recompenſe; (*Joſhua*, c. xiv. v. 6—14.) Such is the character, treatment, and cloſe of the true Chriſtian; whilſt the half-hearted profeſſor, and the apoſtate eſcape the croſs, but loſe the crown, (*Matt.* c. vi. v. 24. c. x. v. 22. 37, 38. *Luke*, c. xiv. v. 26—33. *Rev.* c. ii. v. 10.)

V. 28, 29.] "Thus the Lord ſware in his wrath, that "they ſhould not enter into his reſt," (*Pſ.* xcv. v. 11.) and irrevocably condemned all Iſrael to wander in the wilderneſs, for the ſpace of forty years; till all that generation was dead, and their children grown up to inherit the land, according to his promiſe to their fathers. Having ſworn by himſelf, and pledged the honour of all his perfections, the ſentence was made abſolute and irreverſible. It is probable that the Levites, who were numbered from a month old, were not included in this ſentence: and it is evident, that Eleazar, the ſon of Aaron, aſſiſted Joſhua in dividing the land of Canaan, after the conqueſt of it; (*Joſh.* c. xiv. v. 1,) though he was old enough to officiate in the prieſt's office, before this time, (*Levit.* c. x. v. 6—16.) and was chief over the Levites, (*Num.* c. iii. v. 32.)

V. 31. *Shall know*, &c.] Their children, by poſſeſſing it, experimentally knew that it was a good land, though their fathers had deſpiſed it.

V. 34. *Forty years*, &c.] That is from their departure from Egypt, to their entrance into Canaan.

My breach of promiſe, &c.] The original doth not convey the ſame preciſe idea to the mind, as this tranſlation. It may be rendered, "ye ſhall know my diſannulling:" Which may either mean, that they ſhould know whether the Lord, having uttered this ſentence againſt them, would diſannul it or not: that is, they ſhould experience the truth of it: or they ſhould know, that whilſt his promiſes ſtand firm to the believing, and obedient; hypocrites and apoſtates ſhall be excluded from all benefit from them: and whilſt *they* would interpret this excluſion into a breach of promiſe; *he* would ſhew, that it was only an interruption for wiſe and gracious purpoſes; and would fulfil the promiſe to their deſcendants.

it unto all this evil congregation, that are gathered together againſt me: in this wilderneſs they ſhall be conſumed; and there they ſhall die.

36 And the men which Moſes ſent to ſearch the land, who returned, and made all the congregation to murmur againſt him, by bringing up a ſlander upon the land;

37 Even thoſe men, that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD.

38 But Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, *which were* of the men that went to ſearch the land, lived *ſtill.*

39 And Moſes told theſe ſayings unto all the children of Iſrael: and the people mourned greatly.

40 And they roſe up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, ſaying, Lo, we *be here*, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promiſed: for we have ſinned.

41 And Moſes ſaid, Wherefore now do ye tranſgreſs the commandment of the LORD? but it ſhall not proſper.

42 Go not up, for the LORD *is* not among you; that ye be not ſmitten before your enemies.

V. 40.] Having ſo frequently eſcaped with a more gentle rebuke, they concluded that the Lord would not proceed to extremities: and being convinced that they had ſinned by the death of the ſpies; they vainly hoped that an alteration of conduct, would produce at leaſt a mitigation of the ſentence. But the irreverſible oath was ſworn, and they only added one rebellion to another, to their own deſtruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ſhall not reap the benefit of the Scripture, unleſs we conſider it, as the hiſtory of human nature written with an infallible, and perfectly impartial pen; and are aware that we ourſelves are diſpoſed to act, in ſimilar circumſtances, in exactly the ſame manner, that the Iſraelites did. If we are conſcious of this, we ſhall ſee, in the chapter before us, a very humiliating picture of our own hearts, and characters, which may be of great advantage to us. For we perceive that it is natural to ſinful man to believe a lye, in preference to the faithful word of God; which gives ſatan, and his inſtruments their grand advantage in oppoſing true religion, and deceiving the ſouls of men. In this ſpirit of unbelief, we are prone to harbour hard thoughts of God, to rebel againſt him, to torment ourſelves, and to ruſh headlong upon our own deſtruction: and we ſhould be completely ruined, if our wiſhes were granted us, when diſcontent, and unbelief bear rule; when we are even capable of quarrelling with our choiceſt mercies, and chooſing, nay impatiently deſiring thoſe very evils, which at other times are moſt dreaded. But we ſhould watch, and pray againſt the very firſt beginnings of ſuch an ungrateful, and abominable frame of mind; and keep a guard at the door of our lips, when ſuch thoughts work in our hearts; for the Lord frequently takes ſuch provoking rebels at their word, and ſends them the judgment, or the death, for which they raſhly wiſh. The madneſs of a diſcontented heart is as great in its reſolves, as in its deſires; (*Eccleſ.* c. ix. v. 3.) Nor is there any thing ſo impracticable, or ſo deſperate, which man dare not attempt, when raging in feeble rebellion againſt the will of God: as if he could overpower Omnipotence, and diſannul the appointments of his Maker. Intreaties, counſels, encouragements, and warnings are all at ſuch a time in vain, and only enrage the more: "and a "bear robbed of her whelps is better to meet, than ſuch a "fool in his folly," (*Prov.* c. xvii. v. 12.) How ſhould we then watch our own hearts, leſt this evil, which dwells within, ſhould prevail, break forth, and produce ſuch direful effects! but the grace of God's Spirit poſſeſſing the ſoul produces a contrary diſpoſition; and the ſervants of the Lord will thereby be inclined to ſtoop to, to venture, or to ſuffer any thing, in order to reſcue infatuated ſinners from impending ruin: and though they abhor their crimes, they will compaſſionate their perſons, and both plead with them, and pray for them, even when they ſee them full of enmity, and rage againſt them. And the Lord will afford peculiar protection, and ſingular marks of his regard, to thoſe who venture to ſtem the torrent of prevailing iniquity, in the face of the ſcorn, and malice of their enemies; yet in a ſpirit of tender love to them: and the diſplays of his glory are alone ſufficient to diſmay the ſtouteſt ſpirits of rebellious ſinners, and to encourage the hearts of his ſervants in their extremeſt danger. Though millions of the Lord's *profeſſed* people periſh in their unbelief, and diſobedience; his covenant, and promiſes ſtand ſure: and, whilſt he glorifies his truth and mercy in his dealings with believers; he will take occaſion from the perverſeneſs of unbelievers more extenſively, and durably to glorify his whole name. With the glory of God at heart, and the word of God dwelling within us, we cannot pray amiſs, or plead in vain. Such interceſſors are an invaluable bleſſing to any people, though ſeldom much eſteemed, and oft treated with the baſeſt ingratitude: but, though they avert temporal judgments, and prevail for the converſion of many individuals; yet their prayers will not prevent the final deſtruction of obſtinate, and impenitent ſinners. In his hotteſt diſpleaſure, the Lord knoweth how to diſtinguiſh betwixt the righteous, and the wicked: and they, who manifeſt another ſpirit, than their unbelieving aſſociates, and follow him fully, being valiant, and patient in his cauſe, ſhall in due time have the diſtinguiſhing credit, and comfort of their faithfulneſs. But dreadful is their caſe, againſt whom the oath of God is gone forth; for as it is the *irreverſible* ſecurity of the covenant of grace, for the ſtrong conſolation of all, who have fled for refuge to the hope ſet before them: ſo it ſeals irrevocably the doom of thoſe, who provoke him "to ſwear in his wrath, "that they ſhall never enter into his reſt." And it is in

43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you.

44 But they presumed to go up unto the hill-top: nevertheless, the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.

45 Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, *even* unto Hormah.

CHAP. XV.

Contains laws, 1st. For the meat, and drink-offerings, which accompanied the sacrifices, v. 1—16. 2d. For the heave-offering of the dough, v. 17—21. 3d. For sin-offerings in case of ignorance v. 22—29. 4th. Concerning presumptuous offenders, which is exemplified in the stoning of a sabbath-breaker, v. 30—36. 5th. For their wearing of fringes, v. 37—41.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye be come into the land of your habitations, which I give unto you,

3 And will make an offering by fire unto the LORD, a burnt-offering, or a sacrifice in performing a vow, or in a free-will-offering, or in your solemn feasts, to make a sweet savour unto the LORD, of the herd or of the flock;

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vain to oppose the execution of the sentence, when the Lord can fence around the waste howling wilderness, as a prison, in which effectually to confine the most outrageous rebels; who can by no efforts escape it. Though these truths are so plain, and so important, yet sinners will not take warning; but persist in their rebellion, only varying the mode of it: and they are often blind enough to think that one act of disobedience may atone for another; an hypocritical, uncommanded form of devotion, for gross profaneness, or injustice. But evil pursueth them, and many plagues remain for all, who go on still in their wickedness: and they may read their own condemnation, when the Lord's people separate from, and protest against them.—But in this history of those, who were excluded Canaan, let us advert to a case of greater, and more universal importance: (*Ps.* xcv. v. 5—11. *Heb.* c. iii. v. 7—19. c. iv. v. 1—10.) A heavenly rest is revealed, proposed, and recommended to us in the sacred Scriptures. The true ministers of Christ describe it, as an exceeding good land, "flowing with "richer blessings than milk and honey; and freely given to "all, in whom the Lord delighteth:" and the very proposal of such a blessing to us by his gospel, is a token for good. They point out the way in which sinners must come, and the means which they must use, if they would enter therein: they assure them in the name of the Lord, that notwithstanding all their guilt, depravity, and weakness; notwithstanding the power, malice, and number of their enemies, the Lord will bring them into it, and give it them, if they rebel not against him, by despising, and neglecting such great salvation: that they need fear no opposition; for that even conflicts, temptations, and persecutions will eventually do them good, and forward their salvation: (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 31—39:) they exhort them to day, to hearken to the voice of the Lord, and warn them not to harden their hearts, and provoke him by delay: and bid them take heed that there be not in them an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. In such addresses, and exhortations, and in fervent prayers for them, they must, and will, and do persist with unceasing importunity, in the face of hatred, contempt, and persecution, whilst hope is left. But alas! most men "despise the pleasant land, "and believe not their word;" (*Psalm* cvi. v. 24, 25;) place no dependance on the Lord's promises; are discouraged by the prospect of real, or imaginary difficulties, and dangers; do not think even heaven, worth so much trouble, and self-denial; prefer a portion in this world, and harden their hearts, till it be too late, till their exclusion be irreversibly determined, and then they unavailingly regret their folly; (*Prov.* c. i. v. 24—32. *Matt.* c. xxv. v. 1—13. *Luke*, c. xiii. v. 24—28.) And alas! too many, who appear to set out, through unbelief grow weary, and in their hearts, perhaps in their conduct, return back to the world: and many, who profess to be spies, and to have searched out the good land, bring an evil report upon it: and either by their doctrine, or by their evident attachment to temporal interests, and carelessness about spiritual things, weaken the hands of believers, and strengthen those of unbelievers. These being ringleaders in wickedness, will have the first share, or the largest portion of divine vengeance. "Let us then fear, "lest a promise being left us of entering into the Lord's "rest, any of us should seem to come short of it:" let us take warning from the fate of Israel, lest we perish, after the same example of unbelief; "let us be afraid of nothing, "but of provoking the Lord to swear in his wrath, that we "shall never enter into his rest;" let us go forth depending on his mercy, power, promise, and truth; let us follow him fully, venture for him freely, and suffer for him patiently; and he will assuredly be with us, and bring our souls to everlasting rest in heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 2. *When ye be come*, &c.] Though that generation were doomed to fall in the wilderness, and the whole congregation to wander in it forty years; during which space many new provocations, and judgments were like to intervene, all which threatened their final exclusion from Canaan: yet, as the Lord actually intended in due time to bring them into possession of it, he enacted these laws as a pledge, and assurance of his purpose, and as a token of his being *thus far* reconciled to them. In the wilderness, whilst they had neither corn fields, vineyards, or olive yards, but lived upon manna, they could not easily bring meat, and drink-offerings; which were therefore not then required; and indeed it is probable that much of their insti-

4 Then ſhall he that offereth his offering unto the LORD, bring a meat-offering of a tenth-deal of flour, mingled with the fourth *part* of an hin of oil.

5 And the fourth *part* of an hin of wine for a drink-offering ſhalt thou prepare, with the burnt-offering or ſacrifice, for one lamb.

6 Or for a ram, thou ſhalt prepare *for* a meat-offering two tenth-deals of flour, mingled with the third *part* of an hin of oil.

7 And for a drink-offering thou ſhalt offer the third *part* of an hin of wine, *for* a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

8 And when thou prepareſt a bullock *for* a burnt-offering, or *for* a ſacrifice in performing a vow, or peace-offerings unto the LORD:

9 Then ſhall he bring with a bullock a meat-offering of three tenth-deals of flour, mingled with half an hin of oil.

10 And thou ſhalt bring for a drink-offering half an hin of wine, *for* an offering made by fire of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

11 Thus ſhall it be done for one bullock, or for one ram, or for a lamb, or a kid.

12 According to the number that ye ſhall prepare, ſo ſhall ye do to every one, according to their number.

13 All that are born of the country ſhall do theſe things after this manner, in offering an offering made by fire of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD.

14 And if a ſtranger ſojourn with you, or whoſoever *be* among you in your generations, and will offer an offering made by fire of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD; as ye do, ſo he ſhall do.

15 One ordinance *ſhall be both* for you of the congregation, and alſo for the ſtranger that ſojourneth *with you*, an ordinance for ever in your generations: as ye *are*, ſo ſhall the ſtranger be before the LORD.

16 One law, and one manner, ſhall be for you, and for the ſtranger that ſojourneth with you.

17 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

18 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When ye come into the land whither I bring you;

19 Then it ſhall be, that, when ye eat of the bread of the land, ye ſhall offer up an heave-offering unto the LORD.

20 Ye ſhall offer up a cake of the firſt of your dough *for* an heave-offering: as *ye do* the heave-offering of the threſhing-floor, ſo ſhall ye heave it.

21 Of the firſt of your dough ye ſhall give unto the LORD an heave-offering in your generations.

22 And if ye have erred, and not obſerved all theſe commandments which the LORD hath ſpoken unto Moſes.

23 *Even* all that the LORD hath commanded

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tuted worſhip was then diſpenſed with. The meat-offerings before preſcribed were offered alone; but thoſe, which are here appointed, were to accompany all their ſacrifices of animals, except thoſe of doves. Probably they were diſpoſed of according to the method before appointed, and had the ſame ſignificancy. (*See notes*, &c. *Lev.* c. ii.) A portion was burnt on the altar, and the remainder was eaten by the prieſts: and the drink-offering was diſpoſed of in a ſimilar manner. The ſacrifices were not only typical of Chriſt, and of all that fulneſs of ſpiritual bleſſings which is in him for our uſe, and of all thoſe things which are well pleaſing and honourable to the Father: but ſhadowed forth the pleaſure, which a reconciled God takes in the ſervices of his redeemed people; and the delight, which they take in communion with him. This is repreſented under the notion of their feaſting together; and therefore all thoſe things were to be brought, which were of general uſe at feaſts, and in proper proportions, according to the kind, or number of their ſacrifices.

V. 4. *A tenth deal*, &c.] The ſame as an omer, or about five pints: a hin is computed by ſome to be twice as much; others ſuppoſe it to contain ſomewhat leſs than two omers.

V. 16. *The ſtranger*, &c.] This was intended both to induce ſtrangers to attend to the worſhip, and ordinances of God; to intimate to the Iſraelites, that if they were profligate, and ungodly, they would be treated as ſtrangers; and to teach them that in due time the Gentiles would be fully admitted into the church. It ſeems, that, though an uncircumciſed perſon might not eat the Paſſover, they might offer other ſacrifices in the appointed way, if they were ſo diſpoſed.

V. 17—21.] (*See notes*, &c. *Lev.* c. xxiii. v. 15—17.) The oblation, required in the Scripture referred to, ſeems to have been a general acknowledgment from the people at large; this an oblation from every one, that reaped a harveſt, who was required, previous to his taſting it himſelf, to offer a portion of dough as a heave-offering to the Lord; which is ſuppoſed to have been given to the prieſts in their ſeveral cities, and not carried to the tabernacle. (*Ezek.* c. xliv. v. 30.)

V. 22—29.] This law concerning ſins of ignorance, being diverſe from that, which is in *Lev.* c. iv. occaſions ſome difficulty. But probably *that* was intended for thoſe ſins of ignorance which violated the precepts of the moral

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you by the hand of Moſes, from the day that the LORD commanded *Moſes*, and henceforward among your generations;

24 Then it ſhall be, if *ought* be committed by ignorance, without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation ſhall offer one young bullock for a burnt-offering, for a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD, with his meat-offering, and his drink-offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a ſin-offering.

25 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and it ſhall be forgiven them; for it *is* ignorance: and they ſhall bring their offering, a ſacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their ſin-offering before the LORD, for their ignorance.

26 And it ſhall be forgiven all the congregation of the children of Iſrael, and the ſtranger that ſojourneth among them; ſeeing all the people *were* in ignorance.

27 And if any ſoul ſin through ignorance, then he ſhall bring a ſhe-goat of the firſt year for a ſin-offering.

28 And the prieſt ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſinneth ignorantly, when he ſinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it ſhall be forgiven him.

29 Ye ſhall have one law for him that ſinneth through ignorance, *both for* him that is born amongſt the children of Iſrael, and for the ſtranger that ſojourneth among them.

30 But the ſoul that doeth *ought* preſumptuouſly, *(whether he be* born in the land, or a ſtranger,) the ſame reproacheth the LORD; and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from among his people.

31 Becauſe he hath deſpiſed the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that ſoul ſhall utterly be cut off: his iniquity *ſhall be* upon him.

32 And while the children of Iſrael were in the wilderneſs, they found a man that gathered ſticks upon the ſabbath-day.

33 And they that found him gathering ſticks brought him unto Moſes and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.

34 And they put him in ward, becauſe it was not declared what ſhould be done to him.

35 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, The man ſhall be ſurely put to death: all the congregation ſhall ſtone him with ſtones without the camp.

36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and ſtoned him with ſtones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

37 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

38 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments, throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue.

39 And it ſhall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do

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law: *this* for thoſe errors, which took place in regard to their ceremonial inſtitutions. But though the law be different; the inſtruction contained therein is much the ſame; (*ſee notes*, &c. *Lev.* c. iv.)

V. 30. *That doeth ought preſumptuouſly*, &c.] That is wilfully, deliberately, in contempt of the authority of God's word, in defiance of his juſtice, with a high hand, and in direct rebellion. Such a conduct "reproacheth the "Lord," as if his commands were needleſs, unreaſonable, and inimical to man's happineſs; as if his authority were only fit to be trampled under foot; as if his favour were not deſirable, or his wrath were not to be feared; in ſhort, as if it were more advantageous to rebel againſt, than to ſerve him; (*Malachi*, c. iii. v. 13—15.) Many crimes will be found to be ſins of preſumption, which did not appear ſuch to the offender, at the time, when he committed them; (2 *Sam.* c. xii. v. 9, 10.) Whenever we ſet our own inclinations in oppoſition to the *known* command of God; and when God ſaith, "Thou ſhalt not," our conduct replies, "But I will;" we are guilty of ſuch ſins of preſumption: and though the matter be in itſelf trivial, yet the daring rebellion is exceedingly atrocious; (1 *Sam.* c. xv. v. 22, 23.) For ſuch an offender no ſacrifice was to be offered; he was to bear his own iniquity; and to be utterly cut off, in ſome caſes by a public execution, in others by the immediate judgment of God. (*Heb.* c. x. v. 26.)

V. 32—36. This example is introduced to illuſtrate the foregoing law. A certain perſon was obſerved gathering ſticks on the ſabbath-day in contempt of the commandment, and was condemned as a preſumptuous offender to be ſtoned, as a warning to the reſt.

V. 38. *Fringes*, &c.] This diſtinction in their garments would be a continual profeſſion of their religion, and a conſtant memorial to them to act conſiſtent with it, in all places, companies, and tranſactions; preferring God's commandments to their own wayward inclinations; to gratify which they had ſhewn themſelves ſo *idolatrouſly* them;

them; and that ye seek not after your own heart, and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring;

40 That ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

41 I *am* the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. A circumstantial account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, &c. v. 1—19. 2d. The destruction of the congregation averted by the intercession of Moses, and Aaron; and sentence denounced and executed upon the rebels, v. 20—35. 3d. Orders given for the disposal of their censers, v. 36—40. 4th. The rebellion renewed; a plague breaking out, but stopped by Aaron's burning incense; with the number of those, who perished, v. 41—50.

NOW Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi; and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men*;

2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses, and against Aaron, and said

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prone; (*See note Ex.* xx. c. 3:) and it would be a constant reproach to them, when they committed any kind of wickedness. Christ was obedient to this law; that, which is translated the hem or border, means the fringe of his garment: the Pharisees ostentatiously enlarged their fringes. It is remarkable that the modern Jews generally neglect this precept, which they might obey; whilst they tenaciously adhere to their religion, though in most things it is become absolutely impracticable. Some have argued that it would prevent much wickedness amongst the clergy, if they were always obliged to appear in their peculiar habits: but wretchedly abandoned must he be, who needs such a restraint from open wickedness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The law written in our hearts, and obeyed in our conduct, forms the best evidence of pardoned sin. We should study to proportion our obedience to the several commands of God, in such a manner as may best conduce to his glory, and be useful to those around us. And when repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, produce godliness, righteousness, love, and temperance, harmonizing in our daily walk; we shall attain that end. When our chief delight is in the ordinances of God, and in communion with him, we shall find access to and acceptance with him: and gratitude connected with beneficence, and temperance, will confer the comfortable enjoyment of temporal blessings. We fallen creatures are always violating one or other of God's commandments, when we are most circumspect: and even those slips, which are accounted small, and which spring from ignorance, or inadvertency, are not pardonable, but through atoning blood. Blessed be God for the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ: to this the believer may always have recourse; and he will feel his need of it continually, and never abuse it into an encouragement to sin.—But let presumptuous sinners tremble; for though that great sacrifice is available for all, who humbly repent, and depend upon it; it enhances the guilt of those, who contemptuously reject, or hypocritically profess a dependance upon it, yet allow themselves in known iniquity. Nor have any persons greater cause to tremble, than they, who, in bold contempt of God's authority, violate the holy rest of the sabbath-day; for though they at present escape punishment, yet, unless they repent, the Lord will at length "utterly cut off their soul," and leave them for ever "with their iniquity upon them:" and it must be far worse with us as a nation, than it was with Israel, when they provoked God in the desert; for they generally regarded the sabbath; we almost universally break it.—As we sinners of the Gentiles are now fully admitted to share the benefit of the Saviour's atoning blood, we should be abundant in our spiritual sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving: we should boldly profess our faith, in the sight of the world, and circumspectly walk according to it. We should use every means of refreshing our memories with the recollection of the truths, and precepts of God's word; of animating, and quickening our obedience; and of arming our minds against temptation. We should learn to mortify all our natural sinful inclinations, that we may not think our own thoughts, speak our own words, or find our own pleasure; but that we may seek the Lord's glory, and do his commandments, as his redeemed, and holy people.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1. *Now Korah*, &c.] We are not informed of the date of this rebellion: but probably it was soon after the congregation was sentenced to wander in the wilderness. It is remarkable how the giving of laws, and the breaking out of rebellions are interchanged in this history; for sin by the commandment takes occasion to shew itself, and it's exceeding sinfulness.—Korah was a near relation of Moses, and Aaron; (*Ex.* c. vi. v. 18;) and was discontented with being an ordinary Levite, in subjection to the priests, and became a competitor with Aaron, and his sons for the priesthood. Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Reuben, Jacob's first-born, aspired at the supreme authority, as rivals to Moses; probably being also displeased with the pre-eminence of the tribe of Judah.—On is only once mentioned; either he repented, or was of small note in the transaction. The former rebellions had been mere popular tumults: but this was a regular conspiracy, headed by persons of consequence, and abetted by many of the chief princes, and favoured by the congregation in general.

V. 3. *Ye take too much upon you*, &c.] They intimate that the civil government, and priesthood had been usurped by Moses, and Aaron, without any commandment from God. But they would allow that the Lord was among them, and had shewn them special regard; provided they

unto them, *Ye take* too much upon you, seeing all the congregation *are* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

4 And when Moses heard *it*, he fell upon his face:

5 And he spake unto Korah, and unto all his company, saying, Even to-morrow the LORD will shew who *are* his, and *who is* holy; and will cause *him* to come near unto him: even *him* whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

6 This do: Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;

7 And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to-morrow: and it shall be, *that* the man whom the LORD doth choose, he *shall be* holy: *ye take* too much upon you, ye sons of Levi.

8 And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi;

9 *Seemeth it but* a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?

10 And he hath brought thee near *to him*, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

11 For which cause, *both* thou and all thy company *are* gathered together against the LORD: and what *is* Aaron, that ye murmur against him?

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; which said, We will not come up.

13 *Is it* a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

14 Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up.

15 And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

16 And Moses said unto Korah, Be thou and all thy company before the LORD, thou, and they, and Aaron, to-morrow:

17 And take every man his censer, and

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might draw their own inference from it, and serve their own purposes by it; and, by determining that all the people were alike holy, might overturn the whole system civil, and religious, which the Lord had established amongst them. (*See Heb.* c. vii. v. 12.) For though no miracles can induce the belief of those truths, which militate against men's favourite pursuits, and indulged lusts: yet as far as they can render a profession of religion a cloke to their covetousness, ambition, or malice, they will allow it's evidence, make a profession of it, and pervert it to the very worst of purposes. The two hundred and fifty princes, who joined in this rebellion, and perished in their presumptuous attempt to burn incense, do not appear to have been Levites alone; but heads of the families in the several tribes; who, under the idea that the people were all holy, thought they had as good a right to officiate, in the priest's office, as Aaron and his sons.

V. 5—7. *Even to-morrow*, &c.] Moses was directed of God to challenge them, who aimed at the priesthood, thus to refer the matter to the Lord's decision, if after the fate of Nadab, and Abihu, they would venture so perilous an appeal: and it was appointed for the morrow, that they might consider, and deliberate upon, and so be induced to decline it.

V. 11. *For which cause*, &c.] Korah charged Aaron, and his sons with exercising an usurped authority in an improper manner: but he really meant, by the assistance of the Levites, and people, to exclude them, and to seize upon the honour, and emolument of the priesthood for himself, and his family. And whilst they all pretended to rise up against Aaron, they were in fact gathering together in rebellion against the Lord.

V. 12. *Sent to call*, &c.] Moses, as the ruler, whom God had placed over them, summoned them to appear before him to give an account of their conduct, and to inform him of the cause of this insurrection: but, they aspiring to the government, would not own his authority, and insolently refused to appear before him.

V. 14. *Wilt thou put out*, &c.] They charge him with endeavouring to impose upon the people with pretences of acting by divine authority, and for their advantage, whilst he was sacrificing all their interests to the establishment of an usurped authority over them. As the cloke of religion did not subserve the purposes of those, who aspired to the civil government, they never mentioned the Lord at all, but ascribe all to Moses, as if they had not witnessed any miracles, or divine interpositions in the whole transaction.

V. 15. *Respect not thou*, &c.] That is the offering of incense by Korah, and his company, who were confederates with them: (*Gen.* c. iv. v. 5. *Jude*, v. 11.)

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put incenſe in them, and bring ye before the LORD every man his cenſer, two hundred and fifty cenſers; thou alſo, and Aaron, each *of you* his cenſer.

18 And they took every man his cenſer, and put fire in them, and laid incenſe thereon, and ſtood in the door of the tabernacle of the congregation with Moſes and Aaron.

19 And Korah gathered all the congregation againſt them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

20 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and unto Aaron, ſaying,

21 Separate yourſelves from among this congregation, that I may conſume them in a moment.

22 And they fell upon their faces, and ſaid, O God, the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, ſhall one man ſin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?

23 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

24 Speak unto the congregation, ſaying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

25 And Moſes roſe up, and went unto Dathan and Abiram: and the elders of Iſrael followed him.

26 And he ſpake unto the congregation, ſaying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of theſe wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, leſt ye be conſumed in all their ſins.

27 So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every ſide: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and ſtood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their ſons, and their little children.

28 And Moſes ſaid, Hereby ye ſhall know that the LORD hath ſent me to do all theſe works; for *I have* not *done them* of mine own mind.

29 If theſe men die the common death of all men, or if they be viſited after the viſitation of all men; *then* the LORD hath not ſent me:

30 But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and ſwallow them up, with all that *appertain* unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye ſhall underſtand that theſe men have provoked the LORD.

31 And it came to paſs, as he had made an end of ſpeaking all theſe words, that the ground clave aſunder that *was* under them:

32 And the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed them up, and their houſes, and all the men that *appertained* unto Korah, and all *their* goods.

33 They, and all that *appertained* to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth cloſed upon them: and they periſhed from among the congregation.

34 And all Iſrael that *were* round about them fled at the cry of them: for they ſaid, Leſt the earth ſwallow us up *alſo*.

V. 19. *Korah gathered*, &c.] Whilſt the Levites, and others of their party, preſumptuouſly were burning incenſe, and waiting the Lord's deciſion: Korah himſelf ſeems to have been employed in inſtigating, and with vaſt ſucceſs, the whole congregation to rebellion: thus he gathered them together to witneſs the event of the conteſt, and probably to ſeize by force the diſputed prize, perhaps with the ſlaughter of all, who had attempted oppoſition: had not the appearance of the divine glory over-awed, and intimidated them.

V. 22. *The God of the ſpirits of all fleſh*, &c.] Man is a ſpirit embodied in fleſh, the creature, and ſubject of God. This relation of God to the ſpirits of mortal man ſeems to be here pleaded as a reaſon why he ſhould not indiſcriminately puniſh them all; for he was acquainted with the inmoſt ſpirits of men, and could not be impoſed upon, but could diſtinguiſh both the innocent from the guilty, and the tempters from the tempted: and Moſes charitably hoped that only Korah ſinned preſumptuouſly, and that the reſt were miſled, and ſinned ignorantly: (*Ch.* xv. v. 27—31. *Luke*, c. xxiii. v. 34. 1 *Tim.* c. i. v. 13.)

V. 24. *Get you up*, &c.] The Lord thus allowed of the plea of Moſes; and they, who teſtified their repentance by ſeparating from the ringleaders of the rebellion, were to be exempted from *their* puniſhment: thus the congregation eſcaped, though many rebels periſhed in their preſumption.

V. 26. *Touch nothing of theirs*, &c.] The rebels, and all belonging to them were, as an accurſed thing, devoted to utter deſtruction; (*Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 29.) the people therefore were forbidden to touch any thing belonging to them; that they might enter a ſolemn proteſt againſt their wickedneſs; and acknowledge the juſtice of their puniſhment; and expreſs their fear of being involved in it; (*Matt.* c. x. v. 14. *Acts*, c. xiii. v. 51.

V. 27. *The tabernacle of Korah*, &c.] Though the inſurgents were of different tribes, they had quitted their proper ſituations in the camp, and pitched their tents cloſe together. Korah ſeems to have been ſwallowed up with

35 And

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35 And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

36 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

37 Speak unto Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, that he take up the censers out of the burning, and scatter thou the fire yonder; for they are hallowed.

38 The censers of these sinners against their own souls, let them make them broad plates *for* a covering of the altar; for they offered them before the LORD, therefore they are hallowed: and they shall be a sign unto the children of Israel.

39 And Eleazar the priest took the brasen censers, wherewith they that were burnt had offered; and they were made broad *plates for* a covering of the altar:

40 *To be* a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which *is* not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD, that he be not as Korah and as his company; as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses.

41 But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses, and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD.

42 And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses, and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared.

43 And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation.

44 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

45 Get ye up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces.

46 And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun.

47 And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people.

48 And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed.

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the rest, though not here mentioned, (*see ch.* xxvi. v. 10;) and all his family, and relations who were in the tent, (v. 32;) for his sons died not, (ch. xxvi. v. 11.)

V. 35. *Consumed*, &c.] It seems that they were not only slain by the fire, as Nadab, and Abihu had been, but were thereby entirely consumed; being themselves made awful sacrifices to the justice of God, whose priesthood, and sacrifices they had despised; (*Lev.* c. ix. v. 24. 1 *Kings*, c. xviii. v. 38. 2 *Chron.* c. vii. v. 1.)

V. 38. *The censers*, &c.] These censers having been once employed in burning the sacred incense, though in an uncommanded manner, must never more be employed to ordinary uses; but to impress the greater veneration for that typical institution, they were to be consecrated to the Lord, and in such a manner, as to remain a constant, and useful memorial to the people, who brought, and to the Levites, who assisted in offering the sacrifices. It was an awful employment for Eleazar to gather them from the remains of that dreadful conflagration!

Sinners against their own souls, &c.] Their intent was to injure Moses, and Aaron; but the effect was, that they brought destruction upon themselves both in body and soul. Thus all who break the law, and neglect the gospel, choose, and love death, and destroy their own souls, though they do not mean so.

V. 41. *Ye have killed*, &c.] Whilst the Israelites most absurdly imputed the opening of the earth, and the consuming fire to Moses and Aaron, as if they had caused them; they as absurdly, called the persons, thus perishing in their rebellion, the people of the Lord! nothing can be imagined more perverse, and provoking than such a conduct!

V. 48. *He stood*, &c.] The faith, courage, and love to his ungrateful people, which Aaron manifested, in *running*, without regarding consequences, into the midst of this enraged multitude, and this devouring pestilence, were very illustrious: and the success was a decisive proof of the acceptableness, and efficacy of his priesthood, and consequently of its divine appointment. Whilst the others, who presumed to burn incense, were themselves consumed; his burning of incense stayed the plague, which was so rapidly wasting the congregation! In all this he was a type of Christ, of his priesthood and intercession.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

For what purpose, may we inquire, were these things permitted? And for what end are they recorded? The house of Israel was "planted a noble vine, wholly a right "seed;" (*Jer.* c. ii. v. 21.) and we cannot suppose that they were of a more perverse, and wicked disposition than other people.—But we have in their history an unflattering picture of human nature; a thorough dissection of the human heart. Were any other people circumstanced, proved, and left to themselves, as they were: and were their history written with as complete information, and as impartial a pen, they would appear at least as black as Israel: and the secret history of every individual, who

49 Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thouſand and ſeven hundred, beſide them that died about the matter of Korah.

50 And Aaron returned unto Moſes, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was ſtayed.

lives and dies in ſin, when it ſhall be publiſhed at the day of judgment, will be ſuch another compound of infidelity, ingratitude, rebellion, and abſurdity: and the true believer ſees in his former conduct, and feels in his daily experience, that his heart is of the ſame kind, with thoſe of the Iſraelites. Theſe things were indeed written, and this trial was made of human nature, in order to expoſe the deceitfulneſs, and deſperate wickedneſs of the heart of man, that we might, as in a glaſs, ſee the reflection of our own character; be led to examine and watch our own thoughts, affections, and conduct; be brought to judge, and condemn ourſelves; and become ſenſible of our need of pardoning mercy, and ſanctifying grace; and ſo might learn to ſeek and find them in the appointed way. Inſtead therefore of expreſſing our ſurpriſe, and indignation at theſe ancient rebels, let us look to ourſelves; and we ſhall ſoon become ſenſible that "the Spirit, that is in us, luſteth to envy," to pride, ambition, and covetouſneſs. Theſe reſtleſs paſſions are continually called forth into exerciſe, on one occaſion or other: and whatever advantages we enjoy by our rank in life, or our ſtation in the church of God; though we be wealthy, famous in the congregation, and men of renown: yet ſo long as God withholds any imagined bleſſing, or advances any one above us, we ſhall experience their inſatiable cravings; and they are only increaſed by indulgence.—Except theſe luſts are ſubdued by the grace of God, ſuitable occaſions would induce us to deſpiſe the dominion, which God hath placed over us, (*Jude*, v. 8.) to treat every exerciſe of authority as uſurpation, and oppreſſion; to aſpire at a lawleſs independancy, or to ſeize upon the authority for ourſelves: and to account all our mercies but a ſmall thing.—Nor can any wiſdom, equity, or excellency, in our ſuperiors, or competitors, abate our envy, or enmity; or ſtop our mouths from ſlanderous accuſations, whilſt we are under the power of theſe vile paſſions. And this ungrateful, and injurious conduct towards men, will be accompanied with infidel forgetfulneſs of, and daring rebellion againſt God; which no evidences, no judgments, no warnings, no mercies can repreſs: or if they give it's malignity a temporary check, it is capable afterwards of breaking out moſt deſperately. And if it ſhould appear more to our purpoſe, we are capable of cloaking our ambition and ſelfiſhneſs under a pretence to godlineſs, and an hypocritical profeſſion of being the Lord's holy people.—Such is human nature! Such are our hearts, yea worſe than this, even "deſperately wicked; who can "know them?" Such they would appear to be, if fully proved: Such they have in a meaſure appeared already, when put to the trial. And comparing God's kindneſs to us, with our conduct towards him, during our paſt lives, we may each of us exclaim "It is of the Lord's "mercies, that we are not conſumed," as Korah, and his company were! One dreadful effect of this depravity, is the daring preſumption, in which numbers intrude into the ſacred miniſtry, out of the vile motives of covetouſneſs, ambition, love of eaſe, &c. without any ſuitable diſpoſitions, without any delight in or love for the work; without any zeal for the honour of God, or any deep compaſſion for the ſouls of periſhing ſinners. Yet will ſuch men dare to ſay in the moſt ſolemn manner before God, and his congregation, "that they judge themſelves moved by the "Holy Ghoſt to take this office upon them;" though they are not only conſcious of hypocriſy in this declaration, but deride the very inquiry as enthuſiaſtic! And the whole tranſaction is frequently marked with ſimilar diſſimulation, and atrocious iniquity! Of ſuch conduct the author hath been guilty; and to the end of his days would be abaſed before God on account of it; and admire, and adore the patience, and loving kindneſs of the Lord, that, inſtead of being viſited after the manner of Korah, it hath pleaſed God to give him repentance and forgiveneſs of this aggravated wickedneſs; and to employ him in the work of the miniſtry, with ſome ſmall degree of uſefulneſs: "for "where ſin hath abounded, grace hath much more "abounded." And he mentions this humiliating ſubject, not only that the pious reader may bleſs God in his behalf; but that he may hope, and pray for others, who lie under the ſame guilt, that they may experience the ſame grace. "For our God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." He will alſo, firſt or laſt, manifeſt "who are his," "whom "he hath choſen," "and who are holy;" for it is not enough that we have the Lord's word in our hand, or his name in our mouth, unleſs we really believe his truth, and keep his commandments: "nor will doing the ſervice of "the ſanctuary," and "ſtanding before his congregation," though with acceptance, and uſefulneſs, prevent; nay they will aggravate, the doom of the hypocritical, or rebellious: And wo be to them, who refuſe to judge, or condemn themſelves, till the judge detect, and condemn their iniquity.—He is the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, all creatures obey him, and frequently in this world he makes examples of the wicked, to deter others from ſin: but if in his long-ſuffering he ſpare them here, and they ſtill perſiſt in rebellion: their doom will be more dreadful at laſt, and they will indeed be caſt alive into the bottomleſs pit, and the fire of hell will continually torment, but never conſume him.—Let ſinners then take warning from ſuch awful judgments, leſt they too be ſwallowed up; let them ſeparate from the wicked, and have no fellowſhip with their unfruitful works, but rather reprove, and proteſt againſt them; if they would not be aſſociated with them in their puniſhment. The Lord knows how to diſtinguiſh betwixt the deluded and the preſumptuous; the penitent, and the impenitent; and to glorify his mercy towards the one, whilſt he magnifies his juſtice upon the other, and records their doom, for an uſeful leſſon to ſucceeding generations. Let us however turn from ſuch awful, and hateful objects, to contemplate, admire, and imitate the effects of divine grace in the conduct of Moſes, and Aaron, in their patience, fortitude, meekneſs, forgiveneſs of injuries, and unwearied labours and prayers, for the welfare of their ungrateful enemies. May we have the ſame teſtimony of our conſcience to our integrity, and benevolence, whenever we are falſely accuſed: may we be thus angry without ſinning; and, thus able to bleſs them, that curſe us, not being overcome with evil, but overcoming evil with good.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. The rods of each tribe laid up before the ark: and Aaron's rod budding, blossoming, and bearing almonds, v. 1—9. 2d. Aaron's rod laid up before the ark for a memorial, v. 10—11. 3d. The Israelites' murmuring, and despondency, v. 12—13.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Speak unto the children of Israel, and take of every one of them a rod, according to the house of *their* fathers, of all their princes, according to the house of their fathers, twelve rods: write thou every man's name upon his rod.
3 And thou shalt write Aaron's name upon the rod of Levi: for one rod *shall be* for the head of the house of their fathers.
4 And thou shalt lay them up in the tabernacle of the congregation, before the testimony, where I will meet with you.
5 And it shall come to pass, *that* the man's rod whom I shall choose shall blossom: and I will make to cease from me the murmurings of the children of Israel, whereby they murmur against you.
6 And Moses spake unto the children of Israel; and every one of their princes gave him a rod apiece, for each prince one, according to their father's houses, *even* twelve rods: and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods.
7 And Moses laid up the rods before the LORD, in the tabernacle of witness.
8 And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron, for the house of Levi, was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.
9 And Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD unto all the children of Israel: and they looked, and took every man his rod.
10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels; and thou shalt quite take away their murmurings from me, that they die not.
11 And Moses did *so:* as the LORD commanded him, so did he.
12 And the children of Israel spake unto Moses, saying, Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish.
13 Whosoever cometh any thing near unto the tabernacle of the LORD shall die: shall we be consumed with dying?

Then will the Lord protect, vindicate, and honour us, in due time, in the presence of our opposers, and we shall be blessed ourselves, and blessings to others. But we may in all this look unto Jesus, dying for us when enemies, praying for his crucifiers; hastening between the dead and the living, with the incense of his meritorious intercession, to stay the plague, which sin had occasioned, and by which multitudes have perished, and we, and all must have perished, had it not been for this interposition. Through him we are spared and live; may his love then constrain us to live no longer to ourselves, but to him, who died for us, and rose again.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 2. *Speak*, &c.] The Lord himself was pleased to bring the point in contest to a final decision, by a safe and significant method. The princes of each tribe were commanded to bring every one his rod, which was the badge of his authority, unto Moses; who wrote in their presence, every man's name upon his rod, in some manner, which rendered it easily, and certainly distinguishable from the rest. On the rod for the tribe of Levi Aaron's name was written, as the head, and representative of that tribe: then Moses carried the rods into the tabernacle, and laid them before the ark, within the vail, as is supposed (into which he seems to have been allowed continual access;) and there left them all night. Probably the rods were all of almond tree, but the rest continued dry sticks, Aaron's budded, blossomed, and yielded almonds within the space of one day and night. This not only denoted the usefulness of Aaron's priesthood, but typified the fruitfulness of the priesthood of Christ, and of the gospel ministry through him. In this state Aaron's rod was laid up "for a token against the rebels," and probably continued in that very state to future ages. Thus the Lord quite took away their murmurings on this account; so that we never hear any more of them in their whole history.

V. 12, 13.] The language of these verses is exceedingly descriptive of a forced submission, attended with terror, and despondency, and an inward revolting against an appointment, which they dare no longer oppose. And it significantly expresses the *trait* of their character, and the greatness of the ferment, which prevailed amongst them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though "the Lord hath no pleasure in the death of the "wicked," yet such is his holiness and justice, that continuance in sin is inseparable from ruin: he therefore graciously removes by all suitable means, the occasions of offending, that men may be preserved from condemnation. He will give all proper satisfaction to all those, that are disposed to be convinced, and will manifest the equity of his determinations, to every impartial and humble inquirer.—

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The work, and charge of the prieſts, and the aſſiſtance, which the Levites were to give them, v. 1—7. 2d. The reſerved perquiſites of the prieſt's office, 8—19. 3d. The tithes aſſigned to the Levites, and the tithe thereof to the prieſts, v. 20—32.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Aaron, Thou, and thy ſons, and thy father's houſe with thee, ſhall bear the iniquity of the ſanctuary: and thou and thy ſons with thee ſhall bear the iniquity of your prieſthood.

2 And thy brethren alſo of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and miniſter unto thee: but thou and thy ſons with thee *ſhall miniſter* before the tabernacle of witneſs.

3 And they ſhall keep thy charge, and the charge of all the tabernacle: only they ſhall not come nigh the veſſels of the ſanctuary and the altar, that neither they, nor ye alſo, die.

4 And they ſhall be joined unto thee, and keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, for all the ſervice of the tabernacle: and a ſtranger ſhall not come nigh unto you.

5 And ye ſhall keep the charge of the ſanctuary, and the charge of the altar; that there be no wrath any more upon the children of Iſrael.

6 And I, behold, I have taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Iſrael; to you *they are* given *as* a gift for the LORD, to do the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 Therefore thou and thy ſons with thee ſhall keep your prieſt's office for every thing of the altar, and within the vail; and ye ſhall ſerve: I have given your prieſt's office *unto you as* a ſervice of gift; and the ſtranger that cometh nigh ſhall be put to death.

8 And the LORD ſpake unto Aaron, Behold, I alſo have given thee the charge of mine heave-offerings, of all the hallowed things of the children of Iſrael; unto thee have I given

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But as we have no claim to his favours, "and he does, what "he will with his own," he will not deign to give any account of the reaſons, which induce him to make one man to differ from another.—Our Lord Jeſus was moſt unanſwerably demonſtrated to be the "great High Prieſt over the "houſe of God, when the rod of his ſtrength went forth "out of Zion; and multitudes were made willing in the "day of his power, in the beauties of his holineſs:" (*Pſal.* cx. v. 2, 3.) And when, through him, "Iſrael ſhall "bloſſom, and bud, and fill the face of the world with "fruit;" (*Iſaiah*, c. xxvii. v. 6.) it will appear ſtill more illuſtriouſly divine. Nor ſhall thoſe miniſters, whom God chooſes, and ſends, remain as dry rods before the Lord, and his church: but ſhall, more or leſs, ſooner or later, bud, and bloſſom, and bear fruit; not only the fruits of holineſs in their lives, but the fruits of uſefulneſs in their miniſtry. And when they are moſt oppoſed, and perſecuted, they may hope and pray for more evident fruitfulneſs, for the encouragement of their own hearts, the eſtabliſhment of the Lord's people, and for the confuſion, and ſilencing of their adverſaries.—And whether their uſefulneſs be more immediate, or longer waited and prayed for, it ſhall not be tranſient, but will be "fruit which ſhall remain" (*John*, c. xv. v. 16.) before the Lord, to his everlaſting glory, and their eternal recompence; and in the church for the good of many, when they ſleep in the Lord.—But alas! when man's preſumption is checked, and his ſelf-ſufficiency is abated, he *naturally* verges to the oppoſite extreme: and in hard thoughts of God, and unbelieving deſpondency, neglects divine ordinances, leſt he ſhould be guilty of profaning them; buries his talent in the earth, leſt he ſhould be condemned for waſting it: and juſtifies himſelf in his neglect both of good works, and the means of grace, becauſe he cannot merit heaven by them!—The Lord give us grace to avoid both theſe extremes, into which an evil heart, and a ſubtle enemy, combine to betray us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *Shall bear the iniquity*, &c.] Aaron, and his family were now confirmed in the prieſthood againſt all competitors; and the people were exceedingly terrified leſt the tabernacle ſhould occaſion their deſtruction: to counterbalance the honour conferred on the former, and to allay the terrors of the latter, it was declared that the prieſts muſt bear the blame of every thing, which was not properly conducted, in reſpect of the tabernacle, and it's ſervice: and that the people had nothing in this reſpect to fear, but a preſumptuous intruſion into the places, and ſervices, from which they were by the law excluded. But the prieſts had need to be very circumſpect, active, and exemplary, both in their miniſtrations, and converſation, elſe they would ſoon be laded with guilt, which *their ſacrifices* could not expiate; (1 *Sam.* c. iii. v. 14.)

V. 3. *They ſhall not come nigh*, &c.] The Levites muſt not look upon the ſacred furniture, which they carried, till it was covered; nor muſt they intermeddle with *the burning* of the ſacrifices upon the altar.

V. 7. *A ſervice of gift*, &c.] The prieſts were to account their work, and their charge to be a ſpecial gift, and favour from God; and not, as is too common, to conſider them as a diſagreeable appendage to the diſtinction, and emolument of their office, 16. (*See Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 3—13).

them,

them, by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever.

9 This shall be thine of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every oblation of their's, every meat-offering of their's, and every sin-offering of their's, and every trespass-offering of their's, which they shall render unto me, *shall be* most holy for thee, and for thy sons.

10 In the most holy *place* shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it: it shall be holy unto thee.

11 And this *is* thine; the heave-offering of their gift, with all the wave-offerings of the children of Israel: I have given them unto thee, and to thy sons, and to thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever; every one that is clean in thy house shall eat of it.

12 All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the LORD, them have I given thee.

13 *And* whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the LORD, shall be thine; every one that is clean in thine house shall eat *of* it.

14 Every thing devoted in Israel shall be thine.

15 Every thing that openeth the matrix in all flesh which they bring unto the LORD, *whether it be* of men or beasts, shall be thine: nevertheless, the first-born of man shalt thou surely redeem, and the firstling of unclean beasts shalt thou redeem.

16 And those that are to be redeemed, from a month old shalt thou redeem, according to thine estimation, for the money of five shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* twenty gerahs.

17 But the firstling of a cow, or the firstling of a sheep, or the firstling of a goat, thou shalt not redeem, they *are* holy: thou shalt sprinkle their blood upon the altar, and shalt burn their fat *for* an offering made by fire, for a sweet savour unto the LORD.

18 And the flesh of them shall be thine, as the wave-breast and as the right shoulder are thine.

19 All the heave-offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer unto the LORD, have I given thee, and thy sons and thy daughters with thee, by a statute for ever: it *is* a covenant of salt for ever before the LORD unto thee, and to thy seed with thee.

20 And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I *am* thy part, and thine inheritance among the children of Israel.

21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, *even* the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

V. 19. *A covenant of salt*, &c.] (*See note*, *Lev.* c. ii. v. 13.) It was to be a perpetual and stable covenant with the family of Aaron, and an unalterable statute to Israel, all the time, that they possessed the land of Canaan, that the priests were to have these perquisites for themselves, and their families, not as merited by them, but "by reason of the anointing," to that sacred office.

V. 20. *No inheritance*, &c.] The priests, and Levites possessed houses, and lands for gardens, &c, in the suburbs of their cities; and might purchase estates to the year of jubile, as Jeremiah did, (*Jer.* c. xxxii,) but they had no portion allotted them in the division of the land of Canaan: they were to receive, and to be maintained by that portion, which the Lord reserved to himself, as a rent out of their estates. By this means they would be exempted from many avocations, and snares, which the cultivation, and improvement of their lands would have occasioned them; and would be plentifully supplied with every thing needful and comfortable. At the same time their interests would be placed in an inseparable connexion with the maintenance of the worship of God; for if the people became generally irreligious, or idolatrous, they would neither bring sacrifices, nor pay tithes: and the nature of man in general; their dispensation in particular, in the nonage of the church, and the entail of the priesthood, and of the sacred ministry upon one family and tribe; would render it proper to employ every tye and motive, to engage them to support the worship of God, to the utmost of their ability.

V. 21. *The tenth*, &c.] That is, of the clear increase of their estates, of the labour and improvements, as well as of the land: this was a large proportion for the smallest tribe, and, when joined to all the rest, which was assigned them, would be a very plentiful provision. But the other tribes would have also the advantages accruing from trade, and manufactures, in which the Levites were not intended to be occupied. This tenth seems to have been the common stock of the tribe, and divided amongst them accordingly: which would obviate that common evil effect of tithes, namely the contentions, that thence arise betwixt ministers, and the people of their charge. As they were not paid to an *indiviaual*, but to a *collective* body.

22 Neither muſt the children of Iſrael henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, leſt they bear ſin, and die.

23 But the Levites ſhall do the ſervice of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they ſhall bear their iniquity. *It ſhall be* a ſtatute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Iſrael they have no inheritance.

24 But the tithes of the children of Iſrael, which they offer *as* an heave-offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have ſaid unto them, Among the children of Iſrael they ſhall have no inheritance.

25 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

26 Thus ſpeak unto the Levites, and ſay unto them, When ye take of the children of Iſrael the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye ſhall offer up an heave-offering of it for the LORD, *even* a tenth *part* of the tithe.

27 And *this* your heave-offering ſhall be reckoned unto you as though *it were* the corn of the threſhing-floor, and as the fulneſs of the wine-preſs.

28 Thus ye alſo ſhall offer an heave-offering unto the LORD of all your tithes which ye receive of the children of Iſrael; and ye ſhall give thereof the LORD's heave-offering to Aaron the prieſt.

29 Out of all your gifts ye ſhall offer every heave-offering of the LORD, of all the beſt thereof, *even* the hallowed part thereof, out of it.

30 Therefore thou ſhalt ſay unto them, When ye have heaved the beſt thereof from it, then it ſhall be counted unto the Levites as the increaſe of the threſhing-floor, and as the increaſe of the wine-preſs.

31 And ye ſhall eat it in every place, ye and your houſholds: for it *is* your reward for your ſervice in the tabernacle of the congregation.

32 And ye ſhall bear no ſin by reaſon of it, when ye have heaved from it the beſt of it: neither ſhall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Iſrael, leſt ye die.

V. 27. *As though it were*, &c.] The Levites received tithes of the people, of which they gave a tithe to the prieſts; and ſome have conjectured that the tenth of this tithe was allotted for the High-prieſt's ſupport, according to the pre-eminence, to which he was advanced. This tithe of their tithes was to be the Levites oblation to the Lord, and as acceptable, as that which was paid out of the eſtates of the other Iſraelites; for every one ſhould in ſome way honour God with their ſubſtance.

V. 32. *Neither ſhall ye pollute*, &c.] By uſing the tithes, without ſeparating the prieſt's portion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The office of a miniſter is "a good work," and an important charge, and to be employed and truſted therein, to be approved faithful, and made uſeful, is the greateſt honour, and favour, that God ever confers upon mortal man. But it is weighty, and perilous; and "the iniquity of the prieſthood," and "of the ſanctuary," form the moſt aggravated of all guilt, and will ſink the mercenary, the careleſs, and the profligate miniſter into the deepeſt condemnation: beſides occaſioning wrath upon the people, and dragging them down with him into deſtruction.—Miniſters therefore have need to rejoice with trembling; to take heed to "themſelves, and to their doctrine;" to "avoid entangling themſelves in the affairs of this life;" to conſider the Lord as their portion; the intereſts of godlineſs as their intereſts; and the glory of God in the ſalvation of ſouls, as their grand, their ſole object. And they, who deſire this good work, ſhould look to it, that their motives, diſpoſitions, and qualifications be ſuch, as may give them a reaſonable ground to hope, that they will "be approved of God, workmen that need not be "aſhamed;" and that the maintenance, which they receive, may be indeed "for their ſervice in the ſanctuary." On the other hand it is the Lord's pleaſure, "that they who "preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel," and be preſerved from the anxieties, and temptations of pinching poverty; that they may have no occaſion to entangle themſelves in worldly buſineſs; or inducement to flatter, or to be ſilent out of pecuniary conſiderations. Nor is it only his will, that they ſhould have wherewithal to maintain their families, and punctually to diſcharge their debts; but that they ſhould have a ſurplus for pious, and charitable uſes; and that they ſhould thus employ it: not luxuriouſly ſpending, nor covetouſly hoarding it; but living themſelves, and leaving their families to live, in dependance on God's providence. It is therefore criminal, not only to defraud, but to be niggardly to the miniſters of God: and their maintenance muſt not be conſidered as an alms, or an impoſition, but their juſt due, as God's portion out of men's eſtates; which being withheld will pollute the enjoyment of all the reſt. (v. 32.) Whatſoever is offered to the Lord muſt be of the beſt; and they, who have the Lord for their inheritance, will be well provided for in this world, and in the next; and without the embarraſſments, and cares, which perplex others.—Let us then endeavour to know, and do our own work diligently; to be contented with, and thankful for our daily bread; and, as Chriſtians indeed, to ſeek our inheritance, and our treaſure

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. The law for preparing the water of purification, v. 1—10. 2d. The occasions upon which, and the manner in which it was to be used, v. 11—22.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,

2 This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD hath commanded, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring thee a red heifer without spot, wherein *is* no blemish, *and* upon which never came yoke.

3 And ye shall give her unto Eleazar the priest, that he may bring her forth without the camp, and *one* shall slay her before his face.

4 And Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.

5 And *one* shall burn the heifer in his sight; her skin, and her flesh, and her blood, with her dung, shall he burn.

6 And the priest shall take cedar-wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast *it* into the midst of the burning of the heifer.

7 Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the even.

8 And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until the even.

9 And a man *that is* clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay *them* up without the camp in a clean place; and it shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel, for a water of separation: it *is* a purification for sin.

10 And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until the even: and it shall be unto the children of Israel, and unto the stranger that sojourneth among them, for a statute for ever.

11 He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.

12 He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean: but if he purify not himself the third day, then the seventh day he shall not be clean.

13 Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness *is* yet upon him.

14 This *is* the law when a man dieth in a tent; All that come into the tent, and all that *is* in the tent, shall be unclean seven days.

15 And every open vessel which hath no covering bound upon it, *is* unclean.

16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead

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in heaven; to set our affections on things above; to have our conversation heavenly; to consider ourselves as strangers, and pilgrims upon earth; and to leave the eager pursuit of earthly things to those, who know no better possessions to be coveted, or enjoyed.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 2. *Red heifer*, &c.] The red colour of this heifer may lead us to think of him, "who "was red in his apparel," both as stained with his own blood, shed for our sins, and with the blood of his enemies. Nor did Christ ever bear the yoke of sin; nor would have been made subject to the yoke of the law, except for our sakes, and as our surety.

V. 3. *Eleazar*, &c.] The High-priest must not wittingly contract any defilement; therefore the next priest to him officiated in this ceremony, not only on this, but probably on future occasions of the same nature. Christ suffered without Jerusalem, by the hands of others, but under the inspection of the chief priests, who were all grievously polluted thereby, though his death was according to the purpose of God. (*Acts*, c. ii. . v. 23.)

V. 4. . *Directly before*, &c.] Either towards the tabernacle, when he was without the camp; or after the solemnity was finished, in the court of the tabernacle.

V. 6. (*See Note, Lev.* c. xiv. v. 4.)

V. 9. *Lay them up*, &c.] After the Israelites were settled in Canaan these ashes were probably situated in a convenient place, in every neighbourhood. As a small quantity would serve, they would last a long time, and would aptly typify the *abiding* efficacy of the death of Christ.

V. 11. *He that toucheth*, &c.) It doth not appear that the touch of any other unclean person, or thing, required this burthensome purification, but that of a *dead human body*. It is observable that no object is so offensive to our senses, as an human body in a state of putrefaction. For death *in man* alone, is the wages of sin, the execution of the sentence of God's law upon a condemned criminal. The hatefulness of sin therefore is strongly marked in the body,

body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17 And for an unclean *person* they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification for sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel;

18 And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip *it* in the water, and sprinkle *it* upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the persons that were there, and upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead, or a grave:

19 And the clean *person* shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at even.

20 But the man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the LORD: the water of separation hath not been sprinkled upon him; he *is* unclean.

21 And it shall be a perpetual statute unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his clothes, and he that toucheth the water of separation shall be unclean until even.

22 And whatsoever the unclean *person* toucheth shall be unclean; and the soul that toucheth *it* shall be unclean until even.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The death of Miriam, v. 1. 2d. The people murmuring for want of water: the misbehaviour of Moses, and Aaron, and their consequent sentence of exclusion from Canaan: water notwithstanding brought forth from a rock, v. 2—13. 3d. The Edomites' refusal of a passage through their land, v. 14—21. 4th. The death of Aaron, and the succession of Eleazar, v. 22—29.

THEN came the children of Israel, *even* the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin, in the first month: and the people

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circumstances of this purification: but through Christ the very nature of death is changed to the true believer, and both the defilement, and sting thereof is removed.

V. 21. *Shall be unclean*, &c.] The Jews say, that even Solomon could not understand the mystery, how the same water should pollute the clean person, and cleanse the polluted. But the defiling nature of sin, and the insufficiency of these ceremonial observances, except in their reference to Christ, are therein denoted: and the mystery is revealed to him who "beholds the Lamb of God, that" alone, "taketh away the sin of the world."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our great pretenders to reason, who allow the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and will not say that God appoints any thing unreasonable, should consider what rational account there can be given of, or what use there could be in these appointments; if we do not refer them to those doctrines, which they object to, or perhaps deride.—But comparing them with the New Testament, and with the observable propensities of human nature, their propriety, and instructive use become evident. Fallen man is actually sunk in many respects below the beasts that perish, and is in a most abject, and debased condition, an object of the divine displeasure, and abomination: yet does he admire, and flatter himself, lose sight of his filthiness, and account his very death, as a matter of course, instead of an ignominious execution upon the body, and an introduction to a more dreadful condemnation, and execution upon the immortal soul.—His true state was in these institutions presented before his eyes, and the humiliating consideration was forced upon his attention. Here we may learn the defiling nature of sin, which contaminates whatever it touches; and are warned to avoid those evil communications, which corrupt good manners; and not to associate with sinners, unless to benefit them; and then with great fear, and care, lest instead of cleansing them, we should be defiled by them. From the pollution of sin we must be cleansed, or we never can enter into heaven; nor can it be removed, except in a method of God's own appointing: the atoning sacrifice of Christ is the only purchase of our purification; his Holy Spirit applying salvation to the soul is the only efficient: the living water, with the ashes of the sacrifice; the pardoning efficacy, and the sanctifying grace are never separated: by faith, like this bunch of hyssop, in the use of the instituted means, we are both justified and sanctified: (*Eph.* c. v. v. 25—28. *Titus*, c. ii. v. 14. 1 *Pet.* c. i. v. 2.) Thus the guilt, and dominion of sin is removed, its pollution by *repeated* applications gradually cleansed away, until at length its existence is finally destroyed. No degree of guilt, or pollution can bar his salvation, who avails himself of this provision: but the least sin will for ever ruin those, who presumptuously despise and neglect it. Though we cannot contrive, merit, or effect salvation for ourselves, or others; yet we may use, or we may neglect the means of application; and we may be instrumental either to the salvation, or to the destruction of others: but even they, who are employed in promoting the salvation of their fellow sinners, must recollect continually that they also need cleansing; and not only with reference to their other conduct, but even in respect to their most honest, and strenuous endeavours to save the souls of their fellow sinners.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1. *Then came*, &c.] For more than thirty-seven years Israel had now abode in the wilderness, confined as in a prison by the power of God; during all abode

abode in Kadesh; and Miriam died there, and was buried there.

2 And there was no water for the congregation: and they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron.

3 And the people chode with Moses, and spake, saying, Would God that we had died when our brethren died before the LORD.

4 And why have ye brought up the congregation of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there?

5 And wherefore have ye made us to come up out of Egypt, to bring us in unto this evil place? it *is* no place of seed, or of figs, or vines, or of pomegranates; neither *is* there any water to drink.

6 And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they fell upon their faces; and the glory of the LORD appeared unto them.

7 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

8 Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes, and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink.

9 And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?

11 And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice; and the water came out abundantly: and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*.

12 And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

13 This *is* the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

14 And Moses sent messengers from Kadesh unto the king of Edom, Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travel that hath befallen us;

15 How our fathers went down into Egypt,

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which time we read scarce any thing about them; but that the old generation had almost all died off, and a new generation was risen up in their stead. In the first month in the fortieth year the history is resumed, and we find them at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin, in the confines of Canaan, (not Sin in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea, *Exod.* xvi—1.) where Miriam, who must have been at least one hundred and thirty years of age, died, and was buried.

V. 2. *There was no water*, &c.] How long the water from the rock in Horeb followed them, or whence they had been supplied, we know not. But being at this time in want, the old effect was produced, though they were mainly a new generation: they murmured, desponded, wished themselves dead, and quarrelled with Moses and Aaron, as their fathers had done.

V. 8. *Speak ye unto the rock*, &c.] The waters from the rock in Horeb have been shewn to typify the sanctifying, comforting influences of the Holy Ghost, communicated to God's people, through the death of Christ, when smitten for our sins: (*see notes*, &c. *Exod.* c. xvii:) and though this were not the same rock, the typical meaning seems to be carried on. The rock once smitten needs but be spoken to by the prayer of faith, accompanying the preached word, and the waters will flow forth. The pretended sacrifice of the mass seems to be an imitation of Moses' error, in repeatedly smiting the rock, which he ought only to have spoke unto.

V. 10, 11.] Though the people were rebels, and Moses called them so without offence at other times, yet he evidently spake at this time in an angry spirit. He seems also to have assumed honour to himself and to Aaron, instead of giving glory to God, whilst he says, "must *we* fetch you "water out of this rock?" (*Gen.* c. xl. v. 8. c. xli. v. 16. *Dan.* c. ii. v. 28—30. *Acts*, c. iii. v. 12—16.) He seems to have questioned whether the water would be given; and not to have deemed it sufficient to speak to the rock; and therefore in haste, and in heat, he twice smote it: though the sign of speaking to it was probably intended as a rebuke to the people's disobedience, who were not so obedient to the Lord's command, as the very rocks were. In all this we can see much to blame, but the Lord saw much more, and that Aaron also was involved in the guilt: though the water therefore was not withheld, yet the relief to Israel was followed by a severe rebuke of Moses and Aaron, and a sentence of exclusion from Canaan.

V. 12. *To sanctify me*, &c.] Moses, and Aaron were eminent characters, and the eyes of all Israel were upon them; and their improper conduct, and want of confidence in the power and faithfulness of God were very dishonourable to him; therefore he would, in their punishment, as well as in Israel's relief, manifest his glory, and be sanctified upon them, (v. 13.)

V. 13. *Meribah*, &c.] The other place, where water had been brought out of the rock was likewise called Meribah, but it was called also Massah (*Exod.* c. xvii. v. 7.) this was called Meribah Kadesh, (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 51.)

V. 14—21.] The descendants of Esau, now grown into

and we have dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers.

16 And when we cried unto the LORD, he heard our voice, and ſent an angel, and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; and, behold, we *are* in Kadeſh, a city in the uttermoſt of thy border.

17 Let us paſs, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not paſs through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink *of* the water of the wells; we will go by the king's *high*-way, we will not turn to the right hand nor to the left, until we have paſſed thy borders.

18 And Edom ſaid unto him, Thou ſhalt not paſs by me, leſt I come out againſt thee with the ſword.

19 And the children of Iſrael ſaid unto him, We will go by the high-way; and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only (without *doing* any thing *elſe*) go through on my feet.

20 And he ſaid, Thou ſhalt not go through. And Edom came out againſt him with much people, and with a ſtrong hand.

21 Thus Edom refuſed to give Iſrael paſſage through his border: wherefore Iſrael turned away from him.

22 And the children of Iſrael, *even* the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadeſh, and came unto mount Hor.

23 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes and Aaron in mount Hor, by the coaſt of the land of Edom, ſaying,

24 Aaron ſhall be gathered unto his people: for he ſhall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Iſrael, becauſe ye rebelled againſt my word at the water of Meribah.

25 Take Aaron and Eleazar his ſon, and bring them up unto mount Hor;

26 And ſtrip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his ſon: and Aaron ſhall be gathered *unto his people*, and ſhall die there.

27 And Moſes did as the LORD commanded; and they went up into mount Hor in the ſight of all the congregation.

28 And Moſes ſtripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his ſon;

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a flouriſhing kingdom, were not unacquainted with the relation, in which the Iſraelites ſtood to them, nor with their bondage in, and deliverance from Egypt, their continuance in the wilderneſs, and their pretenſions to Canaan. With them Moſes pleaded the brotherly relation to move natural affection; their paſt diſtreſſes to excite compaſſion; and the favour of the Lord to them, who by the angel of his preſence guided, and protected them, to influence their hopes, and fears: he engaged that the people ſhould paſs through with all convenient ſpeed, on the king's high-way, doing no harm, and paying even for the water, which they drank. But the Edomites not only ſuſpected their intentions, but retained their old enmity; and denied their requeſt, and threatened them with war. Yet were not the Iſraelites allowed to moleſt them; but were required to ſet an example of forbearance, and forgiveneſs, by taking a long circuit round their country.

V. 28.] Though Aaron died under a divine rebuke; yet he died as a pardoned ſinner, with the hope, and earneſt of glory, and with the comfort of ſeeing his ſon inveſted with his prieſthood. Doubtleſs the command given to Moſes, and the ſervice aſſigned him in this matter, muſt have awakened many painful feelings in his breaſt, when he conſidered his own perhaps deeper guilt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Well might Moſes ſay, (*Pſalm* xc. v. 9—12,) "All our "days are paſſed in thy wrath; we ſpend our years, as a tale "that is told:" when for ſo many years he witneſſed nothing worthy to be recorded, but the death of ſo many hundreds of thouſands of his brethren!—Even to this day man's life paſſes away in much the ſame manner; a tedious repetition of the ſame dull occurrences, with evident proofs of our folly, and guilt, and of the Lord's anger tempered with mercy, "till our life be cut off, and we flee away." May "he teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our "hearts unto wiſdom." For the longeſt life ſoon comes to a cloſe; and the only advantage that the moſt eminent poſſeſs above the more obſcure is, that they do not die quite ſo unnoticed. The propenſity to ſin is evidently not the fault of this, or that man, or people, but of human nature: therefore one generation after another manifeſts the ſame diſpoſition to unbelief, impatience, and rebellious murmurs. We can eaſily deſcant on the aggravations of Iſrael's crime, in this inſtance, after all they had ſeen, been taught, received and ſuffered. But had we been in their place, cooped up in the wilderneſs, confined mainly to one kind of food; (at a diſtance from all the delicacies, and varieties, with which even the pooreſt in a fertile land, are *comparatively* feaſted, during the revolutions of the ſeaſons, and their ſeveral productions,) ſhould not we have been fretful, and impatient alſo? not that we ſhould have had either right, or reaſon to complain: but becauſe we are proud, and ſenſual, and conſequently hard to pleaſe. But why queſtion whether *we* ſhould have rebelled? when Moſes and Aaron ſtand condemned with Iſrael, though not of the ſame, yet of ſimilar unbelief, and rebellion, and anger; even Moſes, the meekeſt man on earth ſpake unadviſedly with his lips; (*Pſalm*, cvi.

and

and Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moſes and Eleazar came down from the mount.

29 And when all the congregation ſaw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, *even* all the houſe of Iſrael.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. Arad's attack upon Iſrael, and his utter deſtruction, v. 1—3. 2d. Iſrael murmuring, and puniſhed by fiery ſerpents, and repenting: the brazen ſerpent erected for their relief, v. 4—9. 3d. Their marching forward, and directed to ſprings of water, v. 10—20. 4th. The conqueſt of Sihon, and Og, with their kingdoms, v. 21—35.

AND *when* king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the ſouth, heard tell that Iſrael came by the way of the ſpies; then he fought againſt Iſrael, and took *ſome* of them priſoners.

2 And Iſrael vowed a vow unto the LORD, and ſaid, If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly deſtroy their cities.

3 And the LORD hearkened to the voice of Iſrael, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly deſtroyed them and their cities: and he called the name of the place Hormah.

4 And they journeyed from mount Hor, by the way of the Red ſea, to compaſs the land of Edom: and the ſoul of the people was much diſcouraged becauſe of the way.

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v. 32, 33.) and we are conſtrained repeatedly to notice the moſt eminent ſaints defective in their moſt diſtinguiſhing excellencies. Under long continued trials, the beſt of men prove not only the reality of their grace; but alſo that "ſin "ſtill dwelleth in them;" nay old age will give advantage to ſome evils, and to none more than a peeviſh ſpirit. In proportion to the eminence of a man's character, and the notoriety of his offence, it will diſhonour, and diſpleaſe God; (*Eccleſ.* c. x. v. 1. *Matt.* c. v. ver. 13—16;) and by noting, and putting us to ſhame for our ſins, he will diſtrain for that honour, which we have neglected to render him: and whilſt impenitent ſinners eſcape puniſhment in this world, being reſerved unto the day of judgment; the Lord marks the ſins of his people with alarming ſeverity: yet ſtill it is all in mercy, and notwithſtanding our unworthineſs he will ſupply our wants, and anſwer our prayers, when we ſpeak for a ſupply of the waters of life, which flow from the rock of ſalvation.—Let us learn to imitate the impartiality of the hiſtorian; and the ſilent ſubmiſſion of him, and of Aaron in acquieſcing in this humiliating public rebuke for a public offence: and the example of Iſrael to inſolent, and injurious Edom. Thus upright, and inoffenſive, thus candid in our declarations, and open in our profeſſion of religion; thus fair in our propoſals, ſlow to anger, ready to forgive, and to give up our conveniency, and even to recede from our right, rather than contend about it, ſhould we be: and when we cannot overcome evil with good, we ſhould leave the Lord to plead our cauſe in his own time, and manner.—When one affliction has not produced a proper effect, another may be expected; and the Lord's word will ſurely, perhaps ſpeedily, be fulfilled in his providence. Shortly death will ſtrip the richeſt, wiſeſt, and moſt honourable of all their diſtinctions; except true grace has made us to differ; in that caſe, when we leave all the reſt to others, that will be our own for ever. Having then ſerved our generation, we need not wiſh to ſurvive our uſefulneſs; nor can that correction be juſtly complained of, which haſtens our entrance into heaven. When eminently good men die, rivalſhip, envy, reſentment, and prejudice, which rendered them uneaſy, whilſt they lived, die alſo; and men will oft honour and mourn for thoſe, whom when living they have oppoſed and reviled! It is indeed a tribute due to them: but it matters not what others think and ſay of them, when dead, except they will then receive their teſtimony and follow their example.—Bleſſed be God our High Prieſt, at death relinquiſhed not his prieſthood to another, but roſe again to complete his deſign, and ever liveth to make interceſſion for us. Having the fulneſs of the Spirit, he raiſes up a ſucceſſion of miniſters, and Chriſtians to preach and profeſs his truth, from age to age, and hath conſigned the robe of his righteouſneſs to all his ſpiritual poſterity, for their accepted appearance before God.—If we are his indeed, though we ſhould be ſeparated from our deareſt friends, and muſt ſhortly be abſent from the body; yet we ſhall never be ſeparated from him; "for he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit."

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—3.] Before the people ſet out to march round the country of Edom; Arad, the king of thoſe Canaanites, who inhabited the ſouthern part of the country, being acquainted with their intentions of invading the land, and of the ſpies having formerly ſearched it out, and that now they approached his borders, attacked them in the wilderneſs, and took ſome of them priſoners, which did elate him, and diſcourage them. But this diſadvantage induced the Iſraelites to place a more entire dependance on the Lord; and to devote the cities, and property of theſe aſſailants to utter deſtruction, in caſe they were victorious; their perſons being already thus devoted by God himſelf. In this confidence they waged war with them, and puſhed forward to their cities, which they took and utterly deſtroyed; and called the name "*Hormah*, or "utter deſtruction;" that none might ever after build thereon. (*Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 28, 29.) And indeed, notwithſtanding many faults, this generation of Iſrael ſeems to have had more true religion amongſt them, than almoſt any other, either before or after them.

V. 4. *Much diſcouraged*, &c.] The people were not permitted to force their way through the land of Edom, but were let back into the wilderneſs, as if they were to return by the road to the Red Sea. The road perhaps proved

5 And

5 And the people ſpake againſt God, and againſt Moſes, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderneſs? for *there is* no bread, neither *is there any* water; and our ſoul loatheth this light bread.

6 And the LORD ſent fiery ſerpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Iſrael died.

7 Therefore the people came to Moſes, and ſaid, We have ſinned; for we have ſpoken againſt the LORD, and againſt thee: pray unto the LORD, that he take away the ſerpents from us. And Moſes prayed for the people.

8 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Make thee a fiery ſerpent, and ſet it upon a pole: and it ſhall come to paſs, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, ſhall live.

9 And Moſes made a ſerpent of braſs, and put it upon a pole; and it came to paſs, that if a ſerpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the ſerpent of braſs, he lived.

10 And the children of Iſrael ſet forward, and pitched in Oboth.

11 And they journeyed from Oboth, and pitched at Ije-abarim, in the wilderneſs which *is* before Moab, toward the ſun-riſing.

12 From thence they removed, and pitched in the valley of Zared.

13 From thence they removed, and pitched on the other ſide of Arnon, which *is* in the wilderneſs that cometh out of the coaſts of the Amorites: for Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.

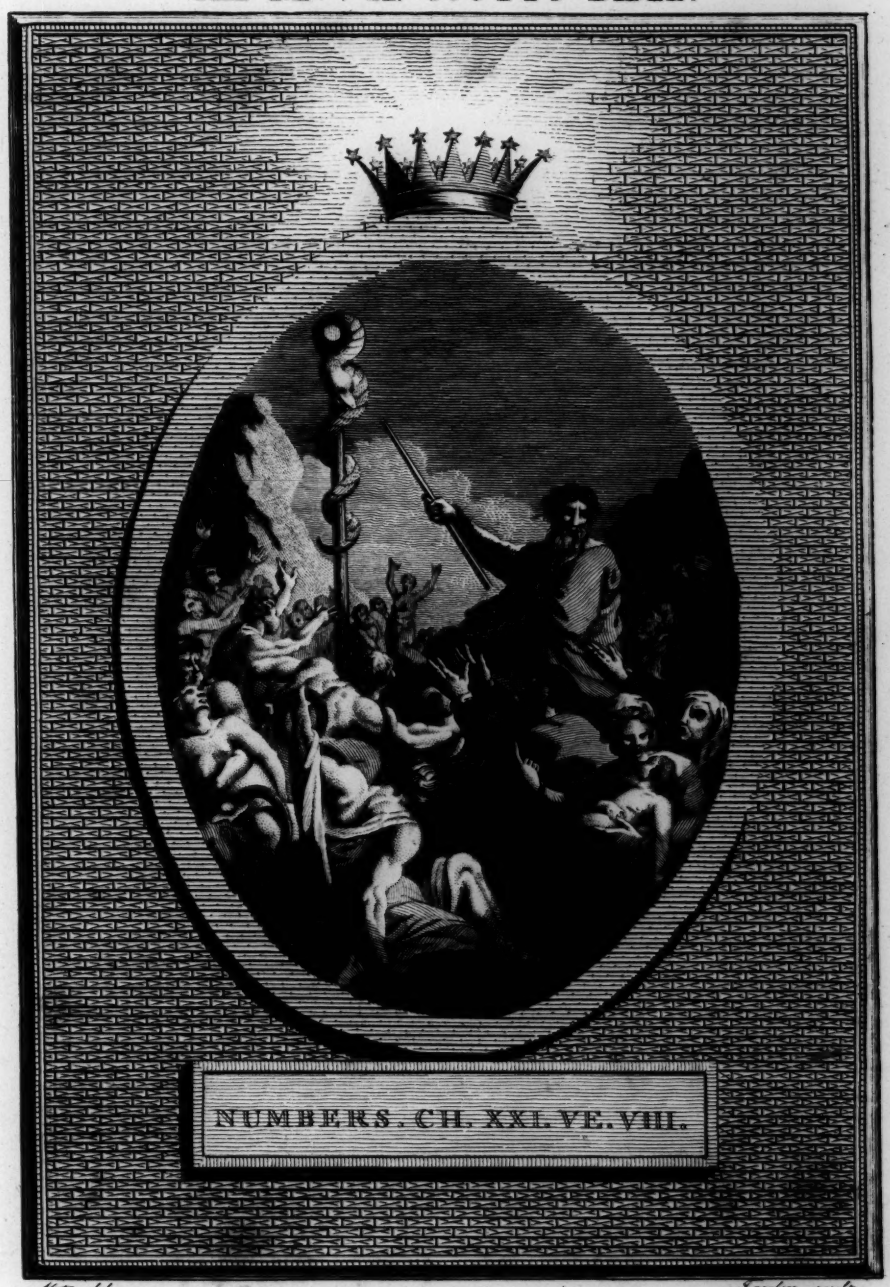
14 Wherefore it is ſaid in the book of the

heavy, or rough, water was ſcarce; and they grew weary of living ſo long on manna, which they fancied was not *hearty* enough to ſupport them under ſuch fatigues. On theſe accounts they were diſcouraged, and relapſed into their old ſin of diſtruſtful murmuring.

V. 6—9.] Theſe ſerpents abounded in the wilderneſs, (*Deut.* c. viii. v. 15,) but had been reſtrained from hurting them, till their ſin provoked God to give them a commiſſion to aſſail their camp; in which they ſoon did dreadful execution, and cauſed ſtill greater conſternation. They were called fiery ſerpents, as ſome think from their colour, which reſembled poliſhed braſs; others, with greater probability, deduce the epithet from the inflammation, like the burning of fire, which immediately followed their bite. The people being by this judgment brought to ſee, and to acknowledge their fault, intreated the prayers of Moſes, for the removal of the ſerpents; who readily concurred. They nevertheleſs continued to bite them, but Moſes was commanded to form a ſerpent of braſs like unto them, to affix it to a long pole, and to place it in a conſpicuous part of the camp. To this brazen ſerpent, thoſe were ordered to look, who had been bitten, though nothing could be more unlikely, than relief from ſuch an expedient: but it was the Lord's appointment, and the cure was from him: his wiſdom was to be ſubmitted to, and by this token they muſt expreſs their dependance on, and expectation from him alone. And whoſoever looked, however deſperate his caſe, or feeble his ſight, or diſtant his ſituation, was infallibly and perfectly cured; but if any one would ſhut his eyes, or turn his back of the brazen ſerpent, he muſt die. This forms a very ſignificant type of our ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt: (*John*, c. iii. v. 14, 15.) The Lord being provoked by man's firſt apoſtacy, hath been pleaſed to permit that old ſerpent, the tempter, the devil, to communicate his baleful venom to the whole human race, which operates to their deſtruction: numbers in conſequence have periſhed, are periſhing, and will periſh. But, "God ſo loved the world, as to give his only-begot-"ten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not "*periſh*, but have everlaſting life."—The Saviour was indeed perfectly free from ſin, but he bare the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, was numbered with tranſgreſſors, and crucified with them: and it is obſervable that the ſuppoſed crime for which he ſuffered, "for making himſelf equal with "God," was conſidered by his enemies as the eſſence of *diabolical* ambition, uſurpation, and blaſphemy. Having been "lifted up upon the croſs," and being now held forth in the preached goſpel publickly to all nations: when any poor ſinner is made ſenſible of his guilt, miſery, and danger; when he humbles himſelf before God, and cries for mercy, and deliverance; he is commanded to look unto Jeſus as dying upon the croſs for the tranſgreſſions "of the law given by Moſes:" and looking in faith, with a deſire, and expectation of ſalvation, and in obedience to God; and perſevering ſo to do from day to day, in the uſe of the appointed means, he ſhall obtain effectual relief, and at length a perfect deliverance; though ſatan's temptations as yet haraſs his ſoul, and infeſt the church of God. Nor ſhall they fail of cure, whoſe faith is weak and wavering, if it be ſincere; and the future lives of ſuch believers will evince that they have looked, and obtained help. And it is not neceſſary that they ſhould be able to account for the cure: it is God's appointment, thereby he works; and though man's reaſoning pride conſider the croſs of Chriſt as fooliſhneſs; yet they, who ſeek, and expect help from God alone in his appointed way, will find it the power of God to their ſalvation. But all, who refuſe to truſt in the Saviour, will find every effort to eſcape deſtruction, unavailing: the bite of the old ſerpent is mortal, and there is but one remedy of ſimple eaſy application, and on that very account too frequently deſpiſed, and neglected; (2 *Kings*, c. v. ver. 10. 14.)

V. 10. *In Oboth*, &c.] Oboth ſignifies bottles, and probably was ſo called from their carrying water thence in bottles, for their uſe in the deſert.

V. 14. *The book of*, &c.] This was probably ſome uninſpired poem, or hiſtory, not now extant. The Iſraelites had now marched round to the country, which lay eaſtward of Canaan, beyond Jordan.



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wars of the LORD, What he did in the Red ſea, and in the brooks of Arnon,

15 And at the ſtream of the brooks that goeth down to the dwelling of Ar, and lieth upon the border of Moab.

16 And from thence *they went* to Beer; that *is* the well whereof the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, Gather the people together, and I will give them water.

17 Then Iſrael ſang this ſong, Spring up, O well; ſing ye unto it:

18 The princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it, by *the direction of* the law-giver, with their ſtaves. And from the wilderneſs *they went* to Mattanah:

19 And from Mattanah to Nahaliel: and from Nahaliel to Bamoth:

20 And from Bamoth *in* the valley, that *is* in the country of Moab, to the top of Piſgah, which looketh toward Jeſhimon.

21 And Iſrael ſent meſſengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, ſaying,

22 Let me paſs through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink *of* the waters of the well; *but* we will go along by the king's *high*-way, until we be paſſed thy borders.

23 And Sihon would not ſuffer Iſrael to paſs through his border; but Sihon gathered all his people together, and went out againſt Iſrael into the wilderneſs: and he came to Jahaz, and fought againſt Iſrael:

24 And Iſrael ſmote him with the edge of the ſword, and poſſeſſed his land from Arnon unto Jabbok, even unto the children of Ammon: for the border of the children of Ammon *was* ſtrong.

25 And Iſrael took all theſe cities: and Iſrael dwelt in all the cities of the Amorites, in Heſhbon, and in all the villages thereof.

26 For Heſhbon *was* the city of Sihon the king of the Amorites, who had fought againſt the former king of Moab, and taken all his land out of his hand, even unto Arnon.

27 Wherefore they that ſpeak in proverbs ſay, Come into Heſhbon, let the city of Sihon be built and prepared:

28 For there is a fire gone out of Heſhbon, a flame from the city of Sihon: it hath conſumed Ar of Moab, *and* the lords of the high places of Arnon.

29 Woe to thee, Moab! thou art undone, O people of Chemoſh: he hath given his ſons that eſcaped, and his daughters, into captivity unto Sihon king of the Amorites.

30 We have ſhot at them: Heſhbon is periſhed even unto Dibon, and we have laid them waſte even unto Nophah, which *reacheth* unto Medeba.

31 Thus Iſrael dwelt in the land of the Amorites.

32 And Moſes ſent to ſpy out Jaazer, and they took the villages thereof, and drove out the Amorites that *were* there.

33 And they turned, and went up by the way of Baſhan: and Og the king of Baſhan went out againſt them, he and all his people, to the battle at Edrei.

34 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Fear him not; for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people, and his land; and thou ſhalt do to him as thou didſt unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heſhbon.

V. 16—18.] Being in want of water, by the Lord's direction, the princes, with their ſtaves only, opened the dry ſurface of the earth, and the water flowed in ſuch abundance, that the place was called Beer, or the well; and the people expreſſed their admiration and gratitude in a ſong of praiſe.

V. 21. *And Iſrael ſent*, &c.] The country of the Amorites was contained in the grant made to Abraham, and as far as to the river Euphrates: (*Gen.* c. xv. v. 18.) Yet perhaps Iſrael did not expect to have taken immediate poſſeſſion of it; but to have firſt invaded the country, which is ſituated betwixt the river Jordan, and the Mediterranean ſea. They therefore, by their ambaſſadors offered peace; and as Moſes approved that meaſure; (*Deut.* c. ii. v. 26;) we may ſuppoſe that it was done by Divine direction. But Sihon not acceding thereto, they began their conqueſts with him, and his country, and proceeded to add thereto that of Og alſo. We have a more full account of this tranſaction in the book of Deuteronomy (c. ii. and iii.)

V. 27. *In proverbs.*] That is, ſongs compoſed, and communicated from one to another by oral tradition; but not committed to writing; which was unknown to, or uncommon amongſt them.

V. 29. *O people of Chemoſh*, &c.] Chemoſh was the chief idol of the Moabites, of which we ſhall read frequently hereafter.

V. 34. *Fear him not*, &c.] Though a giant, and very formidable. (*Deut.* c. iii. v. 11.)

35 So they ſmote him, and his ſons, and all his people, until there was none left him alive: and they poſſeſſed his land.

CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1ſt. Balak king of Moab ſending for Balaam to curſe Iſrael, v. 1—7. *2d. Balaam, though at firſt forbidden to go, afterwards extorting permiſſion, and accompanying the meſſengers, v.* 8—21. *3d. Withſtood by the angel of the Lord, and miraculouſly rebuked by his aſs; at length beholding the angel, and obtaining leave to proceed, v.* 22—35. *4th. Balaam's arrival, Balak welcoming him, and offering ſacrifices, v.* 36—41.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enemies of the Lord will always be the enemies of his people; and in their oppoſition to them may at firſt ſeem to proſper; but they will at laſt be utterly deſtroyed. For though the people of God are often worſted, to take them off from ſelf-dependance: yet thoſe very diſadvantages will conduce to their final victory; as they will excite them to truſt in, and call upon God, and to give him all the glory of their ſucceſs; and then they become invincible: "When they are weak, then are they ſtrong;" (2 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 9—10.) But alas! How ſoon are God's judgments, and mercies forgotten by us! And how prone are we to relapſe into former ſins, though we have ſmarted for them, and even repented of them! To complain of, and magnify every difficulty, to deſpiſe our choiceſt mercies, to be impatient of delays, to diſtruſt, to murmur, and to rebel! Nay, where the dominion of ſin is broke, it dwells within, and will break out again, and ſometimes openly, to the diſhonour of God, and the grief of his faithful ſervants; and under ſome trials, and in ſome caſes, even the true believer may be ſo diſcouraged, and tempted, and ſo yield to temptation, as to undervalue the goſpel manna, the bread of life, and the benefit of Divine ordinances, as if they were "light food," and to almoſt wiſh that he had never ſet out in the ways of God. (*Pſalm*, lxxiii. v. 13, 14.) But they will ſoon be aſhamed of ſuch thoughts, if they have ever wrought in their minds: and only the hypocrite will abide in ſuch a diſpoſition. We have need however to watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation, and it is profitable for us to be aware of the enemy within, as well as of the enemies around us; and eſpecially in times of ſevere trial, and tedious diſcouragement. But "whom "the Lord loves, he chaſtens;" and by his judgments upon hypocrites, as well as by perſonal corrections, he will excite a ſalutary terror in their minds, when they are out of the path of duty, which ſhall bring them back with weeping, and ſupplication: and when they repent, and acknowledge their offence, he will remove the dreaded deſtruction, though perhaps the ſmart of the correcting rod ſhall continue for a time; and he knows how to over-rule, not only the bite of poiſonous ſerpents, but the perſecutions of wicked men, and the temptations of the devil, for the good of thoſe, whom he loves: and our prayers are oft moſt deſirably anſwered, when the letter of the requeſt is not granted; (2 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 7—9.) The Lord can relieve us from our dangers, and diſtreſſes by the moſt unlikely means: of which he hath given proof in redeeming ſo many ſouls from hell, from ſatan, and ſin, and bringing them to holineſs, and eternal life, by the manifeſtation of his Son in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; by his agonizing and accurſed death upon the tree; and by the preaching of the deſpiſed doctrine of a crucified Saviour. Oh! that the venom of the old ſerpent inflaming men's paſſions, and cauſing them to commit thoſe ſins, which iſſue in their eternal deſtruction, were but as *ſenſibly* felt, and the danger as plainly apprehended, as the Iſraelites felt the pain of, and feared the death, which followed from the bite of the fiery ſerpents! Then none would ſhut their eyes to, or turn their backs of Chriſt, and his goſpel: then would a crucified Saviour be ſo valued, that all things elſe would be accounted loſs for him; (*Phil.* c. iii. v. 7—9.) then without delay, and with all earneſtneſs, and ſimplicity of dependance all would apply to him in the appointed way, crying, "Lord ſave us, we periſh:" Then from day to day would they look to him for pardon, and healing; and their conduct would prove, that they had received them; nor would any abuſe the *freeneſs* of his ſalvation to them, whilſt they eſtimated the price, which it coſt *him*; and their love to the Saviour would increaſe their dread, and abhorrence of ſin, and watchfulneſs againſt temptation. But alas! this is not ſo; few feel their periſhing need of Chriſt; and though it ſtill be "Look unto me, and be "ſaved:" yet moſt men periſh in their ſins, even with the Bible in their hands, and the goſpel preached in their hearing, and Chriſt in the goſpel "evidently ſet forth as cru-"cified amongſt them." But how will they eſcape, who through pride of heart, and love of ſin reject this ſimple method of cure, or prefer their own inventions to this heaven-deviſed, purchaſed, and revealed ſalvation? Or who, in abuſe of the doctrine, preſume that their iniquities are pardoned, whilſt their domineering paſſions, earthly affections, and unſanctified tempers; their prevailing covetouſneſs, pride, anger, ambition, or luſt, betray the venom of the old ſerpent to be in full force within! But for thoſe, whom the Lord hath healed, wells of ſalvation ſhall be opened, through their whole journey: and we have only to uſe the appointed means with ſimplicity and diligence, and he will ſend ſupplies of heavenly conſolations: (*Iſaiah*, c. xli. v. 17, 18;) and we ſhall rejoice in celebrating his praiſes. Nor muſt we be unthankful to the inſtruments of our mercies, temporal, or ſpiritual, whether they be princes, nobles, lawgivers, magiſtrates, miniſters, or private perſons.—Still however we muſt prepare for freſh conflicts, and enemies: with ſin and the powers of darkneſs we muſt make no peace, nor truce, nor even treat with them; nor may we expect any interruption in their hoſtilities. And even our neighbours, with whom we would, if poſſible, live peaceably, will often make themſelves ready to battle. But truſting in the Lord's protection, and obeying his commands, we ſhall be more than conquerors over every aſſailant, and profit by all their attempts to hurt us. For our inheritance is ſure, and in the Lord's time and manner, every thing will concur in putting us in poſſeſſion of it. But worldly inheritances are continually changing their maſters: ill gotten gain never wears well; idolatrous dependances fail in the criſis of need; and the deſtruction of the wicked, being appointed of God, will be certainly and ſpeedily effected.

AND

AND the children of Iſrael ſet forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab, on this ſide Jordan by Jericho.

2 And Balak the ſon of Zippor ſaw all that Iſrael had done to the Amorites.

3 And Moab was ſore afraid of the people, becauſe they *were* many: and Moab was diſtreſſed becauſe of the children of Iſrael.

4 And Moab ſaid unto the elders of Midian, Now ſhall this company lick up all *that are* round about us, as the ox licketh up the graſs of the field. And Balak the ſon of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time.

5 He ſent meſſengers therefore unto Balaam the ſon of Beor, to Pethor, which *is* by the river of the land of the children of his people, to call him, ſaying, Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over againſt me.

6 Come now therefore, I pray thee, curſe me this people, for they *are* too mighty for me: peradventure I ſhall prevail, *that* we may ſmite them, and *that* I may drive them out of the land: for I wot that he whom thou bleſſeſt *is* bleſſed, and he whom thou curſeſt is curſed.

7 And the elders of Moab, and the elders of Midian, departed with the rewards of divination in their hand; and they came unto Balaam, and ſpake unto him the words of Balak.

8 And he ſaid unto them, Lodge here this night, and I will bring you word again, as the LORD ſhall ſpeak unto me. And the princes of Moab abode with Balaam.

9 And God came unto Balaam, and ſaid, What men *are* theſe with thee?

10 And Balaam ſaid unto God, Balak the ſon of Zippor king of Moab hath ſent unto me, *ſaying*,

11 Behold, *there is* a people come out of Egypt, which covereth the face of the earth: come now, curſe me them; peradventure I ſhall be able to overcome them, and drive them out.

12 And God ſaid unto Balaam, Thou ſhalt not go with them: thou ſhalt not curſe the people: for they *are* bleſſed.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1. *By Jericho*, &c.] That is on the banks of Jordan over againſt Jericho, where the Iſraelites abode until their paſſage over; for they were now come to an end of their wanderings.

V. 4. *Elders of Midian*, &c.] The Moabites were deſcended from Lot; the Midianites from Abraham by Keturah: they lived near together, and were much united in intereſt, as were alſo the Iſhmaelites, the Edomites, and the Ammonites: but they were all enemies to the children of Iſrael, though ſuch near relations. The ſimile here employed is extremely expreſſive, as referring to the complete deſtruction, which Iſrael had made of Arad, Sihon, and Og, with their reſpective people.

V. 5. *Balaam*, &c.] Balaam appears to have been originally a noted ſoothſayer, or diviner, who was of eminent reputation for his ſkill in thoſe practices. But having acquired ſome knowledge of true religion, without any change in the diſpoſition of his heart; (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 11—13. 18—24.) he endeavoured to render that knowledge ſubſervient to his intereſted, and ambitious ends; and profeſſed himſelf a prophet, and uttered his divinations, &c. in the name of Jehovah. It is not certain, whether the Lord had actually ſpoken to him, or by him, before this event, though it be probable that he had: but he certainly did afterwards; yet have we abundant proof, that he lived, and died a wicked man, and an enemy to God and his people; (*Matt.* c. vii. v. 22, 23. 1 *Cor.* c. xiii. v. 1, 2.)

V. 5. *By the river*, &c.] That is, the river Euphrates, at a very conſiderable diſtance; ſo far had this wicked man's renown diffuſed itſelf!

V. 6. *Come now*, &c.] Balak had ſome general notion of the over-ruling influence of an inviſible power: and at the ſame time had ſuch an opinion of Balaam's intereſt with that inviſible power; that he ſuppoſed he could do nothing ſo effectual to conciliate his favour, as to pay court to his prophet: nay he either actually thought, or he was willing to compliment Balaam, and to comfort himſelf, with the ſuppoſition, that his bleſſings, or curſes were infallibly ratified: if he could therefore have prevailed with him ſolemnly to curſe Iſrael, and to bleſs Moab, he would then have defied the Iſraelites and their God, notwithſtanding all the wonders of which he had heard. Such faith had he in this prophet, and him who employed him.

V. 8. *Lodge here all night*, &c.] As we ſuppoſe, that Balaam actually knew that Jehovah was the true God, and was indeed the protector of his people Iſrael; if his heart had not been exerciſed with covetous practices, if he had not hankered after the "rewards of divination;" he would peremptorily have declared that he durſt not, and would not attempt any thing againſt them. But though he appears to have known that it was in vain to attempt any thing in oppoſition to the almighty power of God; yet he had ſuch unworthy notions of him as to think, that by one means or other, he would be induced to renounce the protection of Iſrael, and to come over to the ſide of Moab. This appears to have been the project, which he had formed, and which he proſecuted for a long time, until he was ſtill further given up to infatuation! Under this idea he deſired

13 And Balaam roſe up in the morning, and ſaid unto the princes of Balak, Get you into your land: for the LORD refuſeth to give me leave to go with you.

14 And the princes of Moab roſe up, and they went unto Balak, and ſaid, Balaam refuſeth to come with us.

15 And Balak ſent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they.

16 And they came to Balaam, and ſaid to him, Thus ſaith Balak, the ſon of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me;

17 For I will promote thee unto very great honour, and I will do whatſoever thou ſayeſt unto me: come therefore, I pray thee, curſe me this people.

18 And Balaam anſwered and ſaid unto the ſervants of Balak, If Balak would give me his houſe full of ſilver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do leſs or more.

19 Now therefore, I pray you, tarry ye alſo here this night, that I may know what the LORD will ſay unto me more.

20 And God came unto Balaam at night, and ſaid unto him, If the men come to call thee, riſe up, *and* go with them; but yet the word which I ſhall ſay unto thee, that ſhalt thou do.

21 And Balaam roſe up in the morning, and ſaddled his aſs, and went with the princes of Moab.

22 And God's anger was kindled, becauſe he went: and the angel of the LORD ſtood in the way for an adverſary againſt him. Now he was riding upon his aſs, and his two ſervants *were* with him.

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a night's time, in hopes to obtain the Lord's conſent, to his intended journey; and conſequently he expected ſome revelation from God about this buſineſs, which, for wiſe reaſons, the Lord was pleaſed to afford him.

V. 13. *The Lord refuſeth*, &c.] He did not "bring them "word again, as the Lord ſpake to him:" for he only mentioned his refuſal, but not the peremptory manner, nor the reaſon of it, viz. "That the people were bleſſed, and "therefore Balaam ſhould not curſe them." Had he properly regarded the words of God, he would for ever have dropt all thoughts of ſuch an undertaking: had he faithfully reported them, they would have conveyed an important warning to Balak, not to meddle to his hurt: but he ſpake as one inclinable to the project, and not without hope of obtaining leave in due time: and as the matter was reported to Balak, he naturally concluded that the prophet only expected more reſpect, and larger promiſes.

V. 15. *Balak ſent*, &c.] The court, which Balak paid to this man, who was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs an intereſt with ſome ſuperior powers, and by whom he hoped to obtain their aſſiſtance; expoſes their hypocriſy, who profeſs the true religion, and yet treat the ordinances, and miniſters of it with neglect, and contempt; and will be at no trouble or expence about it.

V. 16. *Let nothing*, &c.] Neither conſcience, nor the fear of God are excepted in this meſſage; but he fancied that he might expect ſuch complaiſance from the prophet, when he allowed him to fix his own price in return.

V. 18. *I cannot*, &c.] Balaam did not ſay, that he was determined not to come; nor did he expreſs any abhorrence of the crime, or the temptation; (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 20.) But rather ſeemed to regret, that he might not avail himſelf of ſo liberal an offer. He cannot; ſo much the greater his misfortune! Theſe touches muſt be carefully noted, if we would underſtand this inſtructive hiſtory.

V. 19. *Tarry ye alſo*, &c.] After the peremptory anſwer, which God had given Balaam, he ſhould have ſaid to this effect: "Speak no more to me on this ſubject, but return "home, and make the beſt terms you can with Iſrael. "They are the Lord's people, whom he is determined to "bleſs; and you can do nothing againſt them by ſtratagem, or by power, human, or divine: for my part I can"not, I dare not, and I would not for the world, venture to "oppoſe them; ſo tempt me no more:" he was therefore perfectly inexcuſable in parleying with the temptation. But he was the ſlave of his covetouſneſs, and entertained diſhonourable thoughts of God, and ſuppoſed, that he could be induced to change his determination; therefore God in anger gave him the permiſſion, which he ſo wickedly, and eagerly deſired.

V. 20, 21. *If the men come*, &c.] Balaam was in ſuch haſte to go, that he does not ſeem to have waited the call, but to have ariſen early, and prepared for his journey.

V. 22. *God's anger was kindled*, &c.] The Lord is pleaſed to *permit* almoſt an infinity of actions, which he doth not approve; and is very angry at thoſe, who avail themſelves of ſuch permiſſion to gratify their luſts. "They mean it "for evil, but he intends it for good." Nay, the motive, even of obedience, may be ſo corrupt, that whilſt the action is approved, God may abhor the principle, from which it ſprang: (*Compare* 2 *Kings*, c. x. v. 30, *with Hoſea*, c. i. v. 4.) Balaam was inſtigated in the whole tranſaction by covetouſneſs, and ambition; (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 15;) and in a very wicked manner repeatedly ſought permiſſion to curſe a people, whom the Lord had bleſſed, for the ſake of enriching, and advancing himſelf; for he appears not to have had any favour to Moab, or any quarrel with Iſrael, except for filthy lucre's ſake: the Lord, with evident tokens of diſapprobation, gave him leave to follow his inclination, and to go with the princes of Moab; but in going he attempted a buſineſs, which God would not proſper. Of this permiſſion he eagerly availed himſelf, and both the motive, and the conduct diſpleaſed the Lord, who therefore met him "as an adverſary" in the way. His avarice was the more

23 And

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23 And the aſs ſaw the angel of the LORD ſtanding in the way, and his ſword drawn in his hand: and the aſs turned aſide out of the way, and went into the field; and Balaam ſmote the aſs, to turn her into the way.

24 But the angel of the LORD ſtood in a path of the vineyards, a wall *being* on this ſide, and a wall on that ſide.

25 And when the aſs ſaw the angel of the LORD, ſhe thruſt herſelf unto the wall, and cruſhed Balaam's foot againſt the wall; and he ſmote her again.

26 And the angel of the LORD went further, and ſtood in a narrow place, where *was* no way to turn, either to the right hand or to the left.

27 And when the aſs ſaw the angel of the LORD, ſhe fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he ſmote the aſs with a ſtaff.

28 And the LORD opened the mouth of the aſs, and ſhe ſaid unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou haſt ſmitten me theſe three times?

29 And Balaam ſaid unto the aſs, Becauſe thou haſt mocked me: I would there were a ſword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee.

30 And the aſs ſaid unto Balaam, *Am* not I thine aſs, upon which thou haſt ridden ever ſince *I was* thine, unto this day? was I ever wont to do ſo unto thee? And he ſaid, Nay.

31 Then the LORD opened the eyes of Balaam, and he ſaw the angel of the LORD ſtanding in the way, and his ſword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

32 And the angel of the LORD ſaid unto him, Wherefore haſt thou ſmitten thine aſs theſe three times? Behold, I went out to withſtand thee, becauſe *thy* way is perverſe before me.

33 And the aſs ſaw me, and turned from me theſe three times: unleſs ſhe had turned from me, ſurely now alſo I had ſlain thee, and ſaved her alive.

34 And Balaam ſaid unto the angel of the LORD, I have ſinned; for I knew not that thou ſtoodeſt in the way againſt me: now therefore, if it diſpleaſe thee, I will get me back again.

35 And the angel of the LORD ſaid unto Balaam, Go with the men: but only the word that I ſhall ſpeak unto thee, that thou ſhalt ſpeak. So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

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inexcuſable, in that he already could afford to travel with two ſervants attending him. Probably the princes of Moab were gone before to prepare matters for his reception.

V. 23—27.] Balaam's eyes being holden that he could not ſee the angel, nor the danger, which were made viſible to the aſs, was an emblem of the blindneſs of his mind, to that imminent and evident peril, into which he was ruſhing by this preſumptuous undertaking. Surely all the circumſtances of this occurrence ſhould have induced him to have conſidered, whether he were in the right way, or not!

V. 28.] The gift of ſpeech to man is from God, and we cannot comprehend how we ourſelves articulate: and need not therefore be ſurpriſed that the Lord made uſe of the mouth of the aſs to rebuke the madneſs of the prophet, (1 *Peter*, c. ii. v. 16,) and to ſhame him by the reproof, and by the example of the brute. Satan ſpake to Eve by a ſubtle ſerpent; but the Lord choſe to ſpeak to Balaam by a dull aſs: for he does not uſe the enticing words of man's wiſdom; but works by inſtruments, and means, which men deſpiſe.

V. 29.] Balaam in his paſſion ſeems not to have noticed the miracle of the aſs ſpeaking, and to have been but the more enraged thereby.

V. 30. *Am not I*, &c.] Thus the Lord reaſoned with him by the mouth of the aſs; and by reminding him of his property in, and benefit from the animal; and that ſhe had not been accuſtomed ſo to behave, taught him, that his conduct was very abſurd, and prepared the way for a more full diſcovery of his wickedneſs. It would alſo be peculiarly humiliating to this proud man, who boaſted ſo much "of his eyes being open, and of ſeeing the viſions of the "Almighty," to be reproved and ſilenced from the mouth of a brute: and as the Lord both appeared to, and ſpake by the aſs, before he was enabled to ſee the viſion, he had little reaſon to plume himſelf, that the Lord appeared to, and ſpake by him.

V. 32. *Thy way is perverſe before me*, &c.] From this expreſſion; and from the language of the thirty-fifth verſe; "the word that I ſhall ſpeak unto thee," &c, I am induced to conſider this angel, to be the angel of the Lord's preſence, the angel of the covenant, the ſecond perſon in the Trinity, viſibly appearing on this occaſion; (*ſee note Exod.* c. iii. v. 2.)

V. 34. *If it diſpleaſe thee*, &c.] Though Balaam acknowledged that he had ſinned, yet he excuſed himſelf as ignorant that any oppoſition was made to him: and did not yet appear convinced of his wickedneſs in this undertaking; (*ſee Iſaiah*, c. lvii. v. 17,) and only with heſitation propoſed to return: that is, if he might not proceed, except at the hazard of his life.—So reluctant was he to give up the

36 And when Balak heard that Balaam was come, he went out to meet him unto a city of Moab, which *is* in the border of Arnon, which *is* in the utmoſt coaſt.

37 And Balak ſaid unto Balaam, Did I not earneſtly ſend unto thee to call thee? wherefore cameſt thou not unto me? am I not able indeed to promote thee to honour?

38 And Balaam ſaid unto Balak, Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to ſay any thing? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that ſhall I ſpeak.

39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came unto Kirjath-huzoth.

40 And Balak offered oxen and ſheep, and ſent to Balaam, and to the princes that *were* with him.

41 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that

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wages of unrighteouſneſs! He was therefore again permitted to follow his own fooliſh devices.

V. 36.] Balak went as far as to the borders of his land to meet Balaam, that he might teſtify his reſpect to him, and welcome him into his kingdom.

V. 38. *Have I now any power*, &c.?] Still Balaam indicated his approbation of, and concurrence in the project, and betrayed his ſtrong deſire of ſucceeding; though he feared that he ſhould not be able.—In ſhort he was determined to do his beſt to perform the work, and earn the wages; and if he failed, it would be for want of power, not for want of a willing mind: and accordingly we ſhall find that he at laſt periſhed in the attempt. And he even made a merit of coming to Balak, through the midſt of ſo much oppoſition.

V. 40. *And Balak offered*, &c.] It is probable that theſe ſacrifices were offered to ſome of the gods of Moab; by whoſe aid Balak hoped to prevail over Iſrael, through Balaam's incantations: for he was not yet aware of Balaam's project of drawing over the God of Iſrael to their ſide, and therefore propitiated his idols, and invited Balaam, with the princes of Moab, to feaſt upon the ſacrifice.

V. 41. *On the morrow*, &c.] Without loſs of time they went to work, and Balak took Balaam to the high-places, where Baal was worſhipped, that he might both take a view of the whole camp of Iſrael, and curſe them by his gods. (*1 Sam.* c. xvii. v. 43.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our life is a ſucceſſion of wanderings, which will ſhortly cloſe upon the brink of the grave: happy they, who have an inheritance in the Canaan beyond! with comfort may they ſit down on the banks of that Jordan, which rolls between, and with compoſure wait the Lord's call to paſs over, and poſſeſs the promiſed land.—But the ungodly will oft be conſumed with terrors; though more generally afraid of thoſe, "who can only kill the body, than of him, who "is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell." The proſperity of the church, inſtead of inducing ſinners, to ſeek a ſhare in it's privileges and felicity, excites their envy, hatred, and terror, and ſtirs up the ſpirit of oppoſition, and perſecution: but the crafty methods, which ſuch politicians take to ſecure themſelves, generally involve them in more ſpeedy ruin.—That propenſity to religion, which reſults from reaſon, and conſcience, and the corrupted remains of tradition, is, through the depravity of our nature, and the power of ſatan, generally productive of abſurd ſuperſtitions, and abominable idolatries; by means of which that ambitious ſpirit is worſhipped, conſulted, and depended on for information, and aſſiſtance; his miniſters are careſſed and honoured, and his ordinances attended on with immenſe degradation, trouble, and expence.—Much knowledge of doctrinal truth may fill the mind, many convictions may diſquiet the conſcience, and very good words may proceed from the lips of very wicked men: and the ſmalleſt degree of ſanctifying grace is infinitely preferable to all the moſt ſhining talents, or the ſplendid gifts of knowledge, utterance, and eloquence; yea to thoſe of prophecy and miracles; whereby wicked men have ſometimes become more extenſively miſchievous, more illuſtrioufly infamous, more heinouſly criminal, and more exquiſitely miſerable.—Let us then covet earneſtly, and ſeek diligently that beſt gift of divine love, that ſprings from, and is connected with faith, and hope, which never faileth, but ſhall endure for ever. If we have learned to lay up our treaſure in heaven, and to ſeek that honour, which cometh from God only; and to be content with food and raiment: and if covetouſneſs, ambition, and ſenſuality be deeply mortified within us, we ſhall have little to hope, or fear from man, and ſhall be greatly removed out of the way of temptation.—But as there is ſo much remaining of theſe evils in the heart; we all have reaſon to dread, and ſhun thoſe connexions, which almoſt every one covets: I mean the connexions of ungodly men, who are able to promote them to honour, and affluence.—They are eſpecially dangerous to thoſe, who are called to ſpeak in the name of the Lord; for by their influence, by making fair promiſes, and exciting large expectations, and ſhewing great kindneſs, and flattering reſpect, they prevail with many to ſacrifice conſcience, judgment, character, and the fear of God, to their humour, and inclination; and to flatter, and countenance their ſinful practices.—The attraction is almoſt irreſiſtible, the heart is deceitful; and who, that values his ſoul, and knows himſelf, would venture into ſuch a perilous ſituation?—Therefore "avoid them, paſs "not near them, turn from them, and paſs away."—But there have always been many, who have loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs; and paid their court to thoſe, who could bid the higheſt, and reward the beſt. Some of this character will act the hypocrite, and oſtentatiouſly ſpeak of their knowledge of, and intimacy with the Lord, to cloke their wicked intentions: nay they will in this manner deceive themſelves; calling "the Lord their God," whilſt they neither keep his commandments, nor ſeek his ſalvation.—Theſe do not hate ſin, and they love it's wages; they miſtake gain for godlineſs, and covetouſneſs for wiſdom: fear reſtrains them for a time from thoſe outward crimes, which inwardly they are deſirous of committing; and this reſtraint they miſtake for conſcientiouſneſs: convictions

Balak took Balaam, and brought him up into the high places of Baal, that thence he might see the utmost *part* of the people.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains, 1st. Balak building seven altars, and offering sacrifices on each of them, v. 1—2. 2d. Balaam retiring to meet the Lord, returning and blessing Israel; Balak remonstrating, and Balaam shewing the cause of it, v. 3—12. 3d. Other sacrifices offered by Balak in another place, Balaam blessing Israel more and more; and Balak unable to hinder him. v. 13—26. 4th. Sacrifices offered in a third place. v. 27—30.

AND Balaam said unto Balak, Build me here seven altars, and prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams.

2 And Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

3 And Balaam said unto Balak, Stand by

struggle against temptations, though overcome by them, and this they mistake for the conflict between flesh, and Spirit.—But they will parley with the enemy, and nibble at the bait; will seek for excuses, and watch for opportunities; will wrest the Scriptures, explain away the prohibition, or threatening, or hunt out for some evasion; and even seem to crave leave to commit their darling sin.—This will provoke God to give them up to their own hearts lusts; satan will be permitted to increase the force of the temptation; some providence will be misinterpreted into a favourable indication; and, by the ingenuity of a wicked heart, aided and prompted by the enemy, they will at length find some method of expecting impunity, in following their own wicked inclinations.—And when persons are once judicially given over to a strong delusion to believe a lye, all their boasted knowledge, and wisdom will fail them; and they will be left to form such dishonourable notions of God, such erroneous opinions in religion, and such absurd projects in practice, as shall evidence their folly, and ignorance, as much as they expose their desperate wickedness. Nor will this appear more surprising in any thing, than in their strong confidence that the Lord favours them, or their presumptuous hope that he will side with them, notwithstanding the manifest iniquity of their conduct.—But the Lord knows how to restrain the most desperate, and over-rule all to his glory, and the good of his church. By the way, as well as at the end of their course, he will manifest himself to be their adversary: and though they are not thereby convinced, but rush through every hindrance, to the gratification of their ungoverned lusts; these obstructions will one day rise up in judgment against them to their confusion; and every check, which stopped the sinner's career for a time, but hindered not his return to, and continuance in sin, will increase his final condemnation.—Such is man's stupidity and madness, that with all his boasted powers, he may be sent to school to the most stupid of the animals: for though God hath formed us wiser than the beasts of the field; sin hath made us more foolish: and the conduct of the ox, and the ass towards their possessors, yea their inhuman abusers, forms a continued, though silent reproach of our forgetfulness of, ingratitude to, and rebellion against God: and may lead us to conceive in what language they might address us, and how they might plead the cause of their Creator, and their own cause against us, to our shame, and confusion, if the Lord should open their mouths. How might they reproach multitudes with the abuse of God's gift, in their cruel tyranny exercised upon them! With their senseless anger vented in oaths, and curses, revilings, and unmerciful blows furiously bestowed upon a brute beast, even to their own loss! How might they expose man's cruelty to his own species, yea to his own soul, and body: and his excessive animal indulgence as if his understanding only served him to invent methods of being more exquisitely a brute, by refining in gratification!—Little cause then have we to be proud of our reason, which preserves us not from such absurd and destructive excesses; or of the faculty of speech, which is so shamefully abused: and it may serve to abate our self-admiration to reflect, that if God pleases, he can make a dull ass see further, and speak better than any of us. Let us then watch and pray against these dishonourable, and unreasonable passions; and listen to the voice of God, as speaking to us by all the creatures, with which we are surrounded.—Little are the people of God aware of the machinations, which are forming against them; whilst all the policy and power on earth, and in hell are combined for their destruction.—Yet need they not fear: "he that "keepeth Israel neither slumbereth, nor sleepeth."—The Lord sees through every plot, and holds every heart in his hand: "no weapon formed against his church shall pros-"per." (*Isaiah*, c. liv. v. 17.) He restrains, intimidates, and infatuates, as he pleases.—He hath blessed the true believer, and of him alone it can be said, "He, whom thou "blessest is blessed, and he whom thou curseſt is cursed."—Let us then cast our lot amongst them, and then we shall be safe and happy; "for if God be for us, who can be against "us?" "O Lord God of hosts blessed is the man, who "trusteth in thee!" O give unto us true faith, and increase it more and more.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1. *And Balaam*, &c.] The last verse of the foregoing chapter should have been subjoined to this. Upon the high-places, consecrated to Baal, with the camps of Israel full in view, Balaam ordered seven altars to be built, and a bullock, and a ram to be offered upon each, for a sacrifice to the God of Israel, as is evident from the whole history. He had heard that Israel had one altar, and offered upon it bullocks, and rams, and were accepted in so doing: he therefore foolishly fancied, that by outdoing them in the number of altars, and sacrifices, the Moabites might gain the ascendancy in the favour of Jehovah, and draw him over to their side, and obtain leave to curse, and destroy Israel. (2 *Kings*, c. xviii. v 22. *Psal.* l. v. 9. 13—21.)—With great obsequiousness Balak complied with his expensive demands.

V. 3. *Peradventure*, &c.] The Lord had before met Balaam in anger: but having offered such costly sacrifices,

thy burnt-offering, and I will go; peradventure the LORD will come to meet me: and whatſoever he ſheweth me I will tell thee. And he went to an high place.

4 And God met Balaam: and he ſaid unto him, I have prepared ſeven altars, and I have offered upon *every* altar a bullock and a ram.

5 And the LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth, and ſaid, Return unto Balak, and thus thou ſhalt ſpeak.

6 And he returned unto him: and, lo, he ſtood by his burnt-ſacrifice, he, and all the princes of Moab.

7 And he took up his parable, and ſaid, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the eaſt, *ſaying*, Come, curſe me Jacob; and come, defy Iſrael.

8 How ſhall I curſe, whom God hath not curſed? or how ſhall I defy, *whom* the LORD hath not defied?

9 For from the top of the rocks I ſee him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people ſhall dwell alone, and ſhall not be reckoned among the nations.

10 Who can count the duſt of Jacob, and the number of the fourth *part* of Iſrael? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my laſt end be like his!

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he now hoped to have a meeting in favour from him: yet his conſcious guilt rendered him doubtful, and cauſed him to inſert a "peradventure,"—Probably Balaam uſed ſome incantations in his retirement to obtain a favourable meeting from the Lord; ſuch as he had formerly been accuſtomed to, in his ſoothſaying; (V. 23. ch. xxiv. v. 1.) It is very common for *formal* converts to interweave their former ſuperſtitious, philoſophical, or carnal notions, with the truths, ordinances, and precepts of God; from which ſources almoſt all the corruptions of the Chriſtian religion have been deduced.

V. 4. *God met*, &c.] The Lord had many important ends in view, in meeting with, and ſpeaking to this wicked man, notwithſtanding the unwarranted method of his ſeeking him: ſuch as the encouragement, and admonition of Iſrael, and of his church in all ages; the warning of their enemies; and the diſcovery of thoſe depths of wickedneſs, which are in man's heart.

I have prepared, &c.] Inſtead of being humbled for his atrocious wickedneſs, Balaam boaſted of his great ſervices, and deemed it highly meritorious in him, that he had prevailed upon Balak to offer ſo many, and ſuch coſtly ſacrifices to the Lord: though they were not offered at his expence. But he was indeed blind, notwithſtanding his boaſts; (*Rom.* c. xxiv. v. 3, 4;) to ſuppoſe that the God of heaven would be pleaſed with ſacrifices offered in hypocriſy, out of covetouſneſs, and malice, with an intention of curſing, and deſtroying his true people; without any regard to their meaning, and intention, and without repentance, faith, love, or obedience! (1 *Sam.* c. xv. v. 21—23. *Prov.* c. xv. v. 8, 9. *John*, c. xvi. v. 2.)

V. 7. *He took up his parable*, &c.] He began to ſpeak with ſome circumlocutory introduction, and in ſuch a ſtyle, as was uſed in prophecy, which approached to the language of poetry. Whatever were Balaam's intentions, the Lord conſtrained him to pronounce bleſſings on his people: and he that opened the mouth of the aſs, guided the mouth of this wicked man to ſpeak words, as contrary to the deſire of his heart, as thoſe of the aſs were ſuperior to the powers of the brute: and when we duly advert to the temper of the ſpeaker; we ſhall perceive that the Lord ſpake by Balaam, as entirely, as by the aſs; that the miracle was at leaſt as great in the former, as in the latter caſe; and that Balaam had no more to glory in, than the animal; but much indeed to be aſhamed of.

Defy Iſrael, &c.] Balaam was ſent for from Aram, or Meſopotamia, to curſe Iſrael, and to ſet them at defiance: and he confeſſed that he came with that intention. And had he been allowed to do it, Balak would have defied them alſo; (2 *Sam.* c. xvii. v. 10. 43—45;) and have made war upon them. But, as the Lord had not curſed, and defied them; that is, had not rejected them, and determined to treat them as enemies; therefore he would not allow Balaam to curſe them; (though the curſe cauſeleſs could not have hurt them, and would have deceived, and hardened Balak.) But he was pleaſed to guide his tongue to a moſt honourable declaration of his perfections, and the felicity of his people.

V. 9. *Shall dwell alone*, &c.] Beholding their regular encampment in the wilderneſs, ſeparate from other people, Balaam was led to ſpeak language, not only ſuited to their ſituation, but to the peculiar favour ſhewn them, and their ſeparation from other nations, by their laws, religion, and character as a holy people: in all which they were a type of true Chriſtians.

V. 10. *The duſt*, &c.] Their multitudes innumerable as the particles of the duſt, according to the promiſes made to their fathers; (*Gen.* c. xiii. v. 16. c. xxviii. v. 14.)

The fourth part, &c.] That is, one of their four grand encampments.

Let me die, &c.] We ſuppoſe that Balaam ſpoke the words of God, yet not without ſome underſtanding of their meaning, and ſome conviction of their truth; and we may conſider this as an important ancient teſtimony to the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and of a future ſtate of retributions.—Not only the temporal felicity of Iſrael was allowed by Balaam; but their character alſo of a righteous people, accepted of God: and he was led to acknowledge that they, who are truly righteous, are happy in death, and beyond it.—That calmneſs, with which the true believer expects, and ſubmits to the ſtroke of death; that hope full of immortality, which ſupports him at that ſolemn ſeaſon; that proſpect of eternal felicity in another world, in which he rejoices, and which he recommends to

11 And

11 And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed *them* altogether.

12 And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the LORD hath put in my mouth?

13 And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all; and curse me them from thence.

14 And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

15 And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt-offering, while I meet *the LORD* yonder.

16 And the LORD met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus.

17 And when he came to him, behold, he stood by his burnt-offering, and the princes of Moab with him. And Balak said unto him, What hath the LORD spoken?

18 And he took up his parable, and said, Rise up, Balak, and hear; hearken unto me, thou son of Zippor.

19 God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do *it?* or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

20 Behold, I have received *commandment* to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21 He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob,

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others; render his latter end desirable, even in the judgment of wicked people: who are not devoid of convictions respecting a future judgment, are checked in their sinful indulgences with fears of eternal misery, and would be glad of such a deliverance from the horror of dying in sin, and sinking into hell; if it were not to be purchased at too great a price. They wish, they hope, and in some sense they intend to die the death of the righteous: but the love of wealth, honour, or pleasure, in one form or other, prevents their acting according to their convictions, and living the life of the righteous: they therefore procrastinate, and quiet their consciences with the hope of future amendment: or they take up with some false hope, some superficial reformation, or external change; or, in the pride of their hearts, they neglect and despise that only way of salvation, by which a sinner can be righteous before God. Thus many, who have wished to die the death of the righteous, live impenitent, and perish in sin, as Balaam did.

V. 11. *Curse mine enemies*, &c.] The Israelites were no enemies to Balak, or the Moabites, who without cause were enemies unto them: but, as is common in such cases, they construe their own malice into enmity on the side of Israel: for pride and injustice scarce ever forgive those, whom they have injured!

V. 12. *Must I not*, &c.] Balaam attempted to make a merit of necessity, and when he was constrained, much against his will, to bless Israel, would be thought very obedient to the Lord in so doing.—Yet after he had declared that God had not cursed them, and he could not, he persisted in his endeavour, foolishly hoping that the Lord would be induced to change his mind: probably he was encouraged in this expectation, by recollecting, that he had got leave to come at the second time, though it had been refused him at the first: for God's patience emboldens men's wickedness.

V. 13. *Thou shalt see but*, &c.] Balak seems to have thought that Balaam's mind was indisposed for cursing Israel, by seeing their numerous, and orderly encampments all at once; therefore he hoped to prevail in cursing one division first, against which he probably intended to commence hostilities.

V. 19. *God is not a man*, &c.] Men are deceitful in promising, changeable, easily induced to revoke their engagements, or unable to fulfil them. But none of these things have place in God. He is perfectly sincere, faithful, unchangeable, almighty: and though, after the manner of man, he is said to repent of the kindness, that he has shewn, when his creatures make ungrateful returns, and he is provoked to withhold his bounty: and of his judgments denounced against sinners, when they repent, or when in answer to the prayers of his servants, he delays the execution of them: yet in the grand event of things it will be found that every promise and engagement made to believers were exactly accomplished, and all his threatenings to unbelievers, fully and finally executed.—This declaration had in this place a peculiar reference to the state of Israel; God had absolutely determined to bless them as a nation, and as a type of true believers; and he had plainly told Balaam that he would do so; and with hesitation he had intimated it to Balak. Yet were they seeking to bribe, or to tease him (if I may so speak) to alter his mind, and revoke his word. But now Balaam was at length constrained to bear testimony against himself, and to proclaim the madness, folly, and wickedness of his undertaking.

V. 20. *I cannot*, &c.] Still he manifested the strength of his inclination to earn his wages, if possible; but "he "had received to bless," (the word commandment is not in the original,) blessings were forced upon him, and he could not reverse them.

V. 21. *He hath not beheld*, &c.] Their former national sins were atoned for, and pardoned; the people were not at that time guilty of any idolatry, or rebellion; but were in a very obedient disposition, had much true religion

neither hath he ſeen perverſeneſs in Iſrael: the LORD his God *is* with him, and the ſhout of a king *is* among them.

22 God brought them out of Egypt: he hath as it were the ſtrength of an unicorn.

23 Surely *there is* no inchantment againſt Jacob, neither *is there* any divination againſt Iſrael: according to this time it ſhall be ſaid of Jacob and of Iſrael, What hath God wrought!

24 Behold, the people ſhall riſe up as a great lion, and lift up himſelf as a young lion: he ſhall not lie down until he eat *of* the prey, and drink the blood of the ſlain.

25 And Balak ſaid unto Balaam, Neither curſe them at all, nor bleſs them at all.

26 But Balaam anſwered and ſaid unto Balak, Told not I thee, ſaying, All that the LORD ſpeaketh, that I muſt do?

27 And Balak ſaid unto Balaam, Come, I pray thee, I will bring thee into another place; peradventure it will pleaſe God that thou mayeſt curſe me them from thence.

28 And Balak brought Balaam unto the top of Peor, that looketh toward Jeſhimon.

29 And Balaam ſaid unto Balak, build me here ſeven altars, and prepare me here ſeven bullocks and ſeven rams.

30 And Balak did as Balaam had ſaid, and offered a bullock and a ram on *every* altar.

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amongſt them, and were *comparatively* a righteous people. Thus the true believer is fully pardoned, and accepted, and really ſanctified, and obedient: in him the Lord beholds not iniquity, or perverſeneſs, none allowed, none unſubdued, none unpardoned.

The ſhout of a king, &c.] The Lord God, as reigning over, protecting, and leading them forth to battle was amongſt them; of whoſe power they had had ſuch experience, (v. 22.) that they were inſpired with triumphant confidence in him; and at his word, were ready to ſhout for the battle; and attack their enemies with aſſurance of ſucceſs.

V. 23. *Surely there is no*, &c.] It ſeems here admitted that ſatan was allowed to exerciſe ſome power in this way, in anſwer to the expectations of thoſe, who uſed inchantments. But Iſrael was ſo immediately under the divine protection, that nothing of this kind could injure them.—Balaam mentions their ſafety, and his own impotency with the ſame apparent regret, that ſatan mentioned the hedge, which the Lord had made about Job. (c. i. v. 10.)

According to this time, &c.] That is, this is a ſpecimen of that protection, which will always be afforded them; the remembrance of which will encourage the faith, and inſpire the praiſes of future ages: whilſt with admiration they conſider, what God hath now wrought.

V. 24.] In this verſe not only bleſſings are pronounced upon Iſrael; but the doom of all their enemies is denounced: which might have been a warning to Balak, and Balaam alſo, to deſiſt from their vain, and perilous attempt. (c. xxiv. v. 17.)

V. 29. *And Balaam ſaid*, &c.] Not being yet willing to give up all hopes of ſucceeding.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Proud, and wicked men will ſpare no pains, and grudge no expence, when they imagine, that they can therewith purchaſe God's favour, or induce him to concur in, or connive at their miſchievous deſigns. And ſuch is the ignorance of God, of his law, and of true godlineſs, which is incident to human nature, that multitudes perſiſt themſelves, and find teachers to encourage them in theſe vain attempts of obtaining the favour of God, without mortifying their luſts, or humbling themſelves before him: who in return have their covetouſneſs gratified by ſuch pupils, and for ſuch inſtructions. Mere Phariſees have frequently exceeded God's own people in the meaſure of external ſervices, and in the degree of partial mortification; and not knowing of any thing more excellent in religion, they are thereby confirmed in their ſelf-confidence, and ſelf-preference; they truſt in themſelves that they are righteous, and deſpiſe others; and even boaſt of their doings, as if they had made God their debtor, (*Iſaiah* c. lviii. v. 2, 3. *Luke*, c. xviii. v. 12;) when their heart is full of malice, and wickedneſs. But God abhors pompous externals, and ſelf-impoſed ſervices; nay even the moſt zealous attendance on his own ordinances, whilſt the heart remains deſtitute of humility, repentance, faith, and love to him, and to his people: and ſtill more when the devotion is a mere cloke of hypocriſy to cover the moſt unjuſt, and oppreſſive intentions. His people's ſpiritual worſhip, though leſs ſhewy, is of a more excellent kind: a broken and contrite, a believing and thankful, a pure and upright heart, are more ſuitable to his nature, and more precious in his ſight, than thouſands of rams, and ten thouſands of rivers of oil. As they are a people peculiarly favoured, ſo are they peculiarly characteriſed; they "dwell alone," they are deſpiſed by, and they pity the ſurrounding multitudes, who ſeparate them from their company, and with whom they deſire no fellowſhip: their maxims, cuſtoms, laws, and conduct are diſſimilar from thoſe of all other people: their inheritance, their home, their citizenſhip are in heaven; their affections, converſation, purſuits, and pleaſures are heavenly: and whilſt they are deemed the filth of the world, and the offſcouring of all things, and not fit to live; the Lord accounts them the excellent of the earth, of whom the world is not worthy: though they are few in every place, when compared with the ungodly, they are in all very numerous, may the Lord multiply them an hundred fold, how many ſoever they be! And though deſpiſed by thoſe, who know them not; yet they attract the reverence of wicked men, who are well acquainted with them, even when it is accompanied with hatred and reſentment; (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 17—20.) Such perſons, though they eſpouſe an oppoſite intereſt, and lead a contrary life, through the power of domineering luſts,

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. Balaam more copiously blessing Israel, and predicting the destruction of their enemies, v. 1—9. *2d. Balak enraged, and dismissing Balaam, who renders a reason for his conduct, v.* 0—13. *3d. A remarkable prophecy, which Balaam uttered before his departure, v.* 14—25.

AND when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he went not, as at other times, to seek for inchantments, but he set his face toward the wilderness.

2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding *in his tents* according to their tribes; and the Spirit of God came upon him.

3 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said;

4 He hath said, which heard the words of

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and prevailing temptations, yet secretly account them happy; and wish to have their lot with them at death, and in the eternal world: but in vain; for can they expect to be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting, who in defiance of their own convictions choose to serve satan, and their sins in this world? There are indeed a mixt multitude, who attend the camp, that are not thus characterised; whom satan, and his servants do not honour with their hatred, or opposition; but despise, and only despise them,—as suspecting no harm to their cause from either their example, influence, or endeavours. But let not such *mere professors* deem themselves interested in those precious, indefeasible privileges, which belong to the true Israel of God. Notwithstanding disappointments, and convictions, the lusts of wicked men will revive and reign; and whilst some, who persecute the cause of God, are pushed forward by implacable malice and envy; others are induced to concur by insatiable avarice, and restless ambition: and through mean unworthy thoughts of God, they flatter themselves, that by altering their measures, they shall either prevail with him to change, or shall frustrate his counsels. "But he is of one "mind, who can turn him?" (*Job*, c. xxiii. v. 13, 14.) will infallibly perform his kindest largest promises to his people; and execute his most terrible denunciations upon the multitude of his inveterate enemies. And whilst earth and hell combine their power, and policy to prevent it, "the Lord sitteth in the heavens,—has them in derision," and will soon "speak to them in his wrath, and vex them "in his sore displeasure." (*Psalm* ii. v. 1—6.) Nor will the most costly sacrifices prevail with him, any more than the most powerful armaments can force him, to renounce the protection of his people, or to retard the execution of vengeance upon his enemies. Let believers then rejoice in, and sinners tremble at his unchangeableness, his truth, and power. Let none flatter themselves with the hope of impunity in sin; let all take warning to flee from the wrath to come, to give diligence to make their calling and election sure, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. If the Lord sees that we trust in his mercy, and accept of his salvation; that we indulge no secret lust, and continue not in any presumptuous rebellion; but uprightly endeavour to serve, and glorify him: we may be sure that he looks upon us as accepted in Christ; and that our sins are all pardoned, and buried in the depths of the sea, no more to hurt us, than if they had never been committed. If this be our case, the Lord hath blessed us, hath given commandment to bless us, and will never suffer it to be reversed: and if satan cannot prevail to deceive us, or defile us, he cannot hurt us by machinations, or temptations, by inchantments or divinations. Having all hearts and tongues in his hand, the Lord not only can restrain the malice of our enemies, but constrain them against their will to speak well of us, and do well to us: to confess their impotency, to condemn themselves, and to foretel their own misery with their own mouth: (and yet they will madly persist in their destructive opposition!) and to acknowledge with reluctant admiration the work of God for us, and in us.—Well then may the believer triumph in his King the Lord of Hosts, and re-echo with grateful exultation, What hath God wrought! Oh the wonders of his providence, and grace! The wonders of his redeeming love, of his pardoning mercy, of his new-creating Spirit! What a change in our state, our character, and our prospects! Every former mercy now becomes an earnest of still further blessings; and from past deliverances, we may infer the certainty of final victory, and eternal triumphs. Thus shall every true believer; thus shall the whole church of God, be unto him for a name, and for a praise; whilst with their eyes they shall behold the destruction of the wicked. But is this the reader's character, and felicity? let us seriously examine ourselves, and earnestly pray the Lord to decide this infinitely important question: to this let us aspire; this let us pursue with unremitting diligence, and undiverted attention: let us watch and pray always, for our enemies are watchful, indefatigable, and malicious: and sure we ought to be as unwearied in glorifying God, and doing good to his people, and to all men, as his enemies are in their mischievous endeavours. And even Balaam's retirement to meet the Lord; and Balak's assiduous attention to his burnt-sacrifices, and rising up to hear the message from God, may furnish us with profitable hints; if we apply them to ourselves, in our pursuits of nobler objects, from higher motives, and for other purposes.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *When Balaam saw*, &c.] Balaam had been constrained to return from his retirement, and inchantments, with answers the very reverse of his wishes, and intentions: he therefore deemed it to no purpose to repeat them. But whether in desperate rebellion he purposed to curse Israel, without asking leave, and thus to satisfy Balaam, and earn his reward, though he could not hurt Israel; and was forcibly restrained by the Lord, and constrained to pronounce further blessings: or whether under a pang of conviction he desisted from his purpose for the present, and freely yielded himself to the inward impulse of the Spirit of God, in blessing Israel, though he afterwards returned to his wicked projects, is not agreed amongst expositors, nor is it easy to determine.

V. 3, 4. *Whose eyes were open*, &c.] These words are generally allowed to mean, "whose eyes were shut," or

God,

God, which ſaw the viſion of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

5 How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! *and* thy tabernacles, O Iſrael!

6 As the valleys are they ſpread forth, as gardens by the river's ſide, as the trees of lign-aloes, which the LORD hath planted, *and* as cedar-trees beſide the waters.

7 He ſhall pour the water out of his buckets, and his ſeed *ſhall be* in many waters, and his king ſhall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom ſhall be exalted.

8 God brought him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the ſtrength of an unicorn: he ſhall eat up the nations his enemies, and ſhall break their bones, and pierce *them* through with his arrows.

9 He couched, he lay down as a lion, and as a great lion: who ſhall ſtir him up? bleſſed *is* he that bleſſeth thee, and curſed *is* he that curſeth thee.

10 And Balak's anger was kindled againſt Balaam, and he ſmote his hands together: and Balak ſaid unto Balaam, I called thee to curſe mine enemies, and, behold, thou haſt altogether bleſſed *them* theſe three times.

11 Therefore now flee thou to thy place: I thought to promote thee unto great honour, but, lo, the LORD hath kept thee back from honour.

12 And Balaam ſaid unto Balak, Spake I not alſo to thy meſſengers, which thou ſenteſt unto me, ſaying,

13 If Balak would give me his houſe full of ſilver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the LORD, to do *either* good or bad of mine own mind: *but* what the LORD ſaith, that will I ſpeak?

14 And now, behold, I go unto my people: come, *therefore*, *and* I will advertiſe thee what this people ſhall do to thy people in the latter days.

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cloſed: whilſt thoſe in the fourth verſe mean, "whoſe "eyes were opened." His eyes had been ſhut, but were now opened: "ſhut, when he thought of curſing Iſrael, "but now open to perceive that they were bleſſed:" "or his "bodily eyes were ſhut, whilſt thoſe of his underſtanding "were opened." But it is generally ſuppoſed that he referred to that time; when his eyes were holden, that he ſaw not the angel, which his aſs ſaw; until the aſs fell down with him; (c. xxiii. v. 27—31;) when his eyes were opened, and he fell flat on the earth: for the words "into a trance," are not in the original: but it runs thus: "he ſaw the viſion of the Almighty, falling, but having "his eyes opened." But whatever be the exact meaning of the words, they are generally ſuppoſed to ſavour of oſtentation; and the pure language of the Spirit of God ſeems to have been polluted, as it were, by the filthy veſſel, through which it had paſſed.—His viſions and revelations exalted him above meaſure; and he appears to have courted admiration, when he was not able to obtain the riches, which he coveted.

V. 6.] As valleys verdant, fruitful, and widely extended; as luxuriant, well cultured gardens on the banks of ſome fertilizing river; as aromatic trees diffuſing a fragrant ſmell, or cedars moſt ſtately and comely to behold, planted, as it were by God's own hand, in the moſt advantageous ſituation, and not needing, or receiving any human culture: ſuch did the camps of Iſrael appear; and ſuch would be their fruitfulneſs, and proſperity.

V. 7. *He ſhall pour*, &c.] That is, God ſhall water them abundantly with his heavenly bleſſings; and as ſeed ſown in a well watered place, their multitudes ſhall increaſe ſtill more and more.

And his king, &c.] Agag ſeems to have been the name of the kings of Amalek in their ſucceſſion. That nation was at this time very powerful, and their king very renowned and proſperous: but it is here foretold, that Iſrael ſhould come under the government of more proſperous princes, which ſhould overcome the Amalekites: this was fulfilled in the time of Saul, who ſeems here eſpecially predicted.

V. 8. *He hath*, &c.] That is, God hath given Iſrael that ſtrength, which makes him as formidable to his enemies, as the rhinoceros, (for that beaſt is ſuppoſed to be meant,) is to the beaſts of the foreſt.

V. 9. *He couched*, &c.] (*See note*, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 9.) Iſrael is here repreſented as powerful, yet diſpoſed to peace, magnanimous, but generous; indiſpoſed to injure others, and fearleſs of them; but wo to him, that ſhould awake this ſleeping lion.

Bleſſed is he, &c.] (*Gen.* c. xii. v. 3. c. xxvii. v. 29.) Perhaps Balaam hoped at laſt to ſhare the bleſſedneſs of Iſrael, by thus bleſſing them: but he did it reluctantly, not out of love, but by conſtraint; and was not therefore included. This was a prophecy of Iſrael's ſucceſſes under their moſt proſperous kings; and of the ſpiritual proſperity, and felicity of the church of Chriſt, and all it's cordial friends: and implied a ſolemn warning to all their enemies, from Balak and Balaam himſelf, down to their lateſt ſucceſſors, to deſiſt from ſuch an unequal perilous conteſt.

V. 10, 11.] Balak was now enraged to the greateſt degree, and expreſſed his indignation in the moſt furious manner: and not without a mixture of ſcorn and diſdain of Balaam, for having miſſed ſo fair a proſpect of advancing himſelf, out of regard to the God of Iſrael, dimiſſed him from his preſence.

V. 13. *That will I*, &c.] Balaam had repeatedly confeſſed his inability to go beyond the word of the Lord: but here he appears diſpoſed not only to vindicate his

15 And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said;

16 He hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the most High, *which* saw the vision of the Almighty, falling *into a trance*, but having his eyes open:

17 I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

18 And Edom shall be a possession: Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly.

19 Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.

20 And when he looked on Amalek, he took up his parable, and said, Amalek *was* the first of the nations, but his latter end *shall be* that he perish for ever.

21 And he looked on the Kenites; and took up his parable, and said, Strong is thy dwelling-place, and thou putteſt thy nest in a rock;

22 Nevertheless, the Kenite shall be wasted until Asshur shall carry thee away captive.

23 And he took up his parable, and said, Alas! who shall live when God doeth this?

24 And ships *shall come* from the coast of Chittim, and shall afflict Asshur, and shall

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conduct to Balak, as having never engaged to curse Israel; but also to put a favourable construction upon the whole affair, as if he had not had any great inclination so to do, but only had waited to know the Lord's will, and obediently to perform it.

V. 16. *Knew the knowledge*, &c.] Balaam speaks with increasing confidence of the revelations, with which he was favoured: and though similar words were sometimes spoken by the true prophets, (2 *Sam.* c. xxiii. v. 1—3;) yet from so wicked a man they have an air of ostentation. The secret of the Lord is indeed with them that fear him; but Balaam had little reason to boast of his knowledge of God, and heavenly things.

V. 17.] David himself, as swaying the sceptre over all Israel, with great reputation, and as gaining considerable victories over the Moabites, &c; (2 *Sam.* c. viii. *Psal.* lx;) and the kings of his race as ruling over Judah, and still further subjugating the Moabites, and neighbouring nations, may here be intended. But the prophecy must have it's full accomplishment in the kingdom and spiritual victories of Jesus Christ. Some suppose that by Sheth the ancestor of a Moabitish tribe is meant: others, that Seth the son of Adam, and the progenitor of the whole postdeluvian world, is intended. If this be the meaning, the sense must be, that Christ should establish his dominion over them all, either as willing subjects, or as conquered enemies sentenced to destruction. Near 1500 years before Christ this prophecy was uttered: Balaam was enabled to penetrate into futurity, and to predict the coming of the Saviour: he saw, that though the Messiah was not at that time visible, he would at length be manifested; and though his Advent was not near, it would certainly arrive. Some suppose that he also dolefully foreboded his own doom in these words, and looked forward to the consummation of all things, when he should behold the Lord Jesus, as his offended judge, and not as a loving Saviour. And it is also supposed that the tradition of this star predicted by Balaam, being disseminated through the East, prepared the way for the wise men following the star, which appeared at the birth of Christ. Even the Jewish writers allow this prophecy to relate to the Messiah.

V. 18, 19.] The victories of the house of David, as typical of the triumphs of David's Son, are here foretold; who shall destroy all, however they attempt to secure themselves, that will not have him to reign over them.

V. 20. *The first of the nations*, &c.] The Amalekites were one of the most ancient, and prosperous of the nations; and the first of those, who attacked the Israelites. This prophecy was accomplished by Saul, and David; after whose days, there appear no vestiges of that once flourishing people.

V. 21. *The Kenites*, &c.] As Jethro a Midianite is afterwards called a Kenite, (*Judges*, c. i. v. 16,) it is supposed that the Midianites are here meant; who, dwelling in a rocky country, deemed themselves safe from the assaults of their enemies; but were notwithstanding wasted by the Israelites, till at length they were carried captive by the Assyrians, as is supposed, about the time of the captivity of the ten tribes.

V. 23. *Alas, who shall live*, &c.] Perhaps it is here meant that the desolations would then be so dreadful, that it would be miserable to live amongst them at the time predicted: or that the time referred to was so distant, that they should all be dead long before.

V. 24. *The coast of Chittim*, &c.] This expression in Scripture always means the inhabitants of Europe, especially the Greeks, or Romans. (*Dan.* c. xi. v. 30.) And this passage is an evident prediction of the victories of the Greeks, or Macedonians, under Alexander, and his successors; and of those of the Romans after them: these latter especially coming from far in ships overturned the kingdoms, which had long subsisted in that part of the world, and possessed them; causing great afflictions to the people, who inhabited the ancient Assyria, but still greater to the Hebrews, (especially in the last destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans:) and have ever since been tyrannizing in one form or other, over the church, or the world; but shall at length be destroyed as entirely, as the Amalekites were. This part of the prophecy is not yet fulfilled. What a surprising series of prophecy have we here in few words, which in former accomplishments hath already evidenced to successive generations, the divine authority of the Scriptures; and shall to future ages demonstrate the same truth

afflict Eber, and he alſo ſhall periſh for ever.

25 And Balaam roſe up, and went and returned to his place; and Balak alſo went his way.

with undeniable evidence! "Thus," ſays Dr. Lightfoot, "Balaam, inſtead of curſing the church, curſeth Amalek the "firſt, and Rome the laſt enemy of the church."

V. 25. *And Balaam roſe*, &c.] Though Balaam for the preſent deſiſted from his purpoſe, yet he was not rendered more friendly to Iſrael; or cured of his avarice; which at length ſuggeſted to him a ſtill more diabolical plan. The care of God over Iſrael in defeating this malicious confederacy, is long after mentioned as an evidence of his kindneſs, and of their ingratitude for it. (*Micah*, c. vi. v. 5.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enemies of the church of God may renew their attacks as oft, and vary them as much as they pleaſe; yet they can by no means gain any real advantage, "for it "pleaſes the Lord to bleſs" his people, and he will make all their oppoſers ſee, feel, and acknowledge it, though they be thereby filled with rage, and deſperation; (*Rev.* c. iii. v. 9.) nay they ſhall in ſome caſes be conſtrained to allow their excellency, and to forebode their greater proſperity, and their own conſequent deſtruction. Under the protection of Judah's lion, they may ſecurely reſt; and whoſoever diſturbs them, will ſtir him up to their own deſtruction; for he will only ſuffer their malice to proceed, till it hath accompliſhed his purpoſes for the good of his people; and will then execute vengeance on the guilty inſtruments of their ſalutary chaſtiſements; (*Iſaiah*, c. x. v. 5—7. 12. 15—19.) and whilſt he renders them moſt accurſed, and miſerable, who wiſh evil, or do evil to his ſervants; he will abundantly bleſs all, who pray for, and ſeek the peace of them, out of love to their character, and religion.—They, who are kept back from worldly honour and affluence by an upright heart, and a good conſcience, will be thereby great gainers: and the miniſter eſpecially, who faithful to his truſt, by word and deed, with meekneſs, and firmneſs, reproves the wickedneſs of thoſe, who had thought to promote him to honour, will have an hundred fold more in this preſent time, and in the world to come everlaſting life. But they, who have juſt light enough in their minds, and reſtraint enough upon their conſciences, to induce their heſitation at going the whole length, which a wicked Patron may require; and thus loſe their favour, and balk their own preferment, continuing ſtill the ſlaves of ſin, and the enemies of God, are very miſerable in this world, and like to be ſo in the world to come; as they ſin with greater aggravation, than more ignorant people. Let us not then attempt to ſerve God, and Mammon; nor halt between Jehovah, and Baal; but follow the Lord fully, and he will make up every loſs to us. The conſent of wicked men in ſin will at length iſſue in bitter hatred, and ſevere recriminations; and many foreſee the miſeries coming upon others, who ſuſpect not greater, and nearer miſeries, that await themſelves. But what benefit would accrue to any of us? what cauſe ſhould we have to glory, or rejoice, if we underſtood all myſteries, and all knowledge, if we could penetrate the ſecrets of the moſt remote futurity, and develope the book of the divine decrees; "if we ſaw the viſions of "the Almighty, and knew the knowledge of the Moſt "High," and had our eyes opened to ſee things hid from all others, ſince the foundation of the world; whilſt diſtant nations, and ſucceſſive ages were deſtined to celebrate our fame: if at the ſame time we remained the ſlaves of covetouſneſs, ambition, luſt, or malice; impenitent, and unpardoned, under the wrath of God, doomed to the fire, that never ſhall be quenched, and the worm, that never dieth?—All theſe endowments would but aggravate our guilt, and enhance our condemnation. Nor is there any indiſſoluble bond between extenſive knowledge, even in theological ſubjects, and that holineſs, without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord. That light indeed, which diſcovers the glory of God, the beauty of holineſs, the hatefulneſs of ſin, the excellency of Chriſt, and the worthleſſneſs of all earthly things; will always produce a correſpondent diſpoſition, and behaviour; and be attended with repentance, faith, love, gratitude, benevolence, and an heavenly walk and converſation. But let us take heed, leſt the light, that is in us prove darkneſs; for if it do, alas! how great will that darkneſs be! (*Matt.* c. vi. v. 23.) Let us ſeriouſly examine, whether, or in what reſpects, our knowledge, attainments, experience, or profeſſion, excel thoſe of Balaam? no fluency, or excellency of ſpeech, even in preaching, or in prayer; no gifts of knowledge, or prophecy; no viſions, and revelations of the Lord, are intrinſically, and decidedly different from, or ſuperior to *his* boaſted endowments, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs, and died the enemy of God, and his people. But a broken, and contrite heart, which mourns for, hates, and flees from ſin: a ſimple dependance on the Redeemer's atoning blood, and ſanctifying grace; a chearful ſubjection to the divine command, and ſubmiſſion to his will; an habitual aim to glorify God, and benefit his people, are leſs ſplendid, but far more excellent attainments, and invariably accompanying ſalvation. No glorious hypocrite ever poſſeſſed theſe; yet the feebleſt true believer is conſcious of them in ſome degree, and is daily longing, and praying for more of them: whilſt, perhaps through an error in judgment, and ſatan's ſubtlety, ſuch Chriſtians overlook all theſe *infallible* evidences of *ſaving* grace, and indulge deſponding fears, becauſe they cannot emulate ſome boaſting Balaam's gifts. But it is their duty, and privilege to bleſs the Lord for, and rejoice in, what he hath done for them. Here by faith they behold the Saviour, nigh unto them; ſhortly ſhall they ſee him nigh, as come to complete their redemption, and conſummate their felicity: whilſt the wicked, whether infidel, profligate, or hypocritical, ſhall be baniſhed far from his bleſs-giving preſence; "for "the firſt ſhall be laſt, and the laſt ſhall be firſt." Yet will the Lord glorify himſelf, and benefit his church by the gifts, and in the puniſhment of ſuch wicked men; and in theſe prophecies we may diſcern both the miſery of the ungodly, the vanity of all worldly dependances and preeminence; the approaching deſtruction of every enemy, who hath done evil in the ſanctuary; the conſequent triumphs of the church, and the univerſal ſpread of the goſpel, notwithſtanding afflictions, perſecutions, and damnable hereſies: whilſt they aſſure our faith in the full accompliſhment of all the promiſes, which reſpect our own eternal ſalvation.

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1st. The Israelites drawn into whoredom, and idolatry by the Moabitish women, &c. v. 1—3. *2d. God commanding the public execution of the ringleaders; the presumptuous crime of an Israelite, and a Midianitish woman, punished with immediate death by Phinehas; a terrible devastation amongst them by the plague, v.* 4—9. *3d. The Lord's acceptance of Phinehas' zeal; the names of the parties slain; and the Lord's command to make war against the tempters, v.* 10—18.

AND Israel abode in Shittim, and the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.

2 And they called the people unto the sacrifices of their gods: and the people did eat, and bowed down to their gods.

3 And Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel.

4 And the LORD said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the LORD against the sun, that the fierce anger of the LORD may be turned away from Israel.

5 And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor.

6 And, behold, one of the children of Israel came, and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman, in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, who *were* weeping *before* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

7 And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it*, he rose up from among the congregation, and took a javelin in his hand;

8 And he went after the man of Israel into the tent, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly. So the plague was stayed from the children of Israel.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1—3.] We are informed by the Lord himself, (c. xxxi. v. 16. *Rev.* c. ii. v. 14.) that this sin of the Israelites was the result of counsel, which Balaam gave to Balak. The last verse of the foregoing chapter relates "that he went, and returned to his place;" yet we afterwards read that he was slain in the war, to which his counsel gave rise: it seems therefore most natural to suppose, that he directly went home in sullen despondency; where after a time satan suggested this counsel to him; (*John*, c. xiii. v. 2;) upon which he returned back to propose it to Balak; and waiting to observe it's success, he was slain amongst the Midianites. Though most commentators suppose that he gave Balak this counsel, before he went home; and are consequently puzzled to find out what brought him back amongst the Midianites; (c. xxxi. v. 8.) This wicked man could not obtain leave to denounce a solemn curse on Israel, but he instructed Balak how to seduce Israel to bring a curse upon themselves; or at least to deprive themselves of the Lord's immediate protection, and to provoke such judgments, as would both diminish their numbers, and dispirit their hearts.—Under the mask of friendship, an intercourse was opened, and some of the Moabitish, and Midianitish, women, (who were it seems no ways backward to such an infamous undertaking,) were employed to allure them to an unreserved intercourse with them. This having taken place in many instances, and especially amongst their chief persons, an invitation was given them, to come to their idolatrous feasts, at which every species of licentiousness was practised: this was readily complied with, and they flocked in great numbers, and joined in their idolatrous worship; the inferiors being encouraged by the example of their superiors. (1 *Kings*, c. xi. v. 1—8.)

V. 4, 5. *The heads of the people*, &c.] That is, the ringleaders in this iniquity, who were chiefly the principal persons in their several tribes, and families: it is probable that the anger of the Lord had already occasioned a plague amongst them, which was making dreadful ravages: and if they would not have their idolatry interpreted into a national forfeiture of the covenant, and the plague destroy them all; immediate vengeance must be executed on the chief transgressors, by putting them to death, and hanging them up ignominiously as a sacrifice to the justice of God. From comparing the sum total of those who died in the plague, (v. 9,) with that mentioned by St. Paul, (1 *Cor.* c. x. v. 8,) some compute that no less than one thousand persons were thus put to death.

V. 6—8.] This action of Zimri and Cozbi was done in direct defiance of God, of Moses, and of the congregation; who in great multitudes were penitently confessing their sins, and deprecating the divine displeasure. It was the greatest insult and outrage imaginable upon all authority, divine, and human, upon all order, and common decency; in such circumstances, whilst numbers were dying by the sword of the magistrate, and much greater multitudes by the hand of God; for a man thus to triumph in his wickedness, and dare the whole government to touch him.—Phinehas was the second priest, and successor to the High Priesthood, and doubtless as high in authority, as in rank; and as a magistrate was commissioned both by God, and by Moses, to slay those, who were joined to Baal-peor; Zimri was notoriously, and avowedly guilty; but whilst others trembled to come near him, he in the courage of zeal, and faith, executed vengeance upon him, and his infamous paramour at once. No conduct could in every view be more unexceptionable; nor can it ever be drawn into a precedent, to countenance acts of private revenge, of religious persecution, or even of irregular public ven-

9 And

9 And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.

10 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

11 Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, (while he was zealous for my sake among them,) that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy.

12 Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace.

13 And he shall have it, and his seed after him, *even* the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was zealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.

14 Now the name of the Israelite that was slain, *even* that was slain with the Midianitish woman, *was* Zimri, the son of Salu, a prince of a chief house among the Simeonites.

15 And the name of the Midianitish woman that *was* slain was Cozbi, the daughter of Zur; he *was* head over a people, *and* of a chief house in Midian.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

17 Vex the Midianites, and smite them:

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geance. And the objections of some infidels to this part of holy Scripture, expose their ignorance, or disingenuity, as much as they do their hatred of this sacred book. Nor is there one of them, if God, and religion were out of the question, but, in such a crisis, when a daring rebel set the regular magistracy at defiance, and evidently meant to instigate the people to a revolt, would have agreed, that the welfare of the community, was the chief law, and that so extraordinary a case required an extraordinary remedy; and would have applauded a decisive measure, though irregular; which this doth not appear to have been.

V. 11.] This action, springing from zeal for the honour of God, and of his law, and productive of so much good to the people; (as in consequence "the plague was "stayed," which would otherwise "have consumed the "children of Israel") received the sanction of the divine approbation, and was "imputed to him for righteousness;" (*Psalm* cvi. 28—31.) Let who will censure it, the heart-searching God accepted, and rewarded it, as a righteous action; and confirmed the priesthood to his family for future generations, in consequence of it.

V. 13. *An atonement*, &c.] A sacrifice to divine justice, expiating guilt by inflicting deserved punishment.

V. 17. *Vex the Midianites*, &c.] The execution of these orders is recorded in the thirty-first chapter: though Balaam's counsel was first given to Balak; yet probably the Midianitish women, especially of the higher ranks, as Cozbi, were more generally the tempters, than the Moabitish; and the former nation came into the measure more generally than the latter: therefore the Moabites were spared, and the Midianites selected to be made examples of, for their warning.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The friendship, and caresses of the wicked are more dangerous than their enmity: for none can prevail against God's people, if they are not overcome by their inbred lusts; nor can any inchantment injure them, but the fascination of worldly interests, and pleasures: nor would the enemy of souls be so much gratified by seeing a worshipper of God cast into a fiery furnace, as by alluring him to the indulgence of his sensual inclinations, in opposition to the law of God: because that will more essentially injure his own soul, and wound the credit of his profession. When once the fence of the divine command is broken through, the progress from one kind and degree of sin to another is natural, and almost unavoidable: and when the barrier of female modesty is removed, the transition to the most impudent licentiousness is frequently very sudden: nor are any persons more pestilential to the human species than beautiful abandoned women.—Numbers in every age are brought to an ignominious execution; still greater multitudes are hurried to the grave by dreadful diseases, in consequence of listening to the allurements of such insinuating tempters: in short, "their feet lead down to death, and their "steps take hold of *hell:*" (*See Prov.* c. ii. v. 16.—19. c. v. ver. 3—15. c. vi. v. 24—35. c. vii. v. 5—27.) Yet multitudes, increasing multitudes throng the fatal path, regardless of God's law, in defiance of his vengeance, and in neglect of the dictates of common sense, universal observation, and their own painful experience of the fatal effects. But let him, who would have health, credit, and comfort in this world, or escape the wrath to come, flee youthful lusts, and shun such fascinating tempters, as he would persons infected with a baleful pestilence.—The more advanced in rank or authority any offender is, the deeper is the aggravation of their guilt, and the more extensive the influence of their pernicious example: it is therefore of vast importance that judgment should impartially be administered, without respect of persons. Yet there have always been those, who would attempt to elude, outbrave, or bribe human justice. At such a time, a zeal for God, and the welfare of society should excite all those, who are invested with authority, to disregard all personal considerations, in boldly stepping forwards, and bringing an overgrown offender to condign punishment. And they, who consistent with relative obligations, by any means, boldly attempt to check the progress of daring wickedness, shall be honoured and recompensed of God; though they be censured, and hated of men, for so doing. In large collective bodies there will be a diversity of characters; we should not therefore censure and condemn whole multitudes for the crimes of some individuals, which the rest perhaps detest, and mourn over.—None will be more surely, and severely punished, than they, who after satan's example, as his agents, and with his subtlety, tempt others to wickedness: nor should we dread, or shun any enemies so much as these. The Lord will chastise his offending people, but

18 For

18 For they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague for Peor's sake.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1st. The numbering of the people by the command of God, with the number of each tribe, and the sum total, v. 1—51. 2d. Orders concerning the division of the promised land, v. 52—56. 3d. The numbering of the Levites, v. 57—62. 4th. The performance of God's word noticed, v. 63—65.

AND it came to pass after the plague, that the LORD spake unto Moses, and unto Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying,

2 Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, throughout their father's house, all that are able to go to war in Israel.

3 And Moses and Eleazar the priest spake with them in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

4 *Take the sum of the people*, from twenty years old and upward; as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt.

5 Reuben, the eldest son of Israel: the children of Reuben; Hanoch, *of whom cometh* the family of the Hanochites: of Pallu, the family of the Palluites:

6 Of Hesron, the family of the Hesronites: of Carmi, the family of the Carmites.

7 These *are* the families of the Reubenites: and they that were numbered of them were forty and three thousand and seven hundred and thirty.

8 And the sons of Pallu; Eliab.

9 And the sons of Eliab; Nemuel, and Dathan, and Abiram. This *is that* Dathan and Abiram *which were* famous in the congregation, who strove against Moses and against Aaron in the company of Korah, when they strove against the LORD:

10 And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign.

11 Notwithstanding, the children of Korah died not.

12 The sons of Simeon, after their families: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites: of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites: of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites:

13 Of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites: of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites.

14 These *are* the families of the Simeonites, twenty and two thousand and two hundred.

15 The children of Gad, after their families: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites;

their tempters he will utterly destroy.—How dreadful will the change be to those, who sink together from the indulgence of sinful pleasure, into the torments of hell fire! And how mad are men, who so wantonly provoke his vengeance, who can so easily thus destroy them! But let us not close our reflections, without looking to Jesus, who in his zeal for the Lord of Hosts, and his love to his people, made an atonement, not with the blood of others, but with his own blood, that we might not be consumed, and is in consequence established in an everlasting priesthood after the order of Melchizedeck, an High Priest upon the royal throne of universal and everlasting dominion.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1.] The plague, which is recorded in the foregoing chapter, had, it seems, swept away the last remains, of that devoted generation, which had provoked the Lord, to swear in his wrath, that they should not enter Canaan: another numbering therefore of the people was appointed, preparatory to their taking possession of the promised land. In this narration we have not only the tribes, but the families registered; that is the names of those sons, or grandsons of the patriarchs, who were the progenitors of the grand subdivisions in their several tribes. We have more full genealogies of them, in the first book of Chronicles, and there are some trifling variations betwixt the accounts: but these things have little to do with our edification. The sum total was decreased 1820 from the former numbering; but there are more considerable variations in the numbers of the several tribes: these the reader may easily ascertain for himself, by comparing this chapter with the first of this book. I shall only observe, that as Simeon was decreased above 37,000, it hath been not improbably conjectured, that by Zimri's example and influence, they had been peculiarly guilty in the wickedness of Baal-peor; and that the 24,000, who died on that account were chiefly of this tribe.

V. 11. *The children*, &c.] Not consenting to their father's crime, or speedily repenting of it, the children of Korah were preserved, and afterwards became eminent in the service of the sanctuary.

ites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites: of Shuni, the family of the Shunites:

16 Of Ozni, the family of the Oznites: of Eri, the family of the Erites:

17 Of Arod, the family of the Arodites: of Areli, the family of the Arelites.

18 These *are* the families of the children of Gad, according to those that were numbered of them, forty thousand and five hundred.

19 The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan: and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.

20 And the sons of Judah, after their families, were; of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites: of Pharez, the family of the Pharzites: of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites:

21 And the sons of Pharez were; of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites: of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.

22 These *are* the families of Judah, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and sixteen thousand and five hundred.

23 *Of* the sons of Issachar, after their families; *of* Tola, the family of the Tolaites: of Pua, the family of the Punites:

24 Of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites: of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.

25 These *are* the families of Issachar, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore and four thousand and three hundred.

26 *Of* the sons of Zebulun, after their families: of Sered, the family of the Sardites: of Elon, the family of the Elonites: of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.

27 These *are* the families of the Zebulunites, according to those that were numbered of them, threescore thousand and five hundred.

28 The sons of Joseph, after their families, *were* Manasseh and Ephraim.

29 Of the sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites: and Machir begat Gilead: of Gilead *came* the family of the Gileadites.

30 These *are* the sons of Gilead: *of* Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites: of Helek, the family of the Helekites:

31 And *of* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites: and *of* Shechem, the family of the Shechemites:

32 And *of* Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites: and *of* Hepher, the family of the Hepherites.

33 And Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters: and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

34 These *are* the families of Manasseh, and those that were numbered of them, fifty and two thousand and seven hundred.

35 These *are* the sons of Ephraim, after their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalites: of Becher, the family of the Bachrites: of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.

36 And these *are* the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites.

37 These *are* the families of the sons of Ephraim, according to those that were numbered of them, thirty and two thousand and five hundred. These *are* the sons of Joseph after their families.

38 The sons of Benjamin, after their families: of Bela, the family of the Belaites: of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites: of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites:

39 Of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites: of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.

40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: *of Ard*, the family of the Ardites: *and* of Naaman, the family of the Naamites.

41 These *are* the sons of Benjamin, after their families: and they that were numbered of them, *were* forty and five thousand and six hundred.

42 These *are* the sons of Dan, after their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These *are* the families of Dan, after their families.

43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those that were numbered of them, *were* threescore and four thousand and four hundred.

44 *Of* the children of Asher, after their families: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites:

nites: of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites: of Beriah, the family of the Beriites.

45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites: of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites.

46 And the name of the daughter of Asher *was* Sarah.

47 These *are* the families of the sons of Asher, according to those that were numbered of them, *who were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred.

48 *Of* the sons of Naphtali, after their families: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites: of Guni, the family of the Gunites:

49 Of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites: of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites.

50 These *are* the families of Naphtali, according to their families: and they that were numbered of them *were* forty and five thousand and four hundred.

51 These *were* the numbered of the children of Israel, six hundred thousand and a thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

53 Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names.

54 To many thou shalt give the more inheritance, and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance: to every one shall his inheritance be given, according to those that were numbered of him.

55 Notwithstanding, the land shall be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they shall inherit.

56 According to the lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.

57 And these *are* they that were numbered of the Levites, after their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites: of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites: of Merari, the family of the Merarites.

58 These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, the family of the Korathites: and Kohath begat Amram.

59 And the name of Amram's wife *was* Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, whom *her mother* bare to Levi in Egypt: and she bare unto Amram Aaron, and Moses, and Miriam their sister.

60 And unto Aaron was born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.

61 And Nadab and Abihu died, when they offered strange fire before the LORD.

62 And those that were numbered of them were twenty and three thousand, all males from a month old and upward: for they were not numbered among the children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given them among the children of Israel.

63 These *are* they that were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho.

64 But among these there was not a man of them whom Moses and Aaron the priest numbered, when they numbered the children of Israel in the wilderness of Sinai.

V. 55. *The land shall be*, &c.] The quantity was ordered to be proportioned to their numbers: the situation was to be determined by lot. Thus the decreasing of their tribes proved the decrease of their future political importance, and affluence, in all succeeding ages.

V. 58.] These were the principal sub-divisions of the three families of the Levites.

V. 63.] As the Levites were not numbered from twenty years of age; and as "they were not numbered among the children of Israel" as heirs of Canaan, it is not probable that they were included in what follows.

V. 64. *There was not a man*, &c.] Upon exact inquiry it was found that not one man of that number remained. Thus the word of the Lord was magnified, and an intimation was given, that a speedy entrance into Canaan might be expected, now that the rebellious generation was extirpated. We may entertain a pleasing hope, that their temporal punishment was sanctified to multitudes of them, to bring them to repentance ere they died; and so might become the means of their eternal salvation, as a blessed effect of the respite granted them. Amongst all this multitude there was not one man aged sixty, except Caleb, Joshua, and some of the Levites. Of the women we have no information, but have no proof that they were involved in the sentence.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Death is continually making awful havock of the human species, and causing surprising revolutions in families, and nations; yet all is appointed in perfect wisdom, justice and truth, by the Lord himself. This should excite us to meditate upon the hateful nature, and destructive tendency of

65 For the LORD had ſaid of them, They ſhall ſurely die in the wilderneſs. And there was not left a man of them, ſave Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains, 1ſt. The deciſion of the cauſe of Zelophehad's daughters, v. 1—11. 2d. Moſes warned of his approaching death; and, in anſwer to his prayer, Joſhua ſolemnly appointed to ſucceed him, v. 12—23.

THEN came the daughters of Zelophehad, the ſon of Hepher, the ſon of Gilead, the ſon of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, of the families of Manaſſeh the ſon of Joſeph: and theſe *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, Noah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Tirzah.

2 And they ſtood before Moſes, and before Eleazar the prieſt, and before the princes and all the congregation, *by* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, ſaying,

3 Our father died in the wilderneſs, and he was not in the company of them that gathered themſelves together againſt the LORD in the company of Korah; but died in his own ſin, and had no ſons.

4 Why ſhould the name of our father be done away from among his family, becauſe he hath no ſon? Give unto us *therefore* a poſſeſſion among the brethren of our father.

5 And Moſes brought their cauſe before the LORD.

6 And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

7 The daughters of Zelophehad ſpeak right: thou ſhalt ſurely give them a poſſeſſion of an inheritance among their father's brethren: and thou ſhalt cauſe the inheritance of their father to paſs unto them.

8 And thou ſhalt ſpeak unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, If a man die, and have no ſon, then ye ſhall cauſe his inheritance to paſs unto his daughter.

9 And if he have no daughter, then ye ſhall give his inheritance unto his brethren.

10 And if he have no brethren, then ye ſhall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.

11 And if his father have no brethren, then ye ſhall give his inheritance unto his kinſman that is next to him of his family, and he ſhall poſſeſs it: and it ſhall be unto the children of Iſrael a ſtatute of judgment; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Get thee up into this mount Abarim, and ſee the land which I have given unto the children of Iſrael.

13 And when thou haſt ſeen it, thou alſo ſhalt be gathered unto thy people, as Aaron thy brother was gathered.

ſin, the procuring cauſe of all theſe devaſtations; we ſhould thence take occaſion to renew our repentance, to ſeek forgiveneſs, to value the ſalvation of Chriſt, to remember how frail we are, to prepare for the approaching ſummons, and to fill up our remaining days, in ſerving our generation according to the will of God. Then will death be diſarmed of his ſting, become our friend, and convey us to heaven, when our appointed period on earth is finiſhed. But unrepented, unpardoned ſin arms death with unutterable horrors; and laſting infamy perhaps in this world, and everlaſting ſhame, contempt, and miſery, will be the doom of thoſe, who are driven away in their wickedneſs; however famous, and renowned they were amongſt their ill-judging fellow ſinners. And though the Lord puniſh the iniquity of the fathers, upon their unbelieving poſterity; yet he will preſerve thoſe who imitate not their parent's ſin, from ſharing their puniſhment; and the infamy of the father, ſhall only make the piety, and uſefulneſs of the ſon more noticed. The word of God will be ſurely performed; and the eye of the Lord can diſcern, and his arm can reach every ſinner, in the midſt of ſurrounding multitudes: and though reſpites are not pardons, yet they give ſpace and opportunity for repentance. His promiſe alſo is irrevocable, and they who follow the Lord fully, ſhall certainly at length have the comfort of it. In all our different ſituations in life, let us ſubmit to the ſovereignty, admire the equity, and wiſdom, and be thankful for the goodneſs of the Lord: and above all things deſire, that, whatever elſe is denied us, we may have an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *Then came*, &c.] In the orders for the diviſion of the land juſt given, (ch. xxvi. v. 52—56,) no proviſion had been made for the females, in caſe of the failure of male iſſue. Theſe five daughters of Zelophehad, therefore, conſidered themſelves as left deſtitute, having neither father, nor brother to inherit, and being themſelves entirely overlooked. They agree therefore to refer the caſe to Moſes, &c, whether it were not equitable that they ſhould inherit their father's portion; and whether females in future might not inherit the father's eſtate, when there was no male iſſue; both of which the Lord himſelf determined in the affirmative.

V. 3. *Died in his own ſin*, &c.] And therefore had not incurred a forfeiture any more than the other Iſraelites, who were all involved in one common ſentence: why then, aſk

14 For ye rebelled againſt my commandment in the deſert of Zin, in the ſtrife of the congregation, to ſanctify me at the water before their eyes: that *is* the water of Meribah in Kadeſh, in the wilderneſs of Zin.

15 And Moſes ſpake unto the LORD, ſaying,

16 Let the LORD, the God of the ſpirits of all fleſh, ſet a man over the congregation,

17 Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the LORD be not as ſheep which have no ſhepherd.

18 And the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, Take thee Joſhua the ſon of Nun, a man in whom *is* the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him;

19 And ſet him before Eleazar the prieſt, and before all the congregation: and give him a charge in their ſight.

20 And thou ſhalt put *ſome* of thine honour upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Iſrael may be obedient.

21 And he ſhall ſtand before Eleazar the prieſt, who ſhall aſk *counſel* for him, after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word ſhall they go out, and at his word they ſhall come in, *both* he, and all the children of Iſrael with him, even all the congregation.

22 And Moſes did as the LORD commanded him: and he took Joſhua, and ſet him before

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they, ſhould his memory be diſgraced, and he treated, as if his line were extinct, when he hath left ſo many children? (c. xxxvi. *Joſhua*, c. xvii. v. 3—6.)

V. 16. *The God of the ſpirits*, &c.] (*See note*, *Num.* c. xvi. v. 22.) Moſes addreſſed the Lord by this title, intimating, that as he "knew what was in man," (*John*, c. ii. v. 25,) he alone could point out the proper perſon to rule over the congregation. We find that he alſo prayed, that he might enter Canaan, but the Lord would not conſent thereto; and he conſequently acquieſced; (*Deut.* c. iii. v. 23—27;) but his chief concern was about the congregation, that a proper perſon might ſucceed him in ſo arduous, and important a truſt.

V. 18. *In whom is the Spirit*, &c.] Joſhua had long attended on Moſes, and had been endowed with the Spirit of wiſdom, and excellent gifts were thereby conferred on him: but his ſucceſſion had not been publicly recognized until this time. Moſes never ſo much as intimated a deſire that one of his ſons might ſucceed him; as Eleazar had ſucceeded Aaron: nor do we find that *they* entertained any ſuch expectations; but acquieſced in the Lord's determination, and obeyed, and honoured Joſhua without envy, or murmur!

Lay thine hand, &c.] This was a token of conferring authority, and of a man's deſignation to ſome particular office or ſervice.

V. 19. *Give him a charge*, &c.] That is, ſeriouſly inſtruct him in the important duties of his place, warn him to be upon his guard againſt it's temptations, and in the moſt earneſt manner charge it upon his conſcience to be diligent and faithful in it. (1 *Tim.* c. vi. v. 13, 14. 20. 2 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 1.)

V. 20. *Put ſome of thine*, &c.] That is admit him to a preſent ſhare in the authority, that the people may be accuſtomed to obey, and honour him. Moſes lived, and was very buſily employed, ſome time after this warning: and Joſhua would be very uſeful to him, in eaſing him of the burden of the civil government, whilſt he gave himſelf wholly to attend to the intereſts of religion.

V. 21. *Who ſhall aſk counſel*, &c.] Moſes aſked counſel of the Lord himſelf immediately: but all the future rulers of Iſrael were directed to this method of conſulting the Lord by the High Prieſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believing expectation, that the word of the Lord would be performed in due ſeaſon, and the deſire of an intereſt in the promiſed inheritance, which theſe young women manifeſted; and the modeſt manner, in which they preferred their petition, without indulging ſecret murmurs, and diſcontent, are well worthy of imitation. The readineſs alſo of Moſes to liſten to their ſuit with candour, and to conſider it with attention, and to ſeek counſel from the Lord about it, is proper to be copied by magiſtrates, miniſters, and all entruſted with authority.—The earneſtneſs, with which Moſes, under the divine rebuke, and on the verge of death, pleaded in behalf of the congregation; the anxiety that he expreſſed for their welfare, after his deceaſe; and his diſintereſted conduct; with the peaceful ſubmiſſion of his ſons to the lot of private Iſraelites, without any diſtinction, are excellent models for our ſpirit, and conduct.—Though we do not by impenitent and preſumptuous wickedneſs exclude ourſelves from the inheritance of heaven, yet our ſins are to be conſidered as the deſerving cauſes of all our ſufferings in this world, and of our final diſſolution.—The word of God is our only, and ſufficient ſtandard of faith and practice; but in applying general precepts to particular caſes, ſober ſenſe, and ſound judgment will be requiſite: and all thoſe things which are not out of the reach, and province of our reaſon, will be found upon careful inveſtigation evidently reaſonable. When difficulties, relative to practice, are fairly propoſed, and ſolidly reſolved, they become adjudged caſes extenſively, and durably uſeful.—None but Jeſus ever liveth to rule over, and protect his church: others have their ſubordinate temporary ſervices allotted them, which having finiſhed, they muſt be gathered to their fathers; and though their diſmiſſion ſhould be with a rebuke for ſome miſcarriages, of which they have been guilty; the proſpect of heaven, and the grace of the Holy Spirit, will induce a peaceful, and ſubmiſſive acquieſcence.—Advancing ſanctification will always evidence itſelf, by a proportionate regard to the intereſts of true religion; which will be increaſed by the expectation, or approach of death: and the more any one hath experienced the difficulty, and burden of important

Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation.

23 And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge; as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains laws concerning, 1st. The daily sacrifices, v. 1. 8. *2d. Those for the sabbath, v.* 9, 10. *3d. Those for the new moons, v.* 11—15. *4th. Those for the feast of the Passover, and of unleavened bread, v.* 16. 25. *5th. Those for the feast of Pentecost, v.* 26—31.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, My offering, *and* my bread for my sacrifices made by fire, *for* a sweet savour unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season.

3 And thou shalt say unto them, This *is* the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the LORD; two lambs of the first year without spot, day by day, *for* a continual burnt-offering.

4 The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even;

5 And a tenth *part* of an ephah of flour for a meat-offering, mingled with the fourth *part* of an hin of beaten oil.

6 *It is* a continual burnt-offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

7 And the drink-offering thereof *shall be* the fourth *part* of an hin for the one lamb: in the holy *place* shalt thou cause the strong wine to be poured unto the LORD *for* a drink-offering.

8 And the other lamb shalt thou offer at even: as the meat-offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof, thou shalt offer *it*, a sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD.

9 And on the sabbath-day, two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth-deals of flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, and the drink-offering thereof.

10 *This is* the burnt-offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.

11 And in the beginnings of your months ye shall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks and one ram, seven lambs of the first year without spot;

12 And three tenth-deals of flour *for* a meat-

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stations of usefulness, the more sensible will he be, that none but the Lord can furnish a man for, or support him in such services. To him, who hath the fulness of the Spirit, must the application be made, to set suitable persons over his congregations; who by their example, and instructions, and by the proper exercise of authority, may go before the people, and take care of them, that they be not as sheep, which have no shepherd. (*Mark*, c. vi. v. 34.) Nor is that man fully qualified for any service in the church of God, who is destitute of the graces, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, however learned, eloquent, ingenious, or sagacious he may otherwise be.—They, who are appointed to such offices, whether as magistrates, or ministers, should be solemnly charged to attend to the duties of them; and honour is to be put upon them, obedience paid to them, and prayers offered for them, by the church of God: and thus supported, they need not fear the hardest services, to which the Lord may call them in his providence; for his grace shall be sufficient for them.—But in Joshua's succession, we are reminded, "that the law was given by Moses," which by reason of our transgression could not bring any of us to heaven; "but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," to accomplish the salvation of every believer.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1, 2. *Command*, &c.] The ceremonial worship had been much interrupted during the Israelites continuance in the wilderness; (*Amos*, c. v. 25 v.;) but being now about to enter upon the wars of Canaan, and to take possession of the promised land, they were to be reminded not to neglect the ordinances of God, in the hurry and peril of the one, or in the satisfactions of the other.—We have here some repetitions of former laws, with further explications; and some new appointments, especially with reference to the number, and kind of the sacrifices to be offered on particular occasions: but there is not much, which requires interpretation, or affords new subject of practical instruction. In this and the following chapter the reader is referred to the notes and practical observations already made, on the laws for the several kinds of sacrifice, and for the solemn feasts.

V. 7. *Strong wine*, &c.] (*See Ex.* c. xxix. v. 38—42.) The wine to be poured on the sacrifice was commanded to be the best of the kind. Wine is still the memorial of the blood of Christ shed for the ransom of many, by the remission of sins.

V. 9, 10.] This was a new injunction aptly significant both of the extraordinary devotions of the sabbath, and of the need there is, that in those devotions "we should be-"hold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the "world." (*Ezek.* c. xlvi. v. 4, 5.)

V. 11.] St. Paul intimates that the new moons were a shadow, of which Christ was the substance; (*Col.* c. ii. v. 16, 17;) but there appears not any thing typical in them, except the numerous sacrifices offered upon them. The providence of God, "appointing the moon for certain

offering,

offering, mingled with oil, for one bullock; and two tenth-deals of flour *for* a meat-offering, mingled with oil, for one ram;

13 And a several tenth-deal of flour, mingled with oil, *for* a meat-offering, unto one lamb; *for* a burnt-offering of a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

14 And their drink-offerings shall be half an hin of wine unto a bullock, and the third *part* of an hin unto a ram, and a fourth *part* of an hin unto a lamb: this *is* the burnt-offering of every month throughout the months of the year.

15 And one kid of the goats for a sin-offering unto the LORD shall be offered, besides the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.

16 And in the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the passover of the LORD.

17 And in the fifteenth day of this month *is* the feast: seven days shall unleavened bread be eaten.

18 In the first day *shall be* an holy convocation; ye shall do no manner of servile work *therein.*

19 But ye shall offer a sacrifice made by fire, *for* a burnt-offering unto the LORD; two young bullocks, and one ram, and seven lambs of the first year: they shall be unto you without blemish.

20 And their meat-offering *shall be of* flour mingled with oil: three tenth-deals shall ye offer for a bullock, and two tenth-deals for a ram;

21 A several tenth-deal shalt thou offer for every lamb, throughout the seven lambs:

22 And one goat *for* a sin-offering, to make an atonement for you.

23 Ye shall offer these beside the burnt-offering in the morning, which *is* for a continual burnt-offering.

24 After this manner ye shall offer daily, throughout the seven days, the meat of the sacrifice made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD: it shall be offered beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.

25 And on the seventh day ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

26 Also in the day of the first-fruits, when ye bring a new meat-offering unto the LORD, after your weeks *be out*, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work.

27 But ye shall offer the burnt-offering for a sweet savour unto the LORD; two young bullocks, one ram, seven lambs of the first year;

28 And their meat-offering of flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals unto one bullock, two tenth-deals unto one ram,

29 A several tenth-deal unto one lamb, throughout the seven lambs;

30 *And* one kid of the goats, to make an atonement for you.

31 Ye shall offer *them* besides the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, (they shall be unto you without blemish,) and their drink-offerings.

"seasons," was therein acknowledged; and the dedication of all their time to him, who gave it, was inculcated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Two coincident subjects here demand our attention, which are by no means new to us, yet may stir up our minds by a salutary repetition. We are reminded of the continued efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, and of our continual need to depend thereon: and we are taught the constancy, with which the Christian is required, and disposed to wait upon God in his ordinances, both as means of deriving grace from the fulness of Christ into his own soul; and of rendering to God the glory, which is due unto him, as the Creator, the God of providence, and the God of our salvation. No hurrying employments, or perilous situations, or prosperous circumstances, should induce slackness into our religious exercises: but should rather stir us up to greater diligence in seeking help from, or giving thanks to the Lord. And when young people are going to settle in life, and remove to habitations of their own, they should be peculiarly reminded by ministers, parents, and godly friends, to establish the worship of God in their families from the first; which will save them much trouble afterwards, and bring a blessing upon them, and all that they uprightly engage in. Every day should be at least begun, and ended by seriously worshipping God with the best of our time, and powers: sabbaths call for double measures of personal, and family religion: and seasons of peculiar humiliation for sin, of seeking some special blessing, of solemn self-examination, and self dedication previous to approaching the Lord's table; or of remembering signal mercies received, will require days still more entirely set apart for these purposes. But we must take care that one d ty do not preclude another; that all be accompanied with the exercise of repentance, and of faith in and love to the Lord Jesus: and that all be productive of righteousness, and true holi-

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains laws for the ſacrifices to be offered, 1ſt. At the feaſts of trumpets, v. 1—6. *2d. On the day of atonement, v.* 7—11. *3d. At the feaſt of tabernacles, v.* 12—40.

AND in the ſeventh month, on the firſt *day* of the month, ye ſhall have an holy convocation: ye ſhall do no ſervile work; it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you.

2 And ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering for a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD; one young bullock, one ram, *and* ſeven lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

3 And their meat-offering *ſhall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals for a bullock, *and* two tenth-deals for a ram,

4 And one tenth-deal for one lamb, throughout the ſeven lambs;

5 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, to make an atonement for you:

6 Beſide the burnt-offering of the month, and his meat-offering, and the daily burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, according unto their manner, for a ſweet ſavour, a ſacrifice made by fire unto the LORD.

7 And ye ſhall have on the tenth *day* of this ſeventh month an holy convocation; and ye ſhall afflict your ſouls: ye ſhall not do any work *therein*.

8 But ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering unto the LORD *for* a ſweet ſavour; one young bullock, one ram, *and* ſeven lambs of the firſt year; they ſhall be unto you without blemiſh.

9 And their meat-offering *ſhall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals to a bullock, *and* two tenth-deals to one ram,

10 A ſeveral tenth-deal for one lamb, throughout the ſeven lambs:

11 One kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the ſin-offering of atonement, and the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering of it, and their drink-offerings.

12 And on the fifteenth day of the ſeventh month ye ſhall have an holy convocation; ye ſhall do no ſervile work, and ye ſhall keep a feaſt unto the LORD ſeven days.

13 And ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering, a ſacrifice made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD; thirteen young bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the firſt year; they ſhall be without blemiſh:

14 And their meat-offering *ſhall be of* flour mingled with oil, three tenth-deals unto every bullock of the thirteen bullocks, two tenth-deals to each ram of the two rams,

15 And a ſeveral tenth-deal to each lamb of the fourteen lambs;

16 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

17 And on the ſecond day *ye ſhall offer* twelve young bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the firſt year without ſpot:

18 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

19 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, and the meat-offering thereof, and their drink-offerings.

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neſs in our conduct towards all men: otherwiſe God will abhor our moſt ſolemn ſervices, and abundant devotions. (*Pſalm* l. v. 8—20. *Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 10—17.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 1. *And in the ſeventh month*, &c.] There were more ſolemnities in the ſeventh month than in any of the reſt: it was a ſort of vacation between their harveſt, and the enſuing ſeed-time: and might intimate that the ordinances of God ſhould be the Chriſtian's recreation from the fatigue of neceſſary buſineſs; and that religion interferes not with our true intereſt in any thing. Theſe ſolemnities were all before appointed, but the ſacrifices to be ſeverally offered upon them were here preſcribed. (*See notes, &c. on the 16th, and 25th chapters of Leviticus.*)

12—40.] The decreaſe of the number of the bullocks, which were ſacrificed on the ſeveral days of this feaſt; until on the laſt, and great day thereof, only one was offered, is the moſt obſervable circumſtance in this law. But the reaſon of this regulation is not evident; unleſs it be intimated that the Moſaic inſtitution would wax old, and vaniſh away, when the promiſed Meſſiah came.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we would well underſtand the Scriptures, we muſt beſtow pains to compare one part with another; for the Lord

20 And on the third day eleven bullocks, two rams, fourteen lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

21 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

22 And one goat *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

23 And on the fourth day ten bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

24 Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

25 And one kid of the goats *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

26 And on the fifth day nine bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the firſt year without ſpot:

27 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

28 And one goat *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

29 And on the ſixth day eight bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

30 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

31 And one goat *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

32 And on the ſeventh day ſeven bullocks, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

33 And their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullocks, for the rams, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

34 And one goat *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

35 On the eighth day ye ſhall have a ſolemn aſſembly; ye ſhall do no ſervile work *therein.*

36 But ye ſhall offer a burnt-offering, a ſacrifice made by fire, of a ſweet ſavour unto the LORD; one bullock, one ram, ſeven lambs of the firſt year without blemiſh:

37 Their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings, for the bullock, for the ram, and for the lambs, *ſhall be* according to their number, after the manner;

38 And one goat *for* a ſin-offering, beſide the continual burnt-offering, and his meat-offering, and his drink-offering.

39 Theſe *things* ye ſhall do unto the LORD in your ſet feaſts, beſides your vows, and your free-will-offerings, for your burnt-offerings, and for your meat-offerings, and for your drink-offerings, and for your peace-offerings.

40 And Moſes told the children of Iſrael

ſeems purpoſely to have arranged them in this manner, to exerciſe our diligence in ſearching them; and to diſtinguiſh betwixt thoſe, who value the knowledge of the truth, and thoſe, that do not. (*Prov.* c. ii. v. 1—8.) Again we are reminded that the trumpet of the goſpel calls us to mourn for ſin, to receive the atonement, to rejoice in the Lord, to be ſtrangers, and pilgrims upon earth, and to abound in our ſpiritual ſacrifices, which are through Chriſt Jeſus to the praiſe, and glory of God. The more conſolation we receive from him, the more abundant, and unwearied ſhould we be in ſerving him; and a ſpiritual mind will be refreſhed and recreated by the ordinances of God, after the fatigue of worldly care, and labour; more than any carnal perſon will be with feſtivity, and diſſipation. Such will value leiſure, and opportunity of attending upon God's courts as a privilege; and will not be caſting about for an excuſe from attending: they will not ſuppoſe that public ordinances render ſecret devotion unneceſſary; or that the prayers of the miniſter, ſuperſede the neceſſity of their own; much leſs will they imagine that the merits, and ſacrifice of Chriſt for them, render their obedience and good works unneceſſary. Every thing here reminds us of our ſinfulneſs; our very repentance, and application to Chriſt need forgiveneſs through him; and whether we mourn for ſin, or rejoice in the Lord, and praiſe him for his mercies, "the life that we "live in the fleſh muſt be by the faith of the Son of God;" until at the cloſe we go to be with him, behold his glory, and extol his mercy, "who hath loved us, and waſhed us "from our ſins in his own blood." To whom be honour, and glory for ever, amen.

according to all that the LORD commanded Moſes.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains the law concerning religious vows; in what caſes they were valid, and when they were to be diſannulled, v. 1—16.

AND Moſes ſpake unto the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Iſrael, ſaying, This *is* the thing which the LORD hath commanded.

2 If a man vow a vow unto the LORD, or ſwear an oath to bind his ſoul with a bond; he ſhall not break his word, he ſhall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth.

3 If a woman alſo vow a vow unto the LORD, and bind *herſelf* by a bond, *being* in her father's houſe in her youth;

4 And her father hear her vow and her bond wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul, and her father ſhall hold his peace at her: then all her vows ſhall ſtand, and every bond wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand.

5 But if her father diſallow her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds, wherewith ſhe hath bound her ſoul, ſhall ſtand: and the LORD ſhall forgive her, becauſe her father diſallowed her.

6 And if ſhe had at all an huſband when ſhe vowed, or uttered ought out of her lips, wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul;

7 And her huſband heard *it*, and held his peace at her in the day that he heard *it*: then her vows ſhall ſtand, and her bonds wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand.

8 But if her huſband diſallow her on the day that he heard *it*; then he ſhall make her vow which ſhe vowed, and that which ſhe uttered with her lips, wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul, of none effect: and the LORD ſhall forgive her.

9 But every vow of a widow, and of her that is divorced, wherewith they have bound their ſouls, ſhall ſtand againſt her.

10 And if ſhe vowed in her huſband's houſe, or bound her ſoul by a bond with an oath;

11 And her huſband heard *it*, and held his peace at her, *and* diſallowed her not; then all her vows ſhall ſtand, and every bond wherewith ſhe bound her ſoul ſhall ſtand.

12 But if her huſband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard *them*; *then* whatſoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her ſoul, ſhall not ſtand: her huſband hath made them void; and the LORD ſhall forgive her.

13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the ſoul, her huſband may eſtabliſh it, or her huſband may make it void.

14 But if her huſband altogether hold his peace at her from day to day; then he eſta-

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1. *Unto the heads*, &c.] They were to take care that it was made known through their reſpective tribes.

V. 2. *If a man vow a vow*, &c.] (*See notes Lev.* c. xxvii.) If a man vow to do any thing that is ſinful in itſelf, he is only bound to repent of the ſin, which he hath committed. Some vows only engage for our performance of thoſe things, which were previouſly our indiſpenſable duty: ſuch a vow is implied in our attendance on the Lord's table. But there are many things of a diſcretionary nature; as Jacob's vow concerning the proportion of his ſubſtance, which he would ſet apart for religious purpoſes; (*Gen.* c. xxviii. v. 22;) Paul's ſolemn determination to take nothing of the Corinthians; (2 *Cor.* c. xi. v. 9, 10;) the Nazarites vow; the vows concerning undemanded ſacrifices; (ch. xxix. v. 39;) vows of abſtinence in any particular, for a limited ſeaſon. Such vows might properly be made: but being promiſſory oaths they were to be taken with ſolemnity, and religiouſly obſerved; and the ſoul was even bound as ſurety for the performance of them.

V. 3—5.] Such things might be vowed in this caſe, as would both be very diſagreeable to the parent, and prejudicial to the intereſts of the family. An unmarried woman in her father's houſe, was therefore to notify her vows to her father: and if he did not in a little time refuſe his conſent, ſhe was bound by them: but if he did, they were diſannulled, and the obligation ceaſed. If ſhe had vowed diſcretely and properly, "ſhe had done well that it was in "her heart," and her willing mind would be accepted: if otherwiſe her fault would be forgiven. It is queſtioned, whether minor ſons were in the ſame caſe: but it doth not appear by this law, that they were; nor in any other Scripture, except it can be inferred from the fifth commandment. The males were certainly allowed more liberty than the females were under the law; for the vows of the latter might be adjudged more prejudicial to their families: or the ſons being more immediately under the father's tuition, would be leſs liable to be inveigled to enter into raſh engagements of this kind.

V. 6—16.] The caſe of a married woman was the ſame; for at leaſt as cogent reaſons. If a man allowed his wife's vows at firſt, and afterwards cauſed her to break them, the

bliſheth

blisheth all her vows, or all her bonds, which *are* upon her: he confirmeth them, because he held his peace at her in the day that he heard *them*.

15 But if he shall any wise make them void, after that he hath heard *them*; then he shall bear her iniquity.

16 These *are* the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, between the father and his daughter, *being yet* in her youth in her father's house.

iniquity would be charged on him. With this chapter before our eyes, we may form a proper judgment of the injustice and absurdity of the vows of celibacy, and chastity, which children, and wives have been encouraged to take, and required to observe, in the Romish church, without, or against the consent of parents, and husbands.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot engage our souls with too many, or too strict obligations, to be the Lord's, and in all things to glorify him: but we may inconsiderately vow things impracticable, inexpedient, not within our own choice, or not consistent with our relative duties. The peace, comfort, and true interest of families; and the exercise of the parental, and conjugal authority, are of such importance to communities, and to religion; that the Lord would sooner dispense with a solemn vow made to himself, than authorise any thing, which interfere therewith. What regard therefore should all persons, especially the inferior relations pay thereto? and how willing should they be to give up every personal inclination for the preservation of them? Blind guides indeed in all ages, by one means or other, have attempted "to "make these commandments of men of none effect, through "their traditions;" and that they might finger the corban, the money given to God, and to them as his receivers, have authorised disobedience to parents, to husbands, and to magistrates. But the whole tendency of revelation, and of the grace of God, is to induce every individual, from the highest motives, and with the greatest encouragements, to act properly in the several relations of life for the Lord's sake. We should then attend carefully to those indispensable duties, which we have engaged solemnly to perform, by our profession of Christianity, depending on, and seeking for the grace of God to enable us thereto: from the performance of these vows, no authority of husbands, parents, or magistrates can release any one; for we must obey God rather than man. And in respect of the rest we should be cautious, and circumspect, and seek counsel of the Lord in prayer: "for it is better not to vow, than to vow, and not "perform." But if we have engaged our souls, let us never think of going back, when no other duty interferes, though we should have altered our mind, or become averse to the thing engaged to; for our souls are bound for the performance, and the Lord abhors our trifling with holy, and solemn matters.

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. a detachment of Israel, by divine command, attacking, and destroying the Midianites, and returning with the captives, and the spoil, v. 1—12. 2d. All the captives slain, by Moses' orders, except the virgins; with the purification of the warriors, and the spoil, v. 13—24. 3d. The partition of the cattle, and the captives, v. 25—47. 4th. The oblation of the captains, &c. v. 48—54.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *Avenge*, &c.] Vengeance belongeth to God alone, and to those, whom he deputes as his ministers of vengeance: such are magistrates in the ordinary course of his providential government; and none else: and those persons, who without commission from him dare to execute private revenge, and they, who from ambition, avarice, or resentment wage war, and desolate kingdoms, must one day answer for it: God is righteous in the miseries, which they occasion, but they are most unrighteous. But if he, out of the ordinary method of his providence, instead of commissioning an earthquake, a pestilence, or a famine to execute vengeance upon criminals, be pleased expressly to authorise, and command any person, or people, to avenge his cause; such a commission will justify, nay sanctify any war, massacre, or devastation. No person can at present plead such a commission; but the Israelites might, and could shew the broad seal of heaven in ratification of it, and in vindication of all they did by virtue of it. It is therefore absurd to censure *them* for the dreadful slaughter made in those wars, which we are shortly to consider; the Lord passed sentence of condemnation, and employed them merely as executioners; and unless any one can prove, that the criminals did not deserve their doom; or that the Lord had no right to punish his rebellious creatures, and dispose of them, and their property, as he pleased; such objectors only prove their enmity to God, by being the unsolicited advocates of his enemies. The knowledge of the malignity of sin, of which men make light, but which God infinitely abhors, forms the key to the understanding of all these terrible executions upon these nations, which had filled up the measure of their iniquities. The whole was conducted by the express command of God; and the executioners were more than once reproved for being too lenient, but never for being too severe: but yet man's natural compassion recoils at the consideration of the slaughter, which was made: hence we may draw a very forcible argument, that the execution of vengeance, "in the day of "wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," will not accord with those rules, which men, ignorant of the evil of sin, and proud of their own humanity, have presumptuously devised for him; and which they would wrest the Scriptures to countenance, though evidently contrary to the constant tenor of their awful language. If they cannot re-

3 And Moſes ſpake unto the people, ſaying, Arm ſome of yourſelves unto the war, and let them go againſt the Midianites, and avenge the LORD of Midian.

4 Of every tribe a thouſand, throughout all the tribes of Iſrael, ſhall ye ſend to the war.

5 So there were delivered out of the thouſands of Iſrael, a thouſand of *every* tribe, twelve thouſand armed for war.

6 And Moſes ſent them to the war, a thouſand of *every* tribe, them, and Phinehas the ſon of Eleazar the prieſt, to the war, with the holy inſtruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand.

7 And they warred againſt the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moſes; and they ſlew all the males.

8 And they ſlew the kings of Midian, beſide the reſt of them that were ſlain; *namely*, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, five kings of Midian: Balaam alſo, the ſon of Beor, they ſlew with the ſword.

9 And the children of Iſrael took *all* the women of Midian captives, and their little ones, and took the ſpoil of all their cattle, and all their flocks, and all their goods.

10 And they burnt all their cities wherein they dwelt, and all their goodly caſtles, with fire.

11 And they took all the ſpoil, and all the prey, *both* of men and of beaſts.

12 And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the ſpoil, unto Moſes, and Eleazar the prieſt, and unto the congregation of the children of Iſrael, unto the camp at the plains of Moab, which *are* by Jordan *near* Jericho.

13 And Moſes, and Eleazar the prieſt, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp.

14 And Moſes was wroth with the officers of the hoſt, *with* the captains over thouſands,

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concile the ſeverities executed upon the Midianites, and Canaanites, with *their* ideas of juſtice, and goodneſs, which were only the performance of the command of a juſt and good God; let them allow that ſuch things are too high for them, and that they are not competent to determine what conduct befits the righteous judge of the world: and that it is more ſafe, wiſe, and humble, ſimply to believe his teſtimony, and "to flee from the wrath to come," leaving the government of the univerſe to him; than raſhly to diſpute againſt ſuch matters, as are evidently out of our latitude, and of which we know nothing further, than the Lord is pleaſed to inform us. Moſes had beheld with grief and indignation, the temptation, the ſin, and the puniſhment of Iſrael: and in directing, and witneſſing the ſucceſs of this war, before his death, he ſaw a ſpecimen of the Lord's vengeance on the enemies of Iſrael, and of his kindneſs to them.

V. 3. *Avenge the Lord*, &c.] The Lord would take vengeance on the Midianites, for the injury, which they had brought upon his people: but *they* were not to be actuated by private reſentment, but by zeal for the glory of God; and to engage in this war, as the miniſters of *his* vengeance upon them for their ſins.

V. 4—6.] This was a ſmall number, in proportion to the whole multitude of Iſrael; or to the forces, with which they were to engage: but the Lord would hereby teach them, not to truſt in an arm of fleſh, but in his Almighty power, and faithful promiſe. As they were under the conduct of the captains of thouſands, and of hundreds, they probably had no general, and therefore Joſhua is not mentioned. Phinehas the zealous avenger of the inſulted honour of God, and of Iſrael (ch. xxv.) was ordered to accompany them; with the holy inſtruments, by which ſome underſtand the ſilver trumpets: but others ſuppoſe that the ſecond prieſt, the High Prieſt's deputy and ſucceſſor, conſulted the Lord on ſuch occaſions, with the breaſt plate of judgment; and that this is here meant. (*See notes Ex.* c. xxviii. v. 15—30. *Num.* c. x. v. 1—10.)

V. 7. *They ſlew all the males*, &c.] They did not extirpate the nation, which ſubſiſted, and was powerful long after: but they ſlew all, without giving quarter, as far as they proceeded, which probably was as far as thoſe tribes reached, from which the tempters chiefly came.

V. 8. *Balaam*, &c.] Being blinded by covetouſneſs, and hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin, Balaam periſhed amongſt the enemies of Iſrael; as ſome think he foreboded, when he wiſhed, but never prayed, to die the death of the righteous. (*See note, ch.* xxv. v. 1.) But on the other ſide, it is conjectured by ſome perſons, that having given his infernal counſel, he retired home; till upon it's ſucceſs in the death of 24,000 Iſraelites, he was either ſent to, or came to claim his recompenſe, and to aſſiſt with his further counſels; and thus periſhed amongſt them; (*Jude*, v. 11.) of ſuch conjectures every reader will judge for himſelf. Whatever knowledge Moſes might have of this whole tranſaction from human teſtimony, he doubtleſs received it more perfectly exact by inſpiration from God: and it was very proper that it ſhould be thus circumſtantially recorded, for the information, encouragement, and caution of God's people in all ages, concerning the ſecret machinations of their enemies: and on the other hand for the warning of thoſe, who unite in ſuch counſels againſt them. Thus Balaam went to his own place, as Judas did after him, whoſe characters much reſembled each other.

V. 10. *They burnt*, &c.] This was, it ſeems, no part of the country, which they were to inherit, and therefore they in this manner diſabled the Midianites from rallying their forces, and renewing the war; and executed the vengeance of the Lord upon them.

and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle.

15 And Moſes ſaid unto them, Have ye ſaved all the women alive?

16 Behold, theſe cauſed the children of Iſrael, through the counſel of Balaam, to commit treſpaſs againſt the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD.

17 Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him.

18 But all the women-children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourſelves.

19 And do ye abide without the camp ſeven days: whoſoever hath killed any perſon, and whoſoever hath touched any ſlain, purify *both* yourſelves and your captives on the third day, and on the ſeventh day.

20 And purify all *your* raiment, and all that is made of ſkins, and all work of goats *hair*, and all things made of wood.

21 And Eleazar the prieſt ſaid unto the men of war which went to the battle, This *is* the ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moſes;

22 Only the gold, and the ſilver, the braſs, the iron, the tin, and the lead,

23 Every thing that may abide the fire, ye ſhall make *it* go through the fire, and it ſhall be clean; nevertheleſs, it ſhall be purified with the water of ſeparation: and all that abideth not the fire ye ſhall make go through the water.

24 And ye ſhall waſh your clothes on the ſeventh day, and ye ſhall be clean, and afterward ye ſhall come into the camp.

25 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

26 Take the ſum of the prey that was taken, *both* of man and of beaſt, thou, and Eleazar the prieſt, and the chief fathers of the congregation;

27 And divide the prey into two parts, between them that took the war upon them, who went out to battle, and between all the congregation;

28 And levy a tribute unto the LORD of the men of war which went out to battle: one ſoul of five hundred, *both* of the perſons, and of the beeves, and of the aſſes, and of the ſheep.

29 Take *it* of their half, and give *it* unto Eleazar the prieſt, *for* an heave-offering of the LORD.

30 And of the children of Iſrael's half thou ſhalt take one portion of fifty, of the perſons, of the beeves, of the aſſes, and of the flocks,

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V. 15—18.] Probably the command of God had been very explicit in this particular. (*See* 1 *Sam.* c. xv. v. 3.) The ſword of war ſhould ſpare women, and children, as incapable of making reſiſtance; but the *ſword of juſtice* ſhould know no diſtinction, but that of guilty, or not guilty, and more, or leſs guilty. This war was the execution of a righteous ſentence of condemnation upon a *guilty* nation, in which the women were the principal criminals, and the men only aiding, and abetting with their counſel: and if any of the women were ſpared, who had been concerned in the crime, they would have lived a perpetual temptation to thoſe, who ſpared them: all were therefore ordered for immediate execution, but the female children, who could not be ſuppoſed to have been culpable, and who, being brought up amongſt the Iſraelites, would never be unto them a temptation to idolatry. But what ſhall we ſay of the terrible execution of all the male infants, who could not be perſonally guilty in this matter? A ſovereign God would have it ſo: and ſhall not the Judge of all the earth do right? Had they lived, they might have conſpired together to avenge the death of their parents on Iſrael: and the example was thereby rendered more tremendous; warning parents not to imitate the guilt of the Midianites, leſt they ſhould involve their beloved offſpring in deſtruction: and throughout the Scripture, men's natural affection to their children is addreſſed, by promiſes, and threatenings, in which *they* alſo are included: and a future ſtate renders it poſſible for the Lord to turn the temporal ſufferings of the infants into an infinite mercy to them. The whole tranſaction illuſtrates the odiouſneſs, and deſert of ſin, and of the ſin of tempting others: and it teaches us to avoid all occaſions of evil, and to give no quarter to our inward luſts.

V. 19—24.] Though the Iſraelites acted by the Lord's commiſſion; yet they had been ſo much employed about the dead and dying, that they had contracted pollution: and the ſpoil having been uſed by idolaters, and probably in idolatry, was to be purified alſo in the preſcribed manner; which would form a pattern for ſucceeding wars: the law was thus reduced to practice, under the inſpection of the lawgiver.

V. 25—47.] To prevent diſpute, and for a rule to after times, the Lord thus ordered the diſtribution of the cattle, and the female captives, betwixt the ſoldiers, and the congregation; with a portion from each reſerved for the prieſts, and Levites. The whole ſeems to have been very equitable, and to have given univerſal ſatisfaction. The number of the female captives, who were ſpared, ſuggeſts an awful idea of the terrible vengeance, which God took upon

of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD.

31 And Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 And the booty, *being* the rest of the prey which the men of war had caught, was six hundred thousand and seventy thousand and five thousand sheep,

33 And threescore and twelve thousand beeves,

34 And threescore and one thousand asses,

35 And thirty and two thousand persons in all, of women that had not known man by lying with him.

36 And the half, *which was* the portion of them that went out to war, was in number three hundred thousand and seven and thirty thousand and five hundred sheep:

37 And the LORD's tribute of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen.

38 And the beeves *were* thirty and six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* threescore and twelve.

39 And the asses *were* thirty thousand and five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute *was* threescore and one.

40 And the persons *were* sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* thirty and two persons.

41 And Moses gave the tribute *which was* the LORD's heave-offering unto Eleazar the priest; as the LORD commanded Moses.

42 And of the children of Israel's half, which Moses divided from the men that warred.

43 (Now the half *that pertained unto* the congregation, was three hundred thousand and thirty thousand *and* seven thousand and five hundred sheep,

44 And thirty and six thousand beeves,

45 And thirty thousand asses and five hundred,

46 And sixteen thousand persons,)

47 Even of the children of Israel's half, Moses took one portion of fifty, *both* of man and of beast, and gave them unto the Levites which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.

48 And the officers which *were* over thousands of the host, the captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds, came near unto Moses:

49 And they said unto Moses, Thy servants have taken the sum of the men of war which *are* under our charge, and there lacketh not one man of us.

50 We have therefore brought an oblation for the LORD, what every man hath gotten, of jewels of gold, chains, and bracelets, rings, ear-rings, and tablets, to make an atonement for our souls before the LORD.

51 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of them, *even* all wrought jewels.

52 And all the gold of the offering that they offered up to the LORD, of the captains of thousands, and of the captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels.

53 (*For* the men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.)

54 And Moses and Eleazar the priest took the gold of the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it unto the tabernacle of the congregation, *for* a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

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the enemies of him, and of his people! Amalek, who first warred with Israel, was long spared; but Midian, who first tempted them to idolatry, was speedily, and severely punished!

V. 48—54.] Their success had been very extraordinary; so small a company overcoming, and cutting off such immense multitudes, and taking so large a spoil: but their preservation was altogether unparallelled; not one individual being slain, or missing, or even wounded, that we find. In acknowledgment of the Lord's special kindness in this encouraging instance, the officers, in the name of the soldiers also, presented the gold, (all of it probably,) which they had found amongst the spoil, as an oblation to the Lord, to make an "atonement for their souls;" (*Exod.* c. xxx. v. 12. 15, 16;) that is, to be employed in that service of God, whereby atonement was *typically* made. And thus they confessed, that instead of claiming a reward for their service, they needed forgiveness of much that had been amiss; and desired to be thankful for the preservation of their lives, which might justly have been taken away.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The triumphing of the wicked is short; the pleasures, and advantages of sin are bought at an enormous price, and the vengeance of the Lord is always sure, righteous, and terrible, and sometimes very speedy, and sudden.—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living "God;" and if his temporal judgments be so dreadful, what will be the case of sinners, "when the Lord Jesus

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1st. The petition of the tribes of Reuben, and Gad, for a settlement east of Jordan, v. 1—5. 2d. Moses suspecting some ill intention, and sharply remonstrating with them, v. 6—15. 3d. Their explanation, and engagements; and the conditional grant made to them, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, of the conquests on that side of Jordan; upon which they rebuild the cities, &c. v. 16—42.

NOW the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and the land of Gilead, that, behold, the place *was* a place for cattle;

2 The children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spake unto Moses, and to Eleazar the priest, and unto the princes of the congregation, saying,

3 Ataroth, and Dibon, and Jazer, and Nimrah, and Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Shebam, and Nebo, and Beon,

4 *Even* the country which the LORD smote before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle.

5 Wherefore, said they, if we have found grace in thy sight, let this land be given unto thy servants for a possession, *and* bring us not over Jordan.

" shall be revealed from heaven, with flaming fire to take " vengeance on them, that know not God, and that obey " not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?" (2 *Thess.* c. i. v. 8, 9.) Let us then take warning, and flee from the wrath to come, to that Saviour, who alone is able to deliver us: and, depending on his assistance, let us declare war against every sinful propensity, whereby we have been induced to dishonour God, and bring guilt, and misery upon ourselves.—This is the true holy war, in which we must utterly destroy every one of the enemies of the Lord, and of our souls, or they will certainly destroy us: to this the trumpet of the gospel excites and encourages us; and therein we may depend upon the Lord for counsel, and assistance: here we should indulge the deepest resentment, and, without thought of peace or truce, should prosecute the quarrel to the utter extermination of our enemies, root, and branch, with unrelenting severity, neither sparing our strongest, nor overlooking our feeblest lusts, which, if not crucified, will soon become formidable, and produce fatal effects.—In this, and in all our undertakings, we must not only make the Lord our confidence, but adhere to his orders, and instructions, and in so doing may expect all desirable success, notwithstanding interposing difficulties.—Though we must forgive, and pray for all our enemies; yet we should entertain the deepest abhorrence of their conduct, and most carefully shun their company, who have ever attempted to draw us into sin by any persuasion, or allurement whatsoever. Nor will any persons be more severely punished by the Lord, than such tempters of others, especially of his people; except it be those, who, against the convictions of their own conscience, have counselled, and encouraged them so to do.—There is no *natural* disposition of the human heart, in it's present fallen state, that is not capable of being perverted, and running into excess: and our humanity, and compassion must be regulated and moderated according to the law of God, as well our resentment; or we shall spare, connive at, and encourage those, whom the Lord would have reproved, corrected, or treated with severity; and thereby bring anger from him upon ourselves: this is especially the case with magistrates, ministers, heads of families, and those who are intrusted with any authority. They, who have been faithful in inferior stations, may expect to be employed in more important services: but even when we have acquitted ourselves suitably in those things, which were our bounden duty, there will be need of our being purified in the blood of Christ, and by his sanctifying grace, from the guilt and pollution, which have adhered to our best performances.—God so abhors, and would have us to abhor the commission of murder, that he hath represented even that bloodshed, which he authorised, and commanded, as in some degree contaminating those concerned in it; (1 *Chron.* c. xxii. v. 8.) he also approves of, and requires exact equity in all our transactions; nor should we dare to appropriate any gain, of which we cannot conscientiously devote a portion to that God, who hates robbery for burnt-offering; and for which we cannot thank God as the giver. And this rule would render us incapable of making gain by fraud, extortion, oppression, or any kind of iniquity, or sinful compliances. And besides the exact rules of honesty, we should liberally give to the Lord, and dispose of in pious and charitable uses, a proportion of all our acquisitions; especially when commemorating special deliverances: and though the blood of Christ has made the effectual atonement for our souls, such oblations are proper evidences of our faith, and of the sincerity of our love; are acknowledgments of our unworthiness of all our mercies; of our gratitude to the bountiful giver of them, and of our zeal for his glory, and of our love to our fellow-Christians.

NOTES.

CHAP XXXII.] V. 1—5.] This proposal seemed to imply a disregard to the land of Canaan, a distrust of the Lord's promise, and a reluctancy to encounter the difficulties, and face the dangers, of conquering and expelling the inhabitants of that land. When we compare their petition, " not to be brought over Jordan," with the earnestness, with which Moses intreated to pass over, we cannot but suspect, that they did not behold in the rest of Canaan that type of heaven, which he and other believers probably did. However they were not so criminal, as Moses thought them; and it was proper, that this part of the country should be allotted to some of the tribes. In their too great haste for a settlement they petitioned for, and obtained it: but it was a situation very distant from the sanctuary; and

6 And Moſes ſaid unto the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, Shall your brethren go to war, and ſhall ye ſit here?

7 And wherefore diſcourage ye the heart of the children of Iſrael from going over into the land which the LORD hath given them?

8 Thus did your fathers, when I ſent them from Kadeſh-barnea to ſee the land.

9 For when they went up into the valley of Eſhcol, and ſaw the land, they diſcouraged the heart of the children of Iſrael, that they ſhould not go into the land which the LORD had given them.

10 And the LORD's anger was kindled the ſame time, and he ſware, ſaying,

11 Surely none of the men that came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, ſhall ſee the land which I ſware unto Abraham, unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob; becauſe they have not wholly followed me;

12 Save Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh the Kenezite, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun: for they have wholly followed the LORD.

13 And the LORD's anger was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he made them wander in the wilderneſs forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the ſight of the LORD was conſumed.

14 And, behold, ye are riſen up in your fathers ſtead, an increaſe of ſinful men, to augment yet the fierce anger of the LORD toward Iſrael.

15 For if ye turn away from after him, he will yet again leave them in the wilderneſs, and ye ſhall deſtroy all this people.

16 And they came near unto him, and ſaid, We will build ſheep-folds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones;

17 But we ourſelves will go ready armed before the children of Iſrael, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones ſhall dwell in the fenced cities, becauſe of the inhabitants of the land.

18 We will not return unto our houſes, until the children of Iſrael have inherited every man his inheritance:

19 For we will not inherit with them on yonder ſide Jordan, or forward; becauſe our inheritance is fallen to us on this ſide Jordan eaſtward.

20 And Moſes ſaid unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the LORD to war,

21 And will go all of you armed over Jordan before the LORD, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him,

22 And the land be ſubdued before the LORD; then afterward ye ſhall return, and be guiltleſs before the LORD, and before Iſrael; and this land ſhall be your poſſeſſion before the LORD.

23 But if ye will not do ſo, behold, ye have ſinned againſt the LORD: and be ſure your ſin will find you out.

24 Build ye cities for your little ones, and folds for your ſheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, Thy ſervants will do as my lord commandeth.

26 Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our cattle, ſhall be there in the cities of Gilead.

27 But thy ſervants will paſs over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, as my lord ſaith.

28 So concerning them Moſes commanded Eleazar the prieſt, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Iſrael:

29 And Moſes ſaid unto them, If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben will paſs with you over Jordan, every man armed to battle before the LORD, and the land ſhall be ſubdued before you; then ye ſhall give them the land of Gilead for a poſſeſſion:

it much interrupted their intercourſe with their brethren: it was very much expoſed to their enemies, and uneaſy to themſelves; and they ſeem to have been diſpoſſeſſed ſooner than the other Iſraelites; (2 *Kings*, c. x. v. 32—33. 1 *Chron.* c. v. ver. 25—26.)

V. 15. *And ye ſhall deſtroy*, &c.] Moſes feared that their example of unbelief, and timidity, (for ſo he thought it) would lead the congregation into a general imitation of the ſin of their fathers, to *their* deſtruction likewiſe.

30 But if they will not pass over with you armed, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan.

31 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying, As the LORD hath said unto thy servants, so will we do.

32 We will pass over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, that the possession of our inheritance on this side Jordan *may be* ours.

33 And Moses gave unto them, *even* to the children of Gad, and to the children of Reuben, and unto half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land, with the cities thereof, in the coasts, *even* the cities of the country round about.

34 And the children of Gad built Dibon, and Ataroth, and Aroer.

35 And Atroth, Shophan, and Jaazer, and Jogbehah,

36 And Beth-nimrah, and Beth-haran, fenced cities; and folds for sheep.

37 And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kirjathaim,

38 And Nebo, and Baal-meon, (their names being changed,) and Shibmah: and gave other names unto the cities which they builded.

39 And the children of Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead, and took it, and dispossessed the Amorite which *was* in it.

40 And Moses gave Gilead unto Machir the son of Manasseh; and he dwelt therein.

41 And Jair the son of Manasseh went and took the small towns thereof, and called them Havoth-jair.

42 And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah, after his own name.

V. 33.] The country east-ward of Jordan was probably deemed too large a proportion for those two tribes alone; in consequence therefore of the conquest of Gilead by the descendants of Machir, a division of the tribe of Manasseh, had their inheritance there also: probably by their own consent.

V. 38. *Their names being changed*, &c.] When they rebuilt the cities for their own habitations, they changed the names of such of them, as were called after the idols of the former inhabitants. (*Note*, *Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 13.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Covetousness, pride, conveniency, impatience, or other carnal inducements, sway the most with men in general, in their choice of their worldly settlements: whereas they ought to consider in the first place, whether they are likely to be advantageous to their souls, convenient for attendance on God's ordinances, and favourable to their communion with his people. But if any true Christians are betrayed into such an improper conduct, their iniquity will certainly correct them, and their continual uneasiness will make them smart for their folly; (*Notes*, &c. *Gen.* c. 13.) We need not wonder indeed that mankind in general act in this manner: they have not that faith, which explores the unseen world; nor that spiritual mind, which supremely values heavenly blessings; the attainment of which is supposed to be attended with present loss, and trouble; the possession of them future, if not uncertain. Earthly things suit their carnal minds, and form a present portion, which is apprehended by the senses; and that they make choice of: but it proves unsatisfactory, and vexatious; they are speedily driven out of it, and having no inheritance beyond the grave, they will have eternally to bewail their wretched choice, whilst believers eternally rejoice in their portion. But leaving this obvious accommodation; let us observe that we are utterly inexcusable, if we do not profit by the examples of them, whose sins, and punishments are recorded for our warning. Yet so depraved is human nature, that one generation rises up after another, an increase of sinful men, walking in the steps of those, who sinned and perished before them, and thus, still more and more augmenting the fierce anger of the Lord. Nor does the wickedness of men, especially under a profession of religion, only destroy their own souls; but it also murders the souls of others; whilst their examples, influence, and persuasions encourage them in sin, or discourage them from seeking, and serving the Lord; or whilst their crimes increase men's prejudices, or harden their hearts against the gospel of salvation. Yet they, who are deeply acquainted with the wickedness of the human heart, and have been long conversant with perverse, and rebellious people, are sometimes too suspicious. But if, out of zeal for the glory of God, and solicitude for the welfare of his people, such suspicions are entertained, it is generally best to disclose them, and to remonstrate with the suspected persons: this may either withdraw them from their purpose; or give them an opportunity of clearing up matters, by such explanations, as place things in a more favourable light. These should be willingly listened unto; and though there be somewhat culpable, we should not make the worst of every thing; but be ready to accept of reasonable excuses, and to accede to equitable proposals: but always with such express conditions, and limitations, as may supersede occasions of future contention. All men ought to consider the interests of others, as well as their own accommodation: and the law of love requires them reciprocally to labour, venture, and suffer for each other, as occasion requires. But especially it is becoming in the professed people of God to be thus disinterested, and public-spirited: and they cannot consistently account any thing too great, to forego, to endure, or to attempt, in opposing the common enemies of their cause,

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1ſt. A record of the encampments of Iſrael from Egypt to Canaan, v. 1—49. *2d. A charge to deſtroy idolaters, and idolatry from thence, v.* 50—56.

THESE *are* are the journeys of the children of Iſrael, which went forth out of the land of Egypt, with their armies, under the hand of Moſes and Aaron.

2 And Moſes wrote their goings out according to their journeys, by the commandment of the LORD: and theſe *are* their journeys according to their goings out.

3 And they departed from Rameſes in the firſt month, on the fifteenth day of the firſt month: on the morrow after the paſſover, the children of Iſrael went out with an high hand in the ſight of all the Egyptians.

4 (For the Egyptians buried all *their* firſt-born, which the LORD had ſmitten among them: upon their gods alſo the LORD executed judgments.)

5 And the children of Iſrael removed from Rameſes, and pitched in Succoth.

6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which *is* in the edge of the wilderneſs.

7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pi-hahiroth, which *is* before Baal-zephon; and they pitched before Migdol.

8 And they departed from before Pi-hahiroth, and paſſed through the midſt of the ſea into the wilderneſs, and went three days journey in the wilderneſs of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim *were* twelve fountains of water, and threeſcore and ten palm-trees; and they pitched there.

10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red ſea.

11 And they removed from the Red ſea, and encamped in the wilderneſs of Sin.

12 And they took their journey out of the wilderneſs of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah.

13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Aluſh.

14 And they removed from Aluſh, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

15 And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderneſs of Sinai.

16 And they removed from the deſert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibroth-hattaavah.

17 And they departed from Kibroth-hattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.

18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah.

19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmon-parez.

20 And they departed from Rimmon-parez, and pitched in Libnah.

21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Riſſah.

22 And they journeyed from Riſſah, and pitched in Kehelathah.

23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher.

24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.

25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.

26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath.

27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah.

28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah.

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and in promoting the ſalvation of ſouls, and in ſecuring to their brethren alſo their heavenly inheritance. If God hath formed us to this diſpoſition, we ſhall endeavour to avoid all appearance of evil; ſhall do all in equity, and love; ſhall have a ſanctified, and comfortable uſe of our worldly poſſeſſions; and ſhall ſo paſs through things temporal, that we ſhall not finally loſe the things, which are eternal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. XXXIII.] *See Number the* 15*th, Exod.* c. xxxvii. It is very uſeful to record the principal matters of our own experience, and of God's dealings with his church at large: and the frequent peruſal of ſuch records will be found very profitable, both to awaken our gratitude, to renew our repentance, and humiliation, and to encourage our faith, and hope in God.—Few of the periods of our lives can be reflected on, without reminding us of the Lord's goodneſs, and of our own ingratitude, and diſobedience: theſe, like a double thread, ſeem to run entwined together through the whole of our experience; and they enhance each other: our unworthineſs rendering the kindneſs of God the more admirable; his kindneſs rendering our ſins more inexcuſeable. Nor could we reaſonably wiſh to

29 And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah.

30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.

31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan.

32 And they removed from Bene-jaakan, and encamped at Hor-hagidgad.

33 And they went from Hor-hagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah.

34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.

35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Ezion-gaber.

36 And they removed from Ezion-gaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which *is* Kadesh.

37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor, at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first *day* of the fifth month.

39 And Aaron *was* an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.

40 And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south, in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah.

42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon.

43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth.

44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ije-abarim, in the border of Moab.

45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibon-gad.

46 And they removed from Dibon-gad, and encamped in Almon-diblathaim.

47 And they removed from Almon-diblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo.

48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho.

49 And they pitched by Jordan, from Beth-jesimoth *even* unto Abel-shittim, in the plains of Moab.

50 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab, by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places.

53 And ye shall dispossess *the inhabitants of* the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

54 And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families, *and* to

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travel over again any of the stages, through which we have passed; except we could hope by the grace of God to shun the sins, which we then committed; or to embrace those opportunities of glorifying God, and doing good, which before we slipped. But if we are upright in such desires, they shall be graciously accepted, and we may be thankful, that we have travelled thus far on our pilgrimage to a better country: we may set up our Ebenezer, and praise him, who hath helped us hitherto, and trust in him to bring us safe to our journey's end.—But whatever be our character, and state, every day, week, month, and year, whether prosperous or adverse, carries us forward to our long home: carries the unbeliever nearer to the gates of hell; the believer nearer to the joys of heaven: and not only those days, which are marked for some important transaction, or event; but those, which glide away unnoticed, and are speedily forgotten.—Soon will our wanderings end, and our eternal state be irrevocably fixed: how important then is the present moment!—Happy are they whom the Lord now guides with his counsel, and will at length receive to his glory! To this felicity the gospel calls us: "Behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day "of salvation!"—Let sinners seize the precious opportunity, and flee for refuge to the hope set before them. Let us all behold with trembling and keep at a distance from the graves of the lusters; let us fear the doom of the unbelievers, concerning whom the "Lord sware in his wrath, "that they should not enter into his rest:" let us shun the Meribahs, and Massahs, at which so many have perished in their murmurings, and rebellions. Let us rather prefer the bitter waters of Marah, sweetened with the consolations of the gospel: let us not loiter in our journey, or think of returning to Egypt, nor fear interposing enemies, difficulties, or death itself: let us but redeem our time, to the

the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's *inheritance* shall be in the place where his lot falleth: according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.

55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them *shall be* pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

56 Moreover, it shall come to pass, *that* I shall do unto you as I thought to do unto them.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st. The boundaries of Canaan, v. 1—15. *2d. Persons nominated to superintend the division of it, v.* 16—29.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan, (this *is* the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, *even* the land of Canaan, with the coasts thereof,)

3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin, along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward.

4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadesh-barnea, and shall go on to Hazar-addar, and pass on to Azmon.

5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

6 And *as for* the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.

7 And this shall be your north border; from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor.

8 From mount Hor ye shall point out *your border* unto the entrance of Hamath: and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad.

9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazar-enan: this shall be your north border.

10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazar-enan to Shepham.

11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward.

12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land, with the coasts thereof round about.

13 And Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying, This *is* the land which ye

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glorify God, and serve our generation, and he will carry us safe through all to his eternal kingdom.—But we must remember that except we separate from sinners, and avoid occasions of evil, and crucify our lusts, we must perish: and if we shew any quarter to our sinful propensities, they will gather strength by indulgence, spoil the comfort of our lives, and perhaps "be pricks in our eyes, and thorns in our sides," when we lie upon our death bed. In obedience to the command, and in dependance on the grace of God, let us wage vigorously this holy war: and then we may hope for an useful life, a peaceful death, and an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 3. *Then your south quarter*, &c.] It was absolutely necessary that the boundaries of the land of Canaan should be exactly ascertained; as the Israelites were commissioned, and commanded to dispossess, and extirpate the inhabitants of that district; but they must not pretend to push their conquests any further. Without aiming at exactness, we may observe, that from the southern extremity of the Dead sea round by the river, near the entrance of Egypt, and so by the banks of the Mediterranean sea, and across the country near mount Libanus; and so round by the lake of Tiberias, or sea of Chinnereth, the river Jordan, and the Dead sea, to the southern extremity before mentioned, formed a country not more than one hundred and sixty miles long, and about fifty broad. The mount Hor, here mentioned, was on the north end of the land, far distant from mount Hor, where Aaron died. Though in the days of David, and Solomon their dominion extended much farther than the limits here assigned; yet the Israelites scarce ever actually possessed the whole of this small country: for neglecting the warning given in the former chapter, the ancient inhabitants continued to be very troublesome inmates with them from age to age. The Dead sea, on which this pleasant land bordered, having been once a still more fertile country, might be an useful lesson to them, to shun those sins, which brought such a dreadful judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah: the wilderness would call to their remembrance their wanderings, rebellions, and mercies there; and the border of Egypt might remind them, that they had been bondmen, but that the Lord their God had redeemed them. Some consider Jordan, as reviving the recollection of the Lord's faithfulness

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shall inherit by lot, which the LORD commanded to give unto the nine tribes, and to the half tribe.

14 For the tribe of the children of Reuben, according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad, according to the house of their fathers, have received *their inheritance*, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance.

15 The two tribes and the half tribe have received their inheritance on this side Jordan *near* Jericho, eastward, toward the sun-rising.

16 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

17 These *are* the names of the men which shall divide the land unto you: Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun.

18 And ye shall take one prince of every tribe, to divide the land by inheritance.

19 And the names of the men *are* these: Of the tribe of Judah; Caleb, the son of Jephunneh.

20 And of the tribe of the children of Simeon; Shemuel the son of Ammihud.

21 Of the tribe of Benjamin; Elidad the son of Chislon.

22 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli.

23 The prince of the children of Joseph, for the tribe of the children of Manasseh; Hanniel the son of Ephod.

24 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Ephraim; Kemuel the son of Shiphtan.

25 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Zebulun; Elizaphan the son of Parnach.

26 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Issachar; Paltiel the son of Azzan.

27 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Asher; Ahihud the son of Shelomi.

28 And the prince of the tribe of the children of Naphtali; Pedahel the son of Ammihud.

29 These *are they* whom the LORD commanded to divide the inheritance unto the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

CHAP. XXXV.

Contains, 1st. The allotment of forty-eight cities with their suburbs to the tribe of Levi, v. 1—8. 2d. The cities of refuge appointed, with their use; and some laws respecting murder, and manslaughter, v. 9—34.

AND the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho, saying,

2 Command the children of Israel, that they give unto the Levites of the inheritance

in the end of their wanderings; and the Great sea, and Lebanon, as emblems of eternity, into which they must shortly enter: but these are not equally obvious, and seem only devised to render the other mementos complete.

V. 29. *These are they*, &c.] This appointment was an assurance given of conquest to Israel; and to the persons nominated, of preservation from the sword, and from natural death during the wars. The true Christian soldier fights encouraged with the assurance given him of victory through the power of Christ. The tribes are here named in different order than before, and somewhat in the same arrangement in which their inheritance was allotted them in Canaan; hence it has been supposed, that Moses was led by divine inspiration thus to arrange them, as referring to that event.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Though a comparatively small part of the earth falls to the share of the Lord's people; yet are they said to inherit it; because a little, that the righteous hath, is better than the "riches of many wicked;" more comfortable, and more profitable: as the bounds of their habitation, and the measure of their provision are so assigned them by the only wise God in tender love, as best tends to forward their salvation, and the increase of grace and peace in their souls. And as their provision is generally small, so have their numbers been hitherto few in the comparison; and they have commonly been despised, and neglected by the multitude of the turbulent, and wicked of the world, being a quiet, and peaceable people. But the eye of the Lord is upon them, his name is their strong tower, he knoweth what things they have need of, and hath reserved for them a more enduring inheritance in heaven, and they are kept by his power through faith unto that salvation. May we have our inheritance amongst them, and not covet, or seek in any improper way to increase that temporal portion, which the Lord allots us; may we be careful not to live beneath our privileges, through sloth, or indulgence of those lusts, which mar our spiritual comforts: may we have our names written in the book of life, and have the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts, as an assurance of victory, and eternal life; and when our warfare is ended, may we have an inheritance allotted us in heaven, by Jesus, the prince of all the tribes of the redeemed, to our everlasting and complete satisfaction.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXV.] V. 2—5.] These cities were not only designed for the accommodation of the priests and Levites, but for their distribution, as religious instructors in the several parts of the land; that they might have the benefit of much conference with each other, and conveniently go about to the adjacent towns and villages, or receive

of their poſſeſſions cities to dwell in; and ye ſhall give *alſo* unto the Levites ſuburbs for the cities round about them.

3 And the cities ſhall they have to dwell in, and the ſuburbs of them ſhall be for their cattle, and for their goods, and for all their beaſts.

4 And the ſuburbs of the cities which ye ſhall give unto the Levites, *ſhall reach* from the wall of the city and outward, a thouſand cubits round about.

5 And ye ſhall meaſure from without the city on the eaſt ſide two thouſand cubits, and on the ſouth ſide two thouſand cubits, and on the weſt ſide two thouſand cubits, and on the north ſide two thouſand cubits; and the city *ſhall be* in the midſt: this ſhall be to them the ſuburbs of the cities.

6 And among the cities which ye ſhall give unto the Levites *there ſhall be* ſix cities for refuge, which ye ſhall appoint for the man-ſlayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye ſhall add forty and two cities.

7 *So* all the cities which ye ſhall give to the Levites *ſhall be* forty and eight cities: them *ſhall ye give* with their ſuburbs.

8 And the cities which ye ſhall give *ſhall be* of the poſſeſſion of the children of Iſrael: from *them that have* many ye ſhall give many; but from *them that have* few ye ſhall give few: every one ſhall give of his cities unto the Levites according to his inheritance which he inheriteth.

9 And the LORD ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying,

10 Speak unto the children of Iſrael, and ſay unto them, When ye be come over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

11 Then ye ſhall appoint you cities to be

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thoſe, who thence reſorted to them for inſtruction; for though the *typical* temple ſervice was limited to one place; the preaching of the word of God, and prayer and praiſe were not thus confined, but might be attended to any where, with reference to their ſacrifices, and prieſthood, and the ark of the covenant, &c. Thus the curſe pronounced on Levi (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 7,) was turned into a bleſſing both to them, and to Iſrael in general. Theſe cities ſeem to have been like our market-towns, and very numerous in that populous and fruitful country. The ſuburb neareſt the city would ſerve them for gardens and outhouſes; the larger ſuburb at a greater diſtance, would yield them paſture for their flocks. The whole reached to near a mile on every ſide of each city: and though this, with the tithes, and other perquiſites, would be a very plentiful proviſion for this ſmall tribe, we never find that it was complained of by the people, as exorbitant.

V. 11. *That the ſlayer*, &c.] In order to expreſs the greater abhorrence of murder, and to provide the more effectually for the puniſhment of the murderer, the proſecution and execution of the criminal, were cuſtomarily devolved upon the neareſt relation, under the title of the avenger of blood; who in notorious caſes might purſue him any whither, and execute vengeance without the formalities of a trial. Yet we muſt ſuppoſe that this was only, when the man-ſlayer was *certainly known*; for if in raſhneſs the avenger of blood ſlew the wrong perſon, he muſt doubtleſs anſwer for it; for we cannot ſuppoſe that an individual was allowed to put a man to death upon mere ſuſpicion, when the magiſtrates, or congregation might not proceed without two poſitive witneſſes to the fact; (V. 30. *Deut.* c. xvii. v. 6.) However this cuſtom under certain limitations was ſanctioned by the divine law: but an equitable proviſion was made for the ſecurity of thoſe, who *unintentionally* ſhed blood. Six cities were appointed in different parts of the land, to which he might flee for refuge, and be ſafe, until he had a fair trial, whether he had been guilty of murder or not. Some one of theſe cities would lie within half a day's journey of every part of the land. It would rarely occur that the avenger of blood would be upon the ſpot, at the time, when the accident happened; and none elſe had a right to aſſault, or detain the man-ſlayer, at leaſt, if the malicious intention were not manifeſt. Theſe unhappy men would therefore generally get the ſtart of their adverſaries, and very few of them would be overtaken before they gained the place of refuge. But then they muſt leave their families, buſineſs, and all their moſt important intereſts, and deareſt comforts behind: they muſt not loiter, nor yield to wearineſs, nor regard difficulties, nor at all ſlacken their pace, till they had got ſafe within the walls of the appointed city; which ſecured them in virtue of the divine inſtitution, not by its own natural ſtrength. To forward thoſe who thus fled for their life, the Jewiſh writers inform us, that the road to thoſe cities was always preſerved in good repair, and way-poſts inſcribed REFUGE, were placed wherever they were needful, that they might not ſo much as heſitate for a moment. In this refuge they had no occaſion to fear their accuſers, but might boldly meet them; and had the benefit of a trial, and if acquitted from the charge of murder, were protected from the avenger of blood: yet muſt they continue in the city, and not ſtir from its borders; for if they did the avenger might ſlay them with impunity. Thus were they priſoners at large, but well provided for: and as all theſe cities of refuge were ſelected from amongſt thoſe, which belonged to the Levites, they would enjoy the benefit of their converſe, counſel, and inſtructions, whilſt debarred from going up to the temple. Their confinement continued until the death of the High Prieſt, when the public loſs, and the grief occaſioned by it, were ſuppoſed to ſwallow up all their perſonal ſorrows; and they were then permitted to return to their former poſſeſſions. In this equitable, and ſalutary law we have an eminent type of the ſalvation of the goſpel. Our ſins have provoked the vengeance of our offended God, who by innumerable in-

cities

cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares.

12 And they shall be unto you cities for refuge from the avenger; that the man-slayer die not, until he stand before the congregation in judgment.

13 And of these cities which ye shall give, six cities shall ye have for refuge.

14 Ye shall give three cities on this side Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, *which* shall be cities of refuge.

15 These six cities shall be a refuge, *both* for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them; that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither.

16 And if he smite him with an instrument

struments is continually executing justice upon criminals: and by death conveying them away to everlasting punishment. But in infinite mercy he hath provided a refuge, to which we may flee and be safe; even Christ Jesus, in his glorious person, his mediatorial office, his merits, and grace. The holy law of God declaring his will, and denouncing his wrath against every transgressor, with salutary terror, proclaims our danger, and warns us to flee from the wrath to come: the gospel points out Christ as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth: his ministers are appointed to declare them both, and by all needful instructions, exhortations, and encouragements, to make the way plain to every inquirer. The sinner, who is made *really sensible* of his urgent danger, and perceives by faith the distant Refuge, makes no more delay, leaves all behind, even his choicest comforts, and most valued temporal interests, disregards all intervening opposition, will not be bribed, amused, or persuaded to loiter, to turn back, to stop short; but counts all but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, that he "may win him, and be "*found in him.*" The cry of vengeance sounds in his affrighted ears, the sword of justice is behind him, and if death should seize him ere his sins are washed away in the blood of Christ, his everlasting destruction is inevitable: his all is at stake, and he cannot but attend to this one thing needful. Thus he flees for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him, and Christ takes him under his own protection: the law is magnified, and justice satisfied by his obedience unto death: the offender is justified of God himself, and who shall lay any thing to his charge? there is no condemnation for him, he being in Christ Jesus: in him he still abides, and is safe, until in virtue of the death of the anointed High Priest, he is in due time restored to his forfeited inheritance, (v. 25.) This part of the type had a peculiar significance, before the coming of Christ, whose death is the purchase of our security, of our present comforts, and of our future inheritance. But though the most atrocious offender, whether Jew or Gentile, as well as those who have sinned most ignorantly, may come to Christ, and find salvation; for him that cometh he will in no wise cast out: yet the presumptuous sinner will neglect, the hypocrite abuse, and the apostate renounce this salvation, to their deeper condemnation; whilst multitudes who are alarmed with some discoveries of their danger, are ruined by procrastination, by cleaving to some worldly object, or by preferring some self-invented refuge, to that which God hath appointed, and revealed.

V. 16—25.] The distinction here made is not between sudden anger, and malice *prepense* (which latter is indeed an aggravation of murder, but not essential to the crime;) but between *intentionally* striking a man, with any weapon, likely to cause death; and an *unintentional* blow. In the latter case alone the city of refuge afforded a man protection. And of this the congregation, by the appointed magistrates, were to judge.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The provision, which God hath appointed for his ministers, was not intended to pamper them in pride, luxury, sloth, or any kind of self-indulgence; whereby they would be disqualified for, and led to dislike, and despise their work: but to free them from distracting care, to leave them at leisure for, that they might be wholly employed in, the important duties of their station; and avail themselves of every opportunity of conciliating by acts of kindness, the good-will of the people, and their attention to their instructions. So that the intention of the grant, and the effect of it, when properly used, were *ultimately* and *mainly* the advantage of those, who bestowed, not of those, who received it. Nor need we wonder if the sinfulness of man's heart pervert the wisest constitutions human, and divine; and if the abuse of some, afford others a plausible pretext for neglecting their duty; which however may not be thus dispensed with; though they, who furnish the excuse, have the deeper guilt. It is very profitable for the ministers of the gospel to confer much together for their mutual encouragement, admonition, and instruction, to increase mutual love, and to give the younger ministers the opportunity of profiting by the knowledge, experience, and observations of their seniors: but *above all* that they may pray much together, for each other *personally*, for a blessing on each other's labours, for the success of the word, and for the spread of the gospel in every place. And when with this advantage a convenient situation for access to a number of willing hearers can be obtained, there is abundant reason for content, and thankfulness. In the maintenance of the ministry, in the support of divine worship, in the provision for the poor, or in any other good work, equality, and proportion should be considered both by those, who contribute, and those, who receive: for that donation is liberality in some, which is shamefully scanty in those of superior affluence. It is very important in the administration of justice, that the guilty should not escape, and that the innocent should not suffer; and though the prosecution, and execution of criminals be a painful, and in some cases an odious employment; yet it must be done, and becomes a necessary duty to some persons; who should be guided therein by regard to public justice, and the welfare of society. This is especially the case with murder in all its forms, and under all its disguises; which so pollutes

of

of iron, (ſo that he die,) he *is* a murderer: the murderer ſhall ſurely be put to death.

17 And if he ſmite him with throwing a ſtone, (wherewith he may die,) and he die, he *is* a murderer: the murderer ſhall ſurely be put to death.

18 Or *if* he ſmite him with an hand-weapon of wood, (wherewith he may die,) and he die, he *is* a murderer: the murderer ſhall ſurely be put to death.

19 The revenger of blood himſelf ſhall ſlay the murderer: when he meeteth him he ſhall ſlay him.

20 But if he thruſt him of hatred, or hurl at him by laying of wait that he die;

21 Or in enmity ſmite him with his hand, that he die: he that ſmote *him* ſhall ſurely be put to death; *for* he is a murderer: the revenger of blood ſhall ſlay the murderer when he meeteth him.

22 But if he thruſt him ſuddenly without enmity, or have caſt upon him any thing without laying of wait;

23 Or with any ſtone wherewith a man may die, ſeeing *him* not, and caſt *it* upon him that he die, and *was* not his enemy, neither ſought his harm:

24 Then the congregation ſhall judge between the ſlayer and the revenger of blood according to theſe judgments;

25 And the congregation ſhall deliver the ſlayer out of the hand of the revenger of blood, and the congregation ſhall reſtore him to the city of his refuge, whither he was fled: and he ſhall abide in it unto the death of the high prieſt, which was anointed with the holy oil.

26 But if the ſlayer ſhall at any time come without the border of the city of his refuge, whither he was fled;

27 And the revenger of blood find him without the borders of the city of his refuge, and the revenger of blood kill the ſlayer; he ſhall not be guilty of blood:

28 Becauſe he ſhould have remained in the city of his refuge until the death of the high prieſt: but after the death of the high prieſt the ſlayer ſhall return into the land of his poſſeſſion.

29 So theſe *things* ſhall be for a ſtatute of judgment unto you, throughout your generations, in all your dwellings.

30 Whoſo killeth any perſon, the murderer ſhall be put to death by the mouth of witneſſes: but one witneſs ſhall not teſtify againſt any perſon *to cauſe him* to die.

31 Moreover, ye ſhall take no ſatisfaction for the life of a murderer, which *is* guilty of death: but he ſhall be ſurely put to death.

32 And ye ſhall take no ſatisfaction for him that is fled to the city of his refuge, that he ſhould come again to dwell in the land, until the death of the prieſt.

33 So ye ſhall not pollute the land wherein ye *are*; for blood it defileth the land: and

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the land, that nothing but the blood of the murderer, whatever be his rank, or quality, can cleanſe it. Alas! that ſuch unſcriptural, and abſurd diſtinctions, and conceſſions to the maxims of proud ungodly men, ſhould cauſe ſo many atrocious murders to paſs unpuniſhed, the guilt of which, with incumbent, and accumulating weight will, tis ſeriouſly to be apprehended, help to ſink this nation into deſtruction: this nation, which hath ſo long been favoured in a peculiar manner in God's providence; and wherein he hath ſo long dwelt by his word and ordinances: but which a torrent of infidelity, profaneneſs, and licentiouſneſs, deluging all before them, evidently marks to be ripening apace for ruin: except in anſwer to the prayers of his remnant of deſpiſed people, the Spirit of the Lord lift up a ſtandardagainſt them: let us all then with one conſent preſent our ſupplications in behalf of our beloved country, that reformation, and a general revival of pure religion, may avert the judgments of God. Theſe reſtrictions, dangers, and inconveniences, which unintentional bloodſhed occaſioned, ſhould impreſs us with horror of the thought of even raſhly occaſioning death: and increaſe our caution and circumſpection, as well as watchfulneſs over our paſſions; and our earneſtneſs in praying to be preſerved from ſuch a calamity. But above all let ſinners take warning without delay to flee for refuge to Jeſus Chriſt, whatever they renounce, venture, and ſuffer; let them not ſtop ſhort, turn back, or loiter; let them not fear a repulſe; for the refuge is appointed for the purpoſe of receiving all ſuch, as are ſenſible of their danger, and flee to it, how vile ſoever they have been: let them abide in the continued exerciſe of a believing dependance on, and a thankful obedience to him, who died for ſinners, and roſe again: let them only be careful that they abuſe not this refuge by encouraging themſelves in preſumptuous, unrepented ſin: and let them wait the appointed time, and they ſhall certainly at length be reſtored to liberty, and reinſtated in their forfeited inheritance. May the Lord grant that neither the writer, nor any of the readers may be of thoſe, who draw back unto perdition: but that we all may be of thoſe, who believe to the ſaving of the ſoul!

the land cannot be cleanſed of the blood that is ſhed therein, but by the blood of him that ſhed it.

34 Defile not therefore the land which ye ſhall inhabit, wherein I dwell: for I the LORD dwell among the children of Iſrael.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. A difficulty propoſed, and reſolved concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, v. 1—9. 2d. Their conſequent conduct, v. 10—13.

AND the chief fathers of the families of the children of Gilead, the ſon of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, of the families of the ſons of Joſeph, came near, and ſpake before Moſes, and before the princes, the chief fathers of the children of Iſrael;

2 And they ſaid, The LORD commanded my lord to give the land for an inheritance by lot to the children of Iſrael: and my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of Zelophehad our brother unto his daughters.

3 And if they be married to any of the ſons of the *other* tribes of the children of Iſrael; then ſhall their inheritance be taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and ſhall be put to the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: ſo ſhall it be taken from the lot of our inheritance.

4 And when the jubile of the children of Iſrael ſhall be, then ſhall their inheritance be put unto the inheritance of the tribe whereunto they are received: ſo ſhall their inheritance be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers.

5 And Moſes commanded the children of Iſrael according to the word of the LORD, ſaying, The tribe of the ſons of Joſeph hath ſaid well.

6 This *is* the thing which the LORD doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, ſaying, Let them marry to whom they think beſt; only to the family of the tribe of their father ſhall they marry:

7 So ſhall not the inheritance of the children of Iſrael remove from tribe to tribe: for every one of the children of Iſrael ſhall keep himſelf to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers.

8 And every daughter that poſſeſſeth an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Iſrael, ſhall be wife unto one of the family of the tribe of her father, that the children of Iſrael may enjoy every man the inheritance of his fathers.

9 Neither ſhall the inheritance remove from *one* tribe to another tribe; but every one of the tribes of the children of Iſrael ſhall keep himſelf to his own inheritance.

10 Even as the LORD commanded Moſes, ſo did the daughters of Zelophehad:

11 For Mahlah, Tirzah, and Hoglah, and Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married unto their father's brothers ſons.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXVI.] V. 1. It does not appear that Manaſſeh left any ſon but Machir, or Machir any ſon but Gilead; from whoſe poſterity, in different families, this whole numerous tribe had ſprung. To one diviſion of this tribe a portion was aſſigned eaſt of Jordan; (c. xxvi. v. 28—34. c. xxxii. v. 40. *Joſhua*, c. xiii. v. 31. 1 *Chron.* c. ii. v. 21. 23:) But the diviſion, to whom Zelophehad had belonged, is ſuppoſed to have been that, whoſe inheritance was afterwards allotted weſt of Jordan: yet, in expectation of being put in poſſeſſion according to promiſe, they here propoſed a difficulty, which had occurred to them upon the adjudged caſe of Zelophehad's daughters, (c. xxvii.)—If the females were to inherit, in defect of male iſſue, thoſe lands, which were divided to the tribes by lot; by intermarrying with other tribes, they would diminiſh the intereſt, and weaken the influence of their own tribes, and give occaſion to much future confuſion, and perhaps contention among their poſterity, about their inheritances. The ſettling of this matter they referred to Moſes, without giving any opinion of their own: who by the authority of God, annexed a clauſe, which would effectually keep their tribes, and inheritances diſtinct, as long as it was obſerved. Heireſſes were not allowed to marry out of their own tribe, though within thoſe bounds, they were allowed to conſult their own inclinations. Probably there had been ſome proſpect of Zelophehad's daughters marrying into ſome other tribe; as both their character, and expected inheritance would induce ſuch overtures: but when the will of God was declared, all parties acquieſced therein, and they were married to their own couſins; not out of neceſſity, for there were many thouſands within the aſſigned limits; but out of choice, and preference, and perhaps becauſe theſe were the next heirs of the family: and we may hence learn that there is nothing at all improper in ſuch marriages, whatever hath been groundleſsly ſuppoſed.

12 *And* they were married into the families of the ſons of Manaſſeh, the ſon of Joſeph; and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 Theſe *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes unto the children of Iſrael, in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No laws, however excellent, expreſs, or numerous, can reach, in their application, to every particular caſe, which may ariſe: ſtill room will be left for the exerciſe of ſound judgment and common ſenſe. When theſe are regulated according to the Spirit of the word of God, and in ſubmiſſion to and dependance on divine teaching, they will guide us through the various perplexities, that may occur, as far as our immediate duty is concerned. But the Lord frequently leaves us to feel our difficulties, that we may be habituated to reflect, and led to truſt in him more entirely, to guide us through and extricate us out of them; for his glory, and for our good.—All our intentions and inclinations ought to be ſubjected to the will of God, when made known to us: and eſpecially in contracting marriage, future conſequences to poſterity, as well to ourſelves, and our connexions, are to be taken into conſideration. Although the word of God ſuppoſes that eſteem, affection, and preference are requiſite in this important relation: yet it knows nothing of that irrational, ungovernable, and idolatrous paſſion, which regardleſs of all conſequences, and in defiance of all authority, ruſhes headlong upon gratification: which is neither moderated by diſcretion, nor ſubordinated to the will of God: which is not rational eſteem, tender friendſhip, or congenial affection; but ſomewhat vaſtly more rapturous, unintelligible, and undefinable: and which, with all it's refinements, is inconſiſtent with common ſenſe, the intereſts of ſociety, the happineſs of the marriage relation, and the Chriſtian religion.—Finally, though it be prudent to foreſee and prevent diſputes about temporal property; yet it would be better for us, if we were equally quick-ſighted, and attentive to our ſpiritual and eternal intereſts. But "the children of this world are "wiſer in their generation than the children of light." (*Luke*, c. xvi. v. 8.)

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

DEUTERONOMY.

The name of this book, given it, as thoſe of the former were, by the Greek tranſlators, ſignifies "a repetition of the law," and in ſome meaſure expreſſes the nature of it. Therein many of the former laws are repeated, ſome of them with further explanations, and all of them with application to the heart, and conſcience, by pathetic exhortations, perſuaſions, and expoſtulations: and therefore the addreſſes to Iſrael are not generally prefaced with, "the Lord ſpake unto "Moſes, &c;" but Moſes is introduced preaching to the people from the former revelations of the Lord's will. The moſt important parts of the foregoing hiſtory are alſo rehearſed, with enlargements, and illuſtrations, and practical inferences, and obſervations. Many precepts, moral, judicial, and ceremonial, not before given, are ſubjoined with other new matter hiſtorical, prophetical, and poetical. The repetitions therein contained were very proper to a new generation of men; and the application of them, both by word of mouth, and by writing, was of vaſt importance, and could not fail to make a deep, and durable impreſſion on the minds of the people: and it is an honourable circumſtance reſpecting this book, that all thoſe Scriptures, with which Jeſus Chriſt repelled Satan's temptations, were drawn from thence. The book is dated about one month before the death of Moſes, and contains the hiſtory of that laſt period of his life, and which he knew to be ſo, and therefore may be ſaid to compriſe his laſt dying words to Iſrael: and the moſt remarkable circumſtances are, the activity, and fervency of Moſes in his zeal for the glory of God, and his affection for Iſrael, at the cloſe of his life: and the variety of methods, which he was inſpired of God to employ, in order to leave an impreſſion upon the minds of the people, when he ſhould be taken from them. After having reminded them of the commandments of God, and enforced obedience, with immenſe pathos, and enlargement of heart, from every motive imaginable:

imaginable: he ſet before them the conſequences of their conduct in a long catalogue of important bleſſings, and awful curſes; ſome of which were afterwards ordered to be ratified, and as it were ſubſcribed to, in a ſingular manner from mount Ebal, and Gerizzim: he then formed the ſubſtance of all his warnings, and exhortations into a ſacred ſong, which he communicated to them: and finally, having pronounced prophetical bleſſings upon the tribes of Iſrael, and given encouragement to Joſhua his ſucceſſor, he aſcended mount Piſgah, viewed the promiſed land, and died; being buried of God himſelf, and lamented by Iſrael for thirty days. Such are the general out-lines of this book; the whole of which ſhews Moſes's entire forgiveneſs of, and diſintereſted love for Iſrael; and marks him an eminent type of Jeſus Chriſt: it alſo manifeſts the Lord's entire reconciliation to the people after all their rebellions. And as the whole of the tranſactions therein recorded muſt have been exceeding uſeful to the Iſraelites; ſo will the peruſal of them at this diſtant period prove to us, if we accommodate the hiſtory to the Lord's providential, and gracious dealings with us, and our conduct towards him; and apply the exhortations, and perſuaſions to our own conſciences, to excite our minds to a believing grateful obedience to the commands of God.

Before Chriſt 1451.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. The date of place, and time of the enſuing diſcourſes, v. 1—5. 2d. A recapitulation of many paſſages of the foregoing hiſtory; illuſtrating the goodneſs of the Lord to the Iſraelites, and their rebellion againſt him, v. 6—46.

THESE *be* the words which Moſes ſpake unto all Iſrael on this ſide Jordan, in the wilderneſs, in the plain over againſt the Red *ſea*, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

2 (*There are* eleven days *journey* from Horeb, by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadeſh-barnea.)

3 And it came to paſs in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the firſt *day* of the month, *that* Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;

4 After he had ſlain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heſhbon, and Og the king of Baſhan, which dwelt at Aſtaroth in Edrei.

5 On this ſide Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moſes to declare this law, ſaying,

6 The LORD our God ſpake unto us in Horeb, ſaying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:

7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh thereunto in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the ſouth, and

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. The ſeveral names here mentioned cannot be brought to mark out any one place: but the meaning ſeems to be, that on the banks of Jordan Moſes called to their remembrances the inſtructions, which in thoſe ſeveral places had been given them, and the providences, which they had there experienced.

V. 2. *There are eleven days*, &c.] This was mentioned to remind them that nothing but their own miſconduct had occaſioned their tedious wanderings: otherwiſe they might long before have been in peaceable poſſeſſion of Canaan, as in eleven days they might have marched from Horeb to the borders thereof.—The intention of all this recapitulation evidently was, to convince the people of the folly, as well as wickedneſs of their conduct; that perceiving upon the review, that nothing elſe had obſtructed their proſperity, they might the more readily underſtand the advantages of obedience, and might more willingly receive the exhortations, which were about to follow.

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by

12 *And* they were married into the families of the ſons of Manaſſeh, the ſon of Joſeph; and their inheritance remained in the tribe of the family of their father.

13 Theſe *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes unto the children of Iſrael, in the plains of Moab by Jordan *near* Jericho.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No laws, however excellent, expreſs, or numerous, can reach, in their application, to every particular caſe, which may ariſe: ſtill room will be left for the exerciſe of ſound judgment and common ſenſe. When theſe are regulated according to the Spirit of the word of God, and in ſubmiſſion to and dependance on divine teaching, they will guide us through the various perplexities, that may occur, as far as our immediate duty is concerned. But the Lord frequently leaves us to feel our difficulties, that we may be habituated to reflect, and led to truſt in him more entirely, to guide us through and extricate us out of them; for his glory, and for our good.—All our intentions and inclinations ought to be ſubjected to the will of God, when made known to us: and eſpecially in contracting marriage, future conſequences to poſterity, as well to ourſelves, and our connexions, are to be taken into conſideration. Although the word of God ſuppoſes that eſteem, affection, and preference are requiſite in this important relation: yet it knows nothing of that irrational, ungovernable, and idolatrous paſſion, which regardleſs of all conſequences, and in defiance of all authority, ruſhes headlong upon gratification: which is neither moderated by diſcretion, nor ſubordinated to the will of God: which is not rational eſteem, tender friendſhip, or congenial affection; but ſomewhat vaſtly more rapturous, unintelligible, and undefinable: and which, with all it's refinements, is inconſiſtent with common ſenſe, the intereſts of ſociety, the happineſs of the marriage relation, and the Chriſtian religion.—Finally, though it be prudent to foreſee and prevent diſputes about temporal property; yet it would be better for us, if we were equally quick-ſighted, and attentive to our ſpiritual and eternal intereſts. But "the children of this world are "wiſer in their generation than the children of light." (*Luke*, c. xvi. v. 8.)

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

DEUTERONOMY.

The name of this book, given it, as thoſe of the former were, by the Greek tranſlators, ſignifies "a repetition of the law," and in ſome meaſure expreſſes the nature of it. Therein many of the former laws are repeated, ſome of them with further explanations, and all of them with application to the heart, and conſcience, by pathetic exhortations, perſuaſions, and expoſtulations: and therefore the addreſſes to Iſrael are not generally prefaced with, "the Lord ſpake unto "Moſes, &c;" but Moſes is introduced preaching to the people from the former revelations of the Lord's will. The moſt important parts of the foregoing hiſtory are alſo rehearſed, with enlargements, and illuſtrations, and practical inferences, and obſervations. Many precepts, moral, judicial, and ceremonial, not before given, are ſubjoined with other new matter hiſtorical, prophetical, and poetical. The repetitions therein contained were very proper to a new generation of men; and the application of them, both by word of mouth, and by writing, was of vaſt importance, and could not fail to make a deep, and durable impreſſion on the minds of the people: and it is an honourable circumſtance reſpecting this book, that all thoſe Scriptures, with which Jeſus Chriſt repelled Satan's temptations, were drawn from thence. The book is dated about one month before the death of Moſes, and contains the hiſtory of that laſt period of his life, and which he knew to be ſo, and therefore may be ſaid to compriſe his laſt dying words to Iſrael: and the moſt remarkable circumſtances are, the activity, and fervency of Moſes in his zeal for the glory of God, and his affection for Iſrael, at the cloſe of his life: and the variety of methods, which he was inſpired of God to employ, in order to leave an impreſſion upon the minds of the people, when he ſhould be taken from them. After having reminded them of the commandments of God, and enforced obedience, with immenſe pathos, and enlargement of heart, from every motive imaginable:

imaginable: he ſet before them the conſequences of their conduct in a long catalogue of important bleſſings, and awful curſes; ſome of which were afterwards ordered to be ratified, and as it were ſubſcribed to, in a ſingular manner from mount Ebal, and Gerizzim: he then formed the ſubſtance of all his warnings, and exhortations into a ſacred ſong, which he communicated to them: and finally, having pronounced prophetical bleſſings upon the tribes of Iſrael, and given encouragement to Joſhua his ſucceſſor, he aſcended mount Piſgah, viewed the promiſed land, and died; being buried of God himſelf, and lamented by Iſrael for thirty days. Such are the general out-lines of this book; the whole of which ſhews Moſes's entire forgiveneſs of, and diſintereſted love for Iſrael; and marks him an eminent type of Jeſus Chriſt: it alſo manifeſts the Lord's entire reconciliation to the people after all their rebellions. And as the whole of the tranſactions therein recorded muſt have been exceeding uſeful to the Iſraelites; ſo will the peruſal of them at this diſtant period prove to us, if we accommodate the hiſtory to the Lord's providential, and gracious dealings with us, and our conduct towards him; and apply the exhortations, and perſuaſions to our own conſciences, to excite our minds to a believing grateful obedience to the commands of God.

Before Chriſt 1451.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. The date of place, and time of the enſuing diſcourſes, v. 1—5. 2d. A recapitulation of many paſſages of the foregoing hiſtory; illuſtrating the goodneſs of the Lord to the Iſraelites, and their rebellion againſt him, v. 6—46.

THESE *be* the words which Moſes ſpake unto all Iſrael on this ſide Jordan, in the wilderneſs, in the plain over againſt the Red *ſea*, between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab.

2 *(There are* eleven days *journey* from Horeb, by the way of mount Seir, unto Kadeſh-barnea.)

3 And it came to paſs in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the firſt *day* of the

Before Chriſt 1451.

month, *that* Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, according unto all that the LORD had given him in commandment unto them;

4 After he had ſlain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heſhbon, and Og the king of Baſhan, which dwelt at Aſtaroth in Edrei.

5 On this ſide Jordan, in the land of Moab, began Moſes to declare this law, ſaying,

6 The LORD our God ſpake unto us in Horeb, ſaying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount:

7 Turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all *the places* nigh thereunto in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the ſouth, and

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NOTES.

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by the ſea-ſide, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, unto the great river, the river Euphrates.

8 Behold, I have ſet the land before you: go in and poſſeſs the land which the LORD ſware unto your fathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, to give unto them, and to their ſeed after them.

9 And I ſpake unto you at that time, ſaying, I am not able to bear you myſelf alone:

10 The LORD your God hath multiplied you, and, behold, ye *are* this day as the ſtars of heaven for multitude.

11 (The LORD God of your fathers make you a thouſand times ſo many more as ye *are*, and bleſs you, as he hath promiſed you!)

12 How can I myſelf alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your ſtriſe?

13 Take ye wiſe men, and underſtanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.

14 And ye anſwered me, and ſaid, The thing which thou haſt ſpoken *is* good *for us* to do.

15 So I took the chief of your tribes, wiſe men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thouſands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes.

16 And I charged your judges at that time, ſaying, Hear *the cauſes* between your brethren, and judge righteouſly between *every* man and his brother, and the ſtranger *that is* with him.

17 Ye ſhall not reſpect perſons in judgment, *but* ye ſhall hear the ſmall as well as the great; ye ſhall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment *is* God's: and the cauſe that is too hard for you, bring *it* unto me, and I will hear it.

18 And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye ſhould do.

19 And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderneſs, which ye ſaw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the LORD our God commanded us; and we came to Kadeſh-barnea.

20 And I ſaid unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the LORD our God doth give unto us.

21 Behold, the LORD thy God hath ſet the land before thee: go up *and* poſſeſs *it*, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath ſaid unto thee; fear not, neither be diſcouraged.

22 And ye came near unto me every one of you, and ſaid, We will ſend men before us, and they ſhall ſearch us out the land, and bring us word again by what way we muſt go up, and into what cities we ſhall come.

23 And the ſaying pleaſed me well: and I took twelve men of you, one of a tribe.

24 And they turned, and went up into the mountain, and came unto the valley of Eſhcol, and ſearched it out.

25 And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought *it* down unto us, and brought us word again, and ſaid, *It is* a good land which the LORD our God doth give us.

26 Notwithſtanding ye would not go up, but rebelled againſt the commandment of the LORD your God.

27 And ye murmured in your tents, and ſaid,

V. 11. *The Lord God*, &c.] In little more than two hundred years they had been multiplied much above 10,000 times: the promiſe of God did not limit the number, to which the people ſhould be increaſed; nor doth the faith, and prayer of Moſes; for a large definite number is taken for an indefinite increaſe. Under Pharaoh their numbers excited jealouſy, and cruelty; but Moſes delighted in, and prayed for their ſtill greater, increaſe. This was therefore a tacit reproof of their murmurings, and wiſhes to return into Egypt: and he evidently introduced this whole ſubject to remind them, that in his adminiſtration he ſought not his own grandeur, or advantage, but their good; and that in the moſt laborious, patient, and diſintereſted manner. The counſel here referred to was ſuggeſted by Jethro before the giving of the law; (*ſee notes*, &c. *Exod.* c. xviii.) Moſes in conſequence propoſed it to the Lord, who approved of it; and with the concurrence of the people it took place at length; nearly about the time when they departed from Horeb, and much at the ſame time with the appointment of the ſeventy elders; (*ſee Num.* c. 11.) though they muſt have been diſtinct from them, and much more numerous, being according to the number of the thouſands, and hundreds, over whom they probably preſided both in a civil and military capacity, yet with ſubordination; and therefore the ſuperiors of them might be called judges, (v. 16.) or elſe theſe were the ſeventy elders, who were afterwards appointed.

V. 22.] (*See notes*, &c. *on Num.* ch. xiii. and xiv.) In unbelief the people propoſed this expedient: misjudging of their intention, and of it's tendency, Moſes approved of it, and in juſt diſpleaſure the Lord permitted them to follow

Becauſe

Becauſe the LORD hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to deſtroy us.

28 Whither ſhall we go up? our brethren have diſcouraged our heart, ſaying, The people *is* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great, and walled up to heaven; and, moreover, we have ſeen the ſons of the Anakims there.

29 Then I ſaid unto you, Dread not, neither be afraid of them.

30 The LORD your God, which goeth before you, he ſhall fight for you, according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes;

31 And in the wilderneſs, where thou haſt ſeen how that the LORD thy God bare thee as a man doth bare his ſon, in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place.

32 Yet in this thing ye did not believe the LORD your God,

33 Who went in the way before you, to ſearch you out a place to pitch your tents *in*, in fire by night, to ſhew you by what way ye ſhould go, and in a cloud by day.

34 And the LORD heard the voice of your words and was wroth, and ſware, ſaying,

35 Surely there ſhall not one of theſe men of this evil generation ſee that good land which I ſware to give unto your fathers;

36 Save Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, he ſhall ſee it; and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, becauſe he hath wholly followed the LORD.

37 Alſo the LORD was angry with me for your ſakes, ſaying, Thou alſo ſhalt not go in thither.

38 *But* Joſhua the ſon of Nun, which ſtandeth before thee, he ſhall go in thither: encourage him; for he ſhall cauſe Iſrael to inherit it.

39 Moreover, your little ones, which ye ſaid ſhould be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they ſhall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they ſhall poſſeſs it.

40 But *as for* you, turn ye, and take your journey into the wilderneſs, by the way of the Red ſea.

41 Then ye anſwered and ſaid unto me, We have ſinned againſt the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill.

42 And the LORD ſaid unto me, ſay unto them, Go not up, neither fight: for I *am* not among you; leſt ye be ſmitten before your enemies.

43 So I ſpake unto you, and ye would not hear, but rebelled againſt the commandment of the LORD, and went preſumptuouſly up into the hill.

44 And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out againſt you, and chaſed you as bees do, and deſtroyed you in Seir, *even* unto Hormah.

45 And ye returned, and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.

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their own counſel; which was injurious to them, only through their ſin.

V. 31. *The Lord thy God bare thee*, &c.] Moſes in the bitterneſs of his ſpirit, when ſorely tried, had haſtily ſpoken, as if *he* had been required to bear Iſrael, as a man doth his ſon, (*Num.* c. xi. v. 12:) but he here retracted it; and allowed that the Lord himſelf had ſo born them.

V. 32. *Ye did not believe*, &c.] Theſe perſons, whom Moſes addreſſed, were another generation, than that, which had been ſentenced for unbelief to fall in the wilderneſs: but many of them might be concerned, though not of age; and they evidenced very ſtrongly a diſpoſition to imitate the ſin of their fathers; and they formed the ſame nation, the ſame body corporate, though not the ſame individuals. All their diſobedience is here charged upon their unbelief, which is it's root and firſt principle; as all true obedience ſprings from faith, in it's manifold, and diſtinct exerciſes.

V. 37. *Was angry with me*, &c.] It was natural for Moſes here to introduce this ſubject, though the event took place long after that, of which he was diſcourſing; for it would occur to his mind that he too was excluded, and was thus involved in the general ſentence, and that in conſequence of his being overcome by a temptation, which their unbelief had laid in his way; which he mentioned not to excuſe himſelf, but to humble them: and he would moreover remind them, that they heard the words of a dying man, and one to whoſe death they had been acceſſory.

V. 44. *As bees do*, &c.] Which with their ſtings aſſault, and have been known to kill both men, and cattle, that have come near their hives.

46 So ye abode in Kadeſh many days, according unto the days that ye abode *there*.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. A continuation of the diſcourſe of Moſes, reminding them of the charge that they had received, not to diſturb the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites; which is blended with ſome fragments of very ancient hiſtory, and with an account of the Iſraelites waſting in the wilderneſs, till the condemned generation was deſtroyed, v. 1—23. 2d. Of the grant and conqueſt of the kingdom of Sihon, &c. v. 24—37.

THEN we turned, and took our journey into the wilderneſs by the way of the Red ſea, as the LORD ſpake unto me: and we compaſſed mount Seir many days.

2 And the LORD ſpake unto me, ſaying,

3 Ye have compaſſed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.

4 And command thou the people, ſaying, Ye *are* to paſs through the coaſt of your brethren the children of Eſau, which dwell in Seir, and they ſhall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourſelves therefore.

5 Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no not ſo much as a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

With advancing years, and experience, the faithful ſervants of the Lord frequently acquire increaſing reputation for wiſdom, gravity, integrity, piety, and diſintereſted love to their fellow-creatures: as well as zeal for the glory of God: theſe add to their influence, and give weight to their inſtructions; and if their health will permit, they may with vaſt advantage redouble their diligence in enforcing the truths, which they have taught, in their practical tendency upon the conſciences of the people, that they may have them in remembrance, and be influenced thereby after their deceaſe: (2 *Pet.* c. i. v. 12—15.) Whilſt they draw nearer to the heavenly world, they oft ſeem to breathe a purer air, and all their words have a heavenly ſavour; their motion accelerates as they approach their reſt; their earneſtneſs increaſes, when it can have no earthly motive to induce it; and their confidence, and comfort are enlarged, in defiance of the approaching king of terrors: theſe concurring circumſtances render their inſtructions doubly impreſſive, and they oft have a durable effect upon the ſurvivors. Whilſt the miniſters of God take every opportunity of putting the people in remembrance of his faithfulneſs, goodneſs, power, and wiſdom, as manifeſted in his dealings towards them; there may be ſeaſons when it may be proper with modeſty, and humility, to call to their ſerious, and diſpaſſionate recollection, the evidences of their own love to their ſouls, as diſplayed in their faithful labours, unwearied patience, and chearful ſelf-denying ſufferings for their eternal welfare: in order to obviate prejudice, and to obtain a more favourable attention to their further inſtructions, and exhortations; referring all to the glory of God. But when this is deemed expedient, it is alſo neceſſary to ſhew the people their tranſgreſſions, that they may be duly humbled for them; the fatal effects of their unbelief, and diſobedience, that they may watch againſt them, and the advantages of confidence in God and obedience to him, that they may follow after them: It will be proper alſo to unite therewith memorials of their own imperfection, and ſinfulneſs, both to abate the offence, to ſuggeſt encouragement, and for perſonal humiliation.—If it be highly uſeful for miniſters thus to contraſt the Lord's goodneſs, and the people's miſconduct, in tracing the outlines of their paſt experience: it is ſtill more profitable for each individual frequently to meditate on ſuch ſubjects, and to ſet apart time for that purpoſe; to divide our paſt lives into diſtinct periods; to review them ſeparately; to give thanks for the mercies, which we can recollect to have received in each ſucceſſive period; to confeſs, and ſeek forgiveneſs of all the ſins, which we can call to our remembrance: and thus having endeavoured to revive ſuitable affections; with earneſt prayers, and ſimple dependance on the Lord, to renew our acceptance of his ſalvation, and our ſurrender of ourſelves to his ſervice.—In many things brevity requires that the reader be further referred to the practical obſervations on the ſeveral hiſtories here recapitulated. In general we may obſerve that nothing but total unbelief, and that diſobedience, which reſults from it, can exclude any ſinner from the promiſed reſt: that unbelief *partially* operating in diſobedience occaſions manifold abatements, and delays in our comforts: that our own expedients are ſeldom availing to much good purpoſe: that courage in the exerciſe of faith, and in the path of duty, enables the poſſeſſor to follow the Lord fully, to diſregard all obſtructions, to triumph over all oppoſition, and to ſeize the promiſed bleſſings: that all the mercies we receive render our diſtruſt more inexcuſeable: that the ſins of ſome are the temptations of others, and involve both parties in guilt, and puniſhment: that worldly ſorrow is ſeldom better than impatience, and rebellion, and thus worketh death: and that they, who do not exerciſe godly ſorrow in due time, nor obey the call of mercy, muſt weep with bitter unavailing ſorrow, when the ſentence of condemnation is irrevocably paſt.—Finally we may obſerve, that every publick and honourable truſt implies a very heavy, and laborious duty, and that frequently that duty is particularly deſcribed.—Happy is it for themſelves, and for thoſe around them, when men diligently ſearch out, meditate upon, and pray over ſuch paſſages of the word of God, as deſcribe *their* duties, and ſhew them what manner of perſons they ought to be in that ſtation of life, in which the providence of God has placed them: and then in the fear of God, as under his eye, and with reference to the day of judgment, endeavour to regulate their publick and private conduct, according to theſe excellent practical admonitions.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 3. *Ye have compaſſed*, &c.] Here again an almoſt total ſilence is obſerved concerning more than thirty-ſeven years of the time, which they paſſed in the wilderneſs, from the ſentence of condemnation being denounced, until the criminals were nearly all executed. We foot-

foot-breadth; becauſe I have given mount Seir unto Eſau *for* a poſſeſſion.

6 Ye ſhall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat; and ye ſhall alſo buy water of them for money, that ye may drink.

7 For the LORD thy God hath bleſſed thee in all the works of thy hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderneſs: theſe forty years the LORD thy God *hath been* with thee; thou haſt lacked nothing.

8 And when we paſſed by from our brethren the children of Eſau, which dwelt in Seir, through the way of the plain from Elath, and from Ezion-gaber, we turned, and paſſed by the way of the wilderneſs of Moab.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto me, Diſtreſs not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle; for I will not give thee of their land *for* a poſſeſſion, becauſe I have given Ar unto the children of Lot *for* a poſſeſſion.

10 The Emims dwelt therein in times paſt, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakims;

11 Which alſo were accounted giants, as the Anakims, but the Moabites call them Emims.

12 The Horims alſo dwelt in Seir beforetime, but the children of Eſau ſucceeded them, when they had deſtroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their ſtead, as Iſrael did unto the land of his poſſeſſion which the LORD gave unto them.

13 Now riſe up, *ſaid I*, and get you over the brook Zered: and we went over the brook Zered.

14 And the ſpace in which we came from Kadeſh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, *was* thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were waſted out from among the hoſt, as the LORD ſware unto them.

15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was againſt them, to deſtroy them from among the hoſt, until they were conſumed.

16 So it came to paſs, when all the men of war were conſumed and dead from among the people,

17 That the LORD ſpake unto me, ſaying,

18 Thou art to paſs over through Ar, the coaſt of Moab, this day.

19 And *when* thou comeſt nigh over againſt the children of Ammon, diſtreſs them not, nor meddle with them: for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon *any* poſſeſſion, becauſe I have given it unto the children of Lot *for* a poſſeſſion.

20 (That alſo was accounted a land of giants: giants dwelt therein in old time, and the Ammonites call them Zamzummims;

21 A people great and many, and tall as

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may however ſuppoſe that Moſes, and Aaron, and others of the prieſts and Levites were diligently employed in inſtructing the people; and that this diſpenſation was overruled for the preparing of many of them for death, and heaven, whoſe carcaſes fell in the wilderneſs; and alſo for humbling, and proving the ſurvivors, and preparing them for a ſuitable behaviour in the land of Canaan: and that there was no time really loſt, by this tedious delay, as it would appear to them. In the mean time the Canaanites, elated with their firſt ſucceſs, and perceiving their dreaded invaders gone back into, and entangled in the wilderneſs, probably feared no more from that quarter, but grew more inſolent, and daring in wickedneſs, and were ripening apace for deſtruction.

V. 7. *He knoweth*, &c.] The Lord had noticed, guided, and guarded them in all their marches, and counter marches in the wilderneſs; and for forty years had bleſſed them with an abundant ſupply of every needful good: they needed not therefore to covet the poſſeſſions of Edom, having ſuch an all-ſufficient, and tried friend to truſt to: all this is equally applicable to the experience of the believer. Moſes called the Edomites, brethren, (v. 3,) though they would not acknowledge, or act according to that relation; for we muſt do our duty to our relatives, though they fail of theirs towards us: thus Iſrael was taught to forgive *their* enemies; before they were employed to execute vengeance on the enemies of the Lord: and it is obſervable that no mention is here made of the oppoſition of the Edomites; for the Spirit, which ſpake by Moſes, would not needleſsly repeat ſuch grievances, but bury them in oblivion: (*Numb.* c. xx. v. 14—21.)

V. 10. *The Emims*, &c.] This name is interpreted to mean "the terrible ones;" as the word Zamzummim may mean "the crafty ones." All the nations here mentioned ſeem to have been of the poſterity of Ham, that lay under the prophetical curſe of Noah, which was thus executed upon them.

V. 12. *As Iſrael did*, &c.] Some render this, "as Iſrael "ſhall do," &c; whilſt others ſuppoſe that ſome few ſuch additions were made by other inſpired writers in later times.

V. 13. *Brook Zered.*] Or valley, (*Numb.* c. xxi. v. 20.)

V. 20—23.] All theſe ancient hiſtories were introduced for the encouragement of the Iſraelites. If the Lord deſtroyed theſe gigantic people before the poſterity of Lot, and of Eſau: what cauſe had the poſterity of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, his choſen ſervants, and friends, to fear

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the Anakims; but the LORD destroyed them before them, and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead:

22 As he did to the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir, when he destroyed the Horims from before them; and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead, even unto this day:

23 And the Avims, which dwelt in Hazerim, *even* unto Azzah, the Caphtorims, which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them, and dwelt in their stead.)

24 Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land; begin to possess *it*, and contend with him in battle.

25 This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, and the fear of thee, upon the nations *that are* under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee.

26 And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth unto Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace, saying,

27 Let me pass through thy land: I will go along by the high-way, I will neither turn unto the right hand nor to the left.

28 Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat; and give me water for money, that I may drink: only I will pass through on my feet,

29 (As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me;) until I shall pass over Jordan, into the land which the LORD our God giveth us.

30 But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as *appeareth* this day.

31 And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee: begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land.

32 Then Sihon came out against us, he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz.

33 And the LORD our God delivered him before us, and we smote him, and his sons, and all his people.

34 And we took all his cities at that time, and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city; we left none to remain:

35 Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves, and the spoil of the cities which we took.

36 From Aroer, which *is* by the brink of

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the Anakims, though strong, or the Canaanites, though numerous; when they acted by his special commission, had the security of success in his promise, and the pledge of future victory in his presence amongst them, and the wonders, which he had already wrought for them; and when they were the only nation of worshippers of the Lord, in the ordinances of his institution, that were to be found on earth? Nothing could possibly hurt them but the unbelief and disobedience, which had brought down the wrath of the Lord upon their fathers.

V. 24 *Begin to possess*, &c.] Hitherto they had possessed neither lands, nor cities, but had been supported by miracle as wanderers in the waste desart: but now they were to begin to have possessions of houses, and estates, and to subsist thereon as other people: the word "*it*," is not in the original, and might well be spared out of the translation.

V. 26. *And I sent*, &c.] (*See notes*, &c. *Numb.* c. xxi. v. 21—35.) The Lord's secret purposes cannot possibly be either the rule, or motive of our conduct: and therefore can have no influence upon the innocence, or criminality of our actions. Whatever the Lord's intentions, or intimations to Israel were, Sihon knowing nothing of them, could not be induced *by them*, but by his own pride, obstinacy, and presumption, to refuse the proposal of peace, which was made him; and therefore must attribute all the consequences to his own misconduct: for the proposal was made in sincerity; and had he acceded to it, he had doubtless been spared; but the Lord for wise, and righteous reasons, was pleased to leave him to himself, well knowing what the consequence would be. And thus this message tended to discover the wretchedness of his disposition, and to illustrate the justice of God in the destruction of so haughty, and determined an enemy of himself, and of his people. All this tends to elucidate the proposals of the gospel salvation to sinners, who yet are left to the pride and ungodliness of their own hearts, and refuse such great salvation to their own deeper condemnation.

V. 29. *As the children of Esau*, &c.] Hence it appears that the Edomites and the Moabites sold them victuals, &c. though they consented not to their passage through their country; and were otherwise inimical to them.

V. 30.] Moses was accustomed to view things in this light, and to speak of them in this language; for the proper meaning of which the reader must be referred to the notes, and practical observations upon the history of Pharaoh, from the 1st to the 16th chapter of Exodus inclusive.

V. 34.] (*See note Numb.* c. xxxi. v. 2.)

the river of Arnon, and *from* the city that *is* by the river, even unto Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; the LORD our God delivered all unto us:

37 Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not, *nor* unto any place of the river Jabbok, nor unto the cities in the mountains, nor unto whatsoever the LORD our God forbade us.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. Moses' memorial of Israel's victory over Og, and the distribution of his kingdom, with that of Sihon, v. 1—20. 2d. His charge to Joshua, his prayer, and the Lord's refusal to grant it, v. 23—29.

THEN we turned, and went up the way to Bashan; and Og the king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei.

2 And the LORD said unto me, Fear him not: for I will deliver him, and all his people, and his land, into thy hand; and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon.

3 So the LORD our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people: and we smote him, until none was left to him remaining.

4 And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we took not from them, threescore cities, all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

5 All these cities *were* fenced with high walls, gates, and bars, beside unwalled towns a great many.

6 And we utterly destroyed them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, utterly destroying

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The servants of God, whilst they despise worldly possessions in comparison of a treasure in heaven, and often live and die poor, are the only persons who lay up for, and leave to their children durable riches, in those manifold blessings, which the Lord bestows on their posterity for their sake. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and he dispossesses nations at pleasure in perfect justice, and absolute sovereignty, and irresistible power, and gives it to whom he pleases: but, when he gives no express commission, none can plead his grant in excuse for the excesses, which, in their ambition, rapacity, or revenge, they commit, whilst *unwittingly* they fulfil his secret purposes. When nations, or individuals are ripe for destruction, having filled up the measure of their iniquity, the Lord in awful judgment gives them up to final and total obduracy; and their desperate wickedness both occasions their ruin, and manifests his righteousness therein: and when this is the case, the wisest are miserably infatuated, and the boldest speedily intimidated; they tremble, and are in anguish, and so perish, as instructive examples to the survivors. But calling our attention off from these enemies of the Lord, to reflect upon his dealings with his people Israel, we are led to meditate upon our years spent in vanity, through our transgressions and the Lord's indignation: a succession of uninteresting events and changes, of unprofitable employments and pursuits, and of disappointed expectations, and unsatisfying enjoyments, wear out the life of man, and bring one generation after another to the grave. And indeed ever since the sentence was passed upon offending man, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," the hand of the Lord hath been against us to destroy us, until we are consumed: nor can wisdom, learning, authority, wealth, courage, vigour of constitution, or eminence of reputation, procure any exemption, or respite in this universal execution: nay even faith and piety plead in vain for another passage to the heavenly felicity: (2 *Cor.* c. v. ver. 2—4.) thus in every thing, what the mouth of the Lord hath spoken, his hand is engaged to perform. Wretched therefore are they, who in impenitency, and unbelief, abide, and die under the incumbent weight of that wrath from heaven, which is revealed against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men in a future state! But happy they, "whom "Jesus hath delivered from the wrath to come," and to whom he hath given "the earnest of his Spirit in their "hearts." All things are their's: all the promises of God belong to them, and are ratified by covenant, and by oath: His arm is engaged on their behalf, to perform them all: "he knows," he guides, guards, and approves their path, whilst "walking through this great wilderness;" for the twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, or even eighty years of their past lives, they have lacked nothing, but have had all, with a peculiar blessing. The Lord is their portion, nor need they envy the prosperity, or covet the possession of any worldling: he, who hath prepared for them an incorruptible inheritance, and taught them in the first place to seek it, will provide for them all that is needful, and profitable by the way. They have only to submit to the Lord's disposal; to depend on, and obey him; to abstain from what he forbids, and deny themselves when he requires it in his providence, or by his precept: to receive what he gives with thankfulness, and to use it with moderation: to endeavour to glorify him and adorn their profession, by an upright, generous, disinterested, and forgiving, blameless deportment, not injurious to their enemies, nor needlessly burdensome to their friends; and doing to all men, as they would, that they should do unto them. Persevering in this course, the vanity of the world cannot prevent their comfort, nor can its opposition, and tribulation, interrupt the inward serenity of their minds: their inheritance cannot be affected by the revolutions of kingdoms, or the mutability of earthly possessions; death, with all its terrors, and agonies, cannot hurt, and need not alarm them; all will combine in fitting them for, giving them the anticipation, and introducing them to the enjoyment of those pleasures, which never satiate, and never will end. May this salvation, O Lord, be ours!

the men, women, and children, of every city.

7 But all the cattle, and the ſpoil of the cities, we took for a prey to ourſelves.

8 And we took at that time out of the hand of the two kings of the Amorites, the land that was on this ſide Jordan, from the river of Arnon unto mount Hermon;

9 (*Which* Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion; and the Amorites call it Shenir;)

10 All the cities of the plain, and all Gilead, and all Baſhan, unto Salchah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Baſhan:

11 For only Og king of Baſhan remained of the remnant of giants; behold, his bedſtead *was* a bedſtead of iron: *is* it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits *was* the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.

12 And this land *which* we poſſeſſed at that time, from Aroer, which *is* by the river Arnon, and half mount Gilead, and the cities thereof, gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites.

13 And the reſt of Gilead, and all Baſhan, *being* the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manaſſeh; all the region of Argob, with all Baſhan, which was called The land of giants.

14 Jair the ſon of Manaſſeh took all the country of Argob, unto the coaſts of Geſhuri, and Maachathi, and called them after his own name, Baſhan-havoth-jair, unto this day.

15 And I gave Gilead unto Machir.

16 And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites, I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon, half the valley, and the border, even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon;

17 The plain alſo, and Jordan, and the coaſt *thereof*, from Chinnereth even unto the ſea of the plain, *even* the ſalt-ſea, under Aſhdoth-piſgah eaſtward.

18 And I commanded you at that time, ſaying, The LORD your God hath given you this land to poſſeſs it: ye ſhall paſs over armed before your brethren the children of Iſrael, all *that are* meet for the war.

19 But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle, (*for* I know that ye have much cattle,) ſhall abide in your cities which I have given you.

20 Until the LORD have given reſt unto your brethren, as well as unto you, and *until* they alſo poſſeſs the land which the LORD your God hath given them beyond Jordan: and *then* ſhall ye return every man unto his poſſeſſion which I have given you.

21 And I commanded Joſhua at that time, ſaying, Thine eyes have ſeen all that the LORD your God hath done unto theſe two kings: ſo ſhall the LORD do unto all the kingdoms whither thou paſſeſt.

22 Ye ſhall not fear them: for the LORD your God he ſhall fight for you.

23 And I beſought the LORD at that time, ſaying,

24 O LORD God, thou haſt begun to ſhew thy ſervant thy greatneſs, and thy mighty hand: for what god *is there* in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?

25 I pray thee let me go over and ſee the good land that *is* beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.

26 But the LORD was wroth with me for

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 11. *Only Og remained*, &c.] It appears from this, that Og was deſcended from a race of giants, of larger ſtature than even the Anakims, who ſo terrified the Iſraelites.—If his bedſtead of iron was intended for uſe, and not for oſtentation, his bulk muſt have been enormous; as it was near five yards long, and above two broad. By ſome means or other this bedſtead was carried to Rabbath, and there preſerved as a monument of his ſtature, and of Iſrael's victory; for neither his vaſt ſtrength, nor his numerous fortified cities could ſecure him againſt God, who fought for his people.—This race of giants was ſoon extinct; but others remained within the land of Canaan; of whom we ſhall read in the hiſtory of David.

V. 14. *Baſhan-havoth-jair*, &c.] That is, Baſhan, the towns, or villages of Jair. (*See notes, &c. Num.* c. xxxii.)

V. 23—26.] This prayer of Moſes aroſe from a high valuation of the promiſed land, and an earneſt deſire of witneſſing the power and faithfulneſs of the Lord, in putting the Iſraelites in poſſeſſion of it, by the deſtruction of their enemies. The Lord had not irrevocably confirmed the ſentence with an oath, and Moſes had prevailed in behalf of Iſrael more than once in ſimilar circumſtances: (*ſee* 2 *Sam.* c. xii. v. 14—18. *Iſai.* c. xxxviii. v. 1—15.) there appears not to have been any thing diſpleaſing to the Lord in his requeſt; though, for an example to Iſrael, he

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your ſakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD ſaid unto me, Let it ſuffice thee; ſpeak no more unto me of this matter.

27 Get thee up unto the top of Piſgah, and lift up thine eyes weſtward, and northward, and ſouthward, and eaſtward, and behold *it* with thine eyes: for thou ſhalt not go over this Jordan.

28 But charge Joſhua, and encourage him, and ſtrengthen him; for he ſhall go over before this people, and he ſhall cauſe them to inherit the land which thou ſhalt ſee.

29 So we abode in the valley over againſt Beth-peor.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1ſt. The application of the preceding diſcourſe, in practical inſtructions, &c. v. 1—40. 2d. The appointment of three cities of refuge, eaſt of Jordan, v. 41—43. 3d. The introduction to the diſcourſe of the following chapters, v. 44—49.

NOW therefore hearken, O Iſrael, unto the ſtatutes, and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and poſſeſs the land which

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did not pleaſe to grant it: but doubtleſs he brought Moſes to acquieſce in the refuſal. Thus he prevailed for Iſrael, but for himſelf he could not prevail; which made him the more proper type of Chriſt, "who ſaved others, himſelf he "could not ſave," that is conſiſtent with his deſign of ſaving others: and had the Jews remembered this circumſtance concerning Moſes, they could not well have made the other a matter of reviling to Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing more haſtens the deſtruction of ſinners, than overlooking thoſe examples of the Lord's juſtice, which are ſet before them for their warning; and ruſhing forward in the ſame ſteps, which have brought others to a miſerable end.—All thoſe advantages, with which men are pleaſed, of which they are vain, and on which they depend, eventually conduce to their more ſpeedy ruin, and deeper condemnation, whenever they increaſe their pride, ſecurity, and boldneſs in tranſgreſſion: ſo far are riches, power, worldly wiſdom, and courage from profiting their ungodly poſſeſſors! No arm can be ſtrong when the conteſt is againſt the Almighty; and he that aſſaults his church wages war againſt him: in this caſe eſpecially "the battle "is not to the ſtrong, nor the race to the ſwift:" his moſt inſolent, and preſumptuous enemies will ſoon lie down in deſpair; and his feebleſt, and moſt timid friends have no cauſe to fear: his promiſe ſecures ſucceſs in every undertaking, to which he commands them; and not only victory over, but abundant advantage from every foe, that aſſaults them; "the wealth of the ſinner being laid up for the "juſt." Every experience of the Lord's faithfulneſs is a ſure pledge of further mercies, and ere long they ſhall all be made more than conquerors, and enter upon the full poſſeſſion of their everlaſting reſt.—"This is the heritage "of the ſervants of the Lord, and their righteouſneſs is of "me, ſaith the Lord." (*Iſai.* c. liv. ver. 17.) But are we of that number? Do we ſeek reconciliation unto God through Jeſus Chriſt, as the one thing needful? Do we truſt in his grace, plead his promiſes, liſten to his voice, and keep his commandments? If ſo, all goes right, and all will end glorioufly. But unbelief ſecludes from heaven: a dead inactive faith deceives, and ruins thouſands: and even the ſins of believers are chaſtened with ſharp trials, with the withholding of wonted comforts, and the refuſal of their prayers for ſuch mercies, as are not immediately connected with ſalvation. If this ſhould be our caſe, let us kiſs the rod, and accept of, and ſeek to profit by our chaſtening. And if we have the earneſts, and proſpects of heaven; let that ſuffice us, let us acquieſce in the Lord's will, and ſpeak no more to him of other matters, which he ſees good to refuſe us. When we are about to leave the world, the ſame principle, which hath before induced us to contribute, as we were able to promote the cauſe of God, and the good of his church, will diſpoſe us to rejoice in the proſpect of the ſame good work being carried on by other, and more honoured inſtruments; and will make us wiſh to cloſe our eyes exhorting and encouraging our ſurvivors to be valiant for the truth; aſſured that the Lord will fight for them, and make them ſucceſsful.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *Now therefore*, &c.] The power, and love of God to Iſrael, as delineated in the foregoing recapitulation of their hiſtory, are in this chapter improved as the ground, and reaſon of a variety of practical admonitions, and exhortations. The abſtract of the argument may be thus ſtated: as the Lord hath manifeſted himſelf ſo able, and willing, to deliver, protect, and bleſs you; take heed that you do not forfeit his favour by diſobedience; but from gratitude for paſt mercies, and in order to ſecure the continuance of his favour, make it your conſtant ſtudy and care to worſhip him alone, to depend on his promiſe, and providence, to ſubmit to his authority; as a nation governed by his judgments, and as individuals walking in all his ordinances, and commandments: this is your only true wiſdom, this will certainly advance you to greatneſs, proſperity, and reputation, and ſecure your felicity; whereas the contrary conduct will ſurely iſſue in miſery, and ruin. This ſeems the way, in which theſe practical inſtructions are inferred from the preceding hiſtorical memorials; which are enforced by every argument, and upon every motive imaginable: and although there is much reference to their national covenant, yet all may *evangelically be accommodated* to the caſe of thoſe, who live under the goſpel diſpenſation; and to that of true Chriſtians: whilſt they directly ſuit the caſe of nations favoured with the light of revelation.

That ye may live, &c.] The Iſraelites had witneſſed many inſtances, in which diſobedience was puniſhed with immediate death. On that account their fathers had been doomed to die in the wilderneſs; nor could they expect to poſſeſs Canaan, if they were not obedient.—Our obedience as individuals cannot merit ſalvation; but it is the only evidence that we are partakers of the gift of God, which is

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the LORD God of your fathers giveth you.

2 Ye ſhall not add unto the word which I command you, neither ſhall ye diminiſh *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you.

3 Your eyes have ſeen what the LORD did becauſe of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath deſtroyed them from among you.

4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day.

5 Behold I have taught you ſtatutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye ſhould do ſo in the land whither ye go to poſſeſs it.

6 Keep therefore, and do *them*; for this *is* your wiſdom and your underſtanding in the ſight of the nations, which ſhall hear all theſe ſtatutes, and ſay, Surely this great nation *is* a wiſe and underſtanding people.

7 For what nation *is there ſo* great, who *hath* God *ſo* nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for?*

8 And what nation *is there ſo* great, that hath ſtatutes and judgments *ſo* righteous, as all this law which I ſet before you this day?

9 Only take heed to thyſelf, and keep thy ſoul diligently, leſt thou forget the things which thine eyes have ſeen, and leſt they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life; but teach them thy ſons, and thy ſons' ſons:

10 *Specially* the day that thou ſtoodeſt before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD ſaid unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they ſhall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.

11 And ye came near, and ſtood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire unto the midſt of heaven, with darkneſs, clouds, and thick darkneſs.

12 And the LORD ſpake unto you out of the midſt of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but ſaw no ſimilitude; only *ye heard* a voice.

13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of ſtone.

14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you ſtatutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to poſſeſs it.

15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourſelves, (for ye ſaw no manner of ſimilitude on the day *that* the LORD ſpake unto you in Horeb out of the midſt of the fire,)

16 Leſt ye corrupt *yourſelves*, and make you a graven image, the ſimilitude of any figure, the likeneſs of male or female;

17 The likeneſs of any beaſt that *is* on the earth, the likeneſs of any winged fowl that flieth in the air;

18 The likeneſs of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeneſs of any fiſh that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:

19 And leſt thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou ſeeſt the ſun, and

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eternal life through Jeſus Chriſt. And diſobedience both deſerves, and procures eternal deſtruction to thoſe, who perſevere therein.

V. 2. *Ye ſhall not add*, &c.] To add any thing to the commands of God, as obligatory upon the conſcience, or an eſſential part of religion, ſeems to charge him with an overſight, and is as affronting to his wiſdom; as to diminiſh any thing from it, is to his authority, and goodneſs. (*Rev.* c. xxii. v. 18, 19.)

V. 3, 4.] (*See Num.* c. xxv.) Hence it appears that the peſtilence, as well as the ſword of the magiſtrate, ſingled out the guilty perſons, and ſpared the reſt: (*Pſalm* xci. v. 6—8.)

V. 5. *Behold I have*, &c.] The people had been ever ready to conclude that Moſes had taught them by his own authority; but he here at the cloſe of his life ſolemnly aſſures them, that he had taught them exactly as the Lord had taught him, neither more, or leſs, or otherwiſe.

V. 13. *This covenant*, &c.] (*See notes, &c. Exod.* c. xix.—xx.) The ten commandments were the foundation of their national covenant, as well as of the covenant of works, though not exactly in the ſame manner: and the writing of them in the heart, by creating a correſpondent judgment, and diſpoſition of mind, forms the evidence, that the covenant of grace is ratified with us, through faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

V. 14. *To teach you*, &c.] This relates to the judicial and ceremonial laws before commented upon, as the former verſes referred to the ten commandments.

V. 19. *Shouldeſt be driven*, &c.] The propenſity of human nature to idolatry, the artifice of ſatan, and the plauſibility of this practice, would concur to drive them into it. All idolatry is extremely irrational; for it is moſt abſurd to make creatures of God his rivals, and that the

the moon, and the ſtars, *even* all the hoſt of heaven, ſhouldeſt be driven to worſhip them, and ſerve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye are* this day.

21 Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your ſakes, and ſware that I ſhould not go over Jordan, and that I ſhould not go in unto that good land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

22 But I muſt die in this land, I muſt not go over Jordan: but ye ſhall go over, and poſſeſs that good land.

23 Take heed unto yourſelves, leſt ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeneſs of any *thing* which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

24 For the LORD thy God *is* a conſuming fire, *even* a jealous God.

25 When thou ſhalt beget children, and childrens children, and ſhalt have remained long in the land, and ſhall corrupt *yourſelves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeneſs of any *thing*, and ſhall do evil in the ſight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger;

26 I call heaven and earth to witneſs againſt you this day, that ye ſhall ſoon utterly periſh from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to poſſeſs it; ye ſhall not prolong *your* days upon it, but ſhall utterly be deſtroyed.

27 And the LORD ſhall ſcatter you among the nations, and ye ſhall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD ſhall lead you.

28 And there ye ſhall ſerve gods, the work of mens hands, wood and ſtone, which neither ſee, nor hear, nor eat, nor ſmell.

29 But if from thence thou ſhalt ſeek the LORD thy God, thou ſhalt find *him*, if thou ſeek him with all thy heart, and with all thy ſoul.

30 When thou art in tribulation, and all theſe things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and ſhalt be obedient unto his voice.

31 (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God,) he will not forſake thee, neither deſtroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he ſware unto them.

32 For aſk now of the days that are paſt, which were before thee, ſince the day that God created man upon the earth, and *aſk* from the one ſide of heaven unto the other, whether there had been *any ſuch thing* as this great thing *is*, or hath been heard like it?

33 Did *ever* people hear the voice of God ſpeaking out of the midſt of the fire, as thou haſt heard, and live?

34 Or hath God aſſayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midſt of *another* nation, by temptations, by ſigns, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a ſtretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

35 Unto thee it was ſhewed, that thou mighteſt know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none elſe beſides him.

36 Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might inſtruct thee; and

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inſtruments of his bounty ſhould rob him of his glory: but the worſhip of thoſe ſplendid, and uſeful luminaries is more plauſible, and eaſier to be accounted for, and therefore more carefully to be guarded againſt, than any other. Let any one carefully conſider the multiplied and varied expreſſions of theſe verſes, and then form his judgment of, and bring in his verdict reſpecting the uſe of images in the church of Rome.

V. 20. *Iron furnace*, &c.] This ſtrong expreſſion forcibly marks the miſery, which they endured, and the danger, to which they were expoſed, in the Egyptian bondage.—Thence they were brought forth to be "unto the Lord a people of inheritance;" for all the revenue of worſhip, obedience, and praiſe, which the Lord receives from this lower world, is paid him by his redeemed people; by whom alone he is loved, in whom alone he delights, and for whoſe ſake the frame of nature is preſerved.

V. 28.] Though the Jews in their preſent diſperſion do not worſhip images; yet they are evidently ignorant of the God of the Bible; "for he that honoureth not the Son, "honoureth not the Father, that ſent him:" and many expreſſions lead us to conclude that this prophecy looks forward to preſent, and even future times.

V. 34. *By temptations*, &c.] The commands and the

upon earth he ſhewed thee his great fire, and thou heardeſt his words out of the midſt of the fire.

37 And becauſe he loved thy fathers, therefore he choſe their ſeed after them, and brought thee out in his ſight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

38 To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou *art*, to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.

39 Know therefore this day, and conſider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is* none elſe.

40 Thou ſhalt keep therefore his ſtatutes and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayeſt prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.

41 Then Moſes ſevered three cities on this ſide Jordan toward the ſun-riſing;

42 That the ſlayer might flee thither, which ſhould kill his neighbour unawares, and hated him not in times paſt; and that, fleeing unto one of theſe cities, he might live:

43 *Namely*, Bezer in the wilderneſs, in the plain country of the Reubenites; and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites; and Golan in Baſhan of the Manaſſites.

44 And this *is* the law which Moſes ſet before the children of Iſrael:

45 Theſe *are* the teſtimonies, and the ſtatutes, and the judgments, which Moſes ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, after they came forth out of Egypt;

46 On this ſide Jordan, in the valley over againſt Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heſhbon, whom Moſes and the children of Iſrael ſmote, after they were come forth out of Egypt:

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judgments, and reſpites, with which Pharaoh was required to let Iſrael go, made trial of his temper, and diſcovered his unwillingneſs to obey, and his inability to reſiſt.

V. 40.] Here the firſt diſcourſe of this book is concluded: and the appointment of the cities of the refuge in the next verſes has no viſible connexion with what goes before, or what follows: but probably Moſes appointed them before he delivered his next diſcourſe, that he might ſhew them how that matter was to be regulated: and thus he loſt no part of his ſhort remaining time, but filled up the whole with ſpeaking, or acting for the good of the people.

V. 44. *Law*, &c.] *(See note*, c. i. v. 5.) This appears rather an introduction to the following diſcourſe, than any thing annexed to the foregoing. Moſes, having improved practically ſome portions of their hiſtory; proceeded to repeat and enforce the laws, which he had before delivered, with ſome additions and explanations, beginning with the ten commandments.

V. 46. *Beth-peor.*] Or the houſe of Peor; probably a temple of Baal-peor was full in their view, whilſt Moſes was preſſing upon them the worſhip of God alone; and perhaps that very temple, where ſo many had ſinned to their own deſtruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every inſtance, general, and particular, of the Lord's kindneſs to us, forms a concluſive argument for our obedience to his commandments; and will either have this effect upon us, or will teſtify againſt us, and enhance our final condemnation. And indeed the commandments themſelves are all ſo reaſonable, equitable, and ſalutary, that if we were not blinded and infatuated by ſatan, a wiſe regard to our own intereſt would induce us to obedience: for they are only righteous, and kind rules, which the wiſe Creator hath affectionately preſcribed to his rational creatures; by attending unto which, they may ſecure their own felicity, and conduce to that of each other, whilſt they render him the glory which belongs unto him. None of them can be broken without injuring ourſelves, and others, as well as diſhonouring God: and a peaceful conſcience, a tranquil mind, well regulated paſſions and appetites, a ſweet ſenſe of the divine favour, an unſpeakable pleaſure in his ways, and complete peace, harmony, and love amongſt each other; together with health of body, and vigour of mind, muſt have been the conſequence of perfect obedience thereto. And even in that meaſure wherein believers are now enabled to obey them; that obedience invariably produces the ſame effects, in proportion to the degree, and conſtancy, with which it is performed. And the caſe is the ſame with nations, as with individuals. They therefore are, and will one day appear to be, the only wiſe and underſtanding people, (however now derided as fools,) who make the law of God the rule of their whole conduct, without adding to, or diminiſhing from it: and the ſame light, which diſcovers *their* wiſdom, will detect the folly and madneſs of thoſe boaſted pretenders to ſuperior underſtanding, who reject the divine teſtimony, and diſregard the divine authority; namely, that of the day of judgment, and of eternity: then it will be undeniably evident that true religion is but another name for wiſdom, greatneſs, honour, pleaſure, and felicity. And even in this world experience decides, that they, who forſake the Lord, plunge themſelves into many miſeries, and oft into ſudden deſtruction, which thoſe eſcape, who cleave unto him: and notwithſtanding ſelf-denial, and perſecutions, the temporal advantages of true religion, though not ſo ſhewy, are vaſtly more ſolid, and ſatisfactory, than the moſt ſplendid acqui-

47 And

47 And they poſſeſſed his land, and the land of Og king of Baſhan, two kings of the Amorites, which *were* on this ſide Jordan, toward the ſun-riſing;

48 From Aroer, which *is* by the bank of the river Arnon, even unto mount Sion, which *is* Hermon,

49 And all the plain on this ſide Jordan eaſtward, even unto the ſea of the plain, under the ſprings of Piſgah.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. The ten commandments repeated by Moſes to the people, with an introduction, and ſome variations, v. 1—21. *2d. A relation of what paſſed in conſequence of their being delivered from mount Sinai, and a concluding exhortation, v.* 22—33.

AND Moſes called all Iſrael, and ſaid unto them, Hear, O Iſrael, the ſtatutes and judgments which I ſpeak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep and do them.

2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day.

ſitions of proſperous wickedneſs; without bringing into the account the comforts of the Holy Ghoſt and the hope of glory, on the one hand; or the remorſe and terrors which are more ſenſibly felt, than honeſtly acknowledged, on the other hand: For godlineſs hath both the promiſe of this life, and of that which is to come. But if we would ſecure ſuch advantages, with ſuch hearts as ours are, in ſuch a world as this, and in the midſt of ſo many temptations, and enemies, as ſurround us: we muſt apply our minds ſeriouſly, both "to know, and to conſider" the works, and the word of God: we muſt "take great heed "unto ourſelves, and keep our ſouls diligently, leſt the good "impreſſions, that are excited, depart out of our hearts, "without producing any abiding effects;" (*Heb.* c. ii. v. 1.) we muſt watch, and pray always, that we may not be entangled by thoſe ſnares, which are ſtrewed in every place: we muſt keep a ſtrict, and conſtant guard upon our imagination, affections, ſenſes, and appetites; upon every one of them: our minds muſt be armed with every imaginable motive, which can encourage our hopes, or excite our fears, or influence our love, or hatred; that in patience, courage, and ſelf-denial, we may be prepared for labour, ſufferings, and the croſs, in whatever form it is laid in our way.—All this, and much more, muſt be attended to, if we would walk ſafely, and comfortable with God, through this world to glory.—But building upon Chriſt as our foundation, by faith in his blood; and drawing from his fulneſs by daily earneſt prayer, wiſdom, ſtrength, and grace, all this will become practicable, and pleaſant to our ſouls.—Nothing is more fundamentally neceſſary in this important concern, than juſt, and proper apprehenſions of the perfections of God; and univerſal hiſtory reminds us of man's ſtrange propenſity to idolatry.—We muſt not therefore truſt to our vain reaſonings, nor indulge our groſs imaginations; but, by faith exerciſed upon the divine teſtimony, muſt obtain our knowledge of God from revelation alone; particularly attending to the diſplays, which he hath *made*, of his power, juſtice, vengeance, goodneſs, mercy, and truth, in the various diſpenſations therein recorded.—We ought alſo carefully to ſtudy the relations, and obligations, in which we ſtand to him; and his law, and that worſhip which he requires: we ſhould endeavour to underſtand our own ſituation as ſinners, under a diſpenſation of mercy; and the nature of that gracious covenant, to which we are invited to accede. Therein greater things are ſhewn us, than ever Iſrael ſaw from mount Sinai; greater mercies are conferred on us, than they experienced in Egypt, in the wilderneſs, or in Canaan: one ſpeaks to us of infinitely greater dignity than Moſes, who for our ſakes, and for our ſins, bare the anger of the Lord in our ſtead upon the croſs; and pleads with us by his dying love, not with diſplays of fiery terror, but with mild accents of mercy, not to neglect ſuch great ſalvation.—Nay, our God is ſo merciful, that though we have long rebelled, yet if at laſt we ſeek him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, and turn to him, and become obedient to his voice, (fleeing for refuge to the hope ſet before us,) he will yet pardon us, and ratify to us all the bleſſings of the everlaſting covenant.—But apoſtles, prophets, and miniſters will teſtify againſt us; yea heaven, and earth alſo, if we refuſe him that ſpeaketh to us. Even our natural affection to our children, may form an additional motive to obedience; for when the Lord loves the parent, he oft chuſes, and bleſſes their children after them; eſpecially when they diligently inſtruct them in the ſame good way. (*Gen.* c. xviii. v. 19.) Thus may we ſeek an entail of heavenly bleſſings upon our lateſt poſterity: and both parents, and miniſters may learn profitably from Moſes, to inſtruct their children, and people with fervour, and faithfulneſs even to the cloſe of their lives, all that the Lord had taught them, with a mixture of firmneſs, affection, and gravity, ſuited to ſuch important occaſions. And finally, as the preſent diſperſion of the Jews ſhews the chapter before us to be a prophecy, as well as a ſermon: let us not forget to pray for them, that in their tribulation, even now in theſe latter days, they may ſeek the Lord, and be reinſtated in the privileges of the covenant, that was made with their fathers.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 3. *But with us*, &c.] The Sinai covenant was different from that made with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, their fathers; (*Gal.* c. iii. v. 17:) that was chiefly perſonal, and related mainly to ſpiritual bleſſings: this was national, and related eſpecially to their poſſeſſion of, and continuance in the promiſed land. But this expreſſion may alſo mean that the covenant made at Horeb was as obligatory upon that generation, whom Moſes then addreſſed, as it was upon thoſe, who were immediately preſent, when the law was delivered, and the covenant ratified; (*Exod.* c. xxiv.) For they were a collective body,

4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire,

5 (I ſtood between the LORD and you at that time, to ſhew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reaſon of the fire, and went not up into the mount,) ſaying,

6 I *am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage.

7 Thou ſhalt have none other gods before me.

8 Thou ſhalt not make thee *any* graven image, *or* any likeneſs *of any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:

9 Thou ſhalt not bow down thyſelf unto them, nor ſerve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, viſiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me,

10 And ſhewing mercy unto thouſands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

11 Thou ſhalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltleſs that taketh his name in vain.

12 Keep the ſabbath-day to ſanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

13 Six days thou ſhalt labour, and do all thy work:

14 But the ſeventh day *is* the ſabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou ſhalt not do any work, thou, nor thy ſon, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-ſervant, nor thy maid-ſervant, nor thine ox, nor thine aſs, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy ſtranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy man-ſervant and thy maid-ſervant may reſt as well as thou.

15 And remember that thou waſt a ſervant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand, and by a ſtretched-out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the ſabbath-day.

16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee: that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

17 Thou ſhalt not kill.

18 Neither ſhalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither ſhalt thou ſteal.

incorporated by charter, the obligations, and advantages of which deſcended to the ſucceſſors of thoſe, to whom it was at firſt conceded: (*ſee note*, *Exod.* c. xix. v. 5:) Thus all, who are favoured with the light of revelation, are bound to ſubmit to it, equally with thoſe, to whom it was firſt given; though they behold not the miracles, with which it was at firſt authenticated: for there are other evidences, external, and internal, of it's divine authority, which gather force by revolving ages; as they perceive, who impartially, and diligently conſider them. On the other hand, they who ſubmit to, and are willing to be ſaved, and ruled according to that revelation, have equal benefits, with thoſe, to whom it was firſt communicated: yea eſpecial bleſſings are pronounced upon thoſe, "who "have not ſeen, and yet have believed." Some indeed of theſe Iſraelites had been preſent at the giving of the law, though under age; but many of them were at that time unborn, and many more in their infancy and childhood: Yet the covenant was made with their fathers in behalf of them, as well as of themſelves.

V. 14, 15. *That thy man-ſervant*, &c.] The original reaſon for hallowing the ſabbath, taken from God's reſting from the work of creation on the ſeventh day, is not here mentioned: for though this muſt ever remain valid, yet it is not the only one: the Iſraelites were required to remember their oppreſſed and wretched eſtate in Egypt, and their wonderful deliverance: and whilſt they worſhipped and were thankful to their great, and gracious deliverer; they were commanded humanely to allow reſpite from labour to their ſlaves; and piouſly to afford them an opportunity of becoming acquainted with, and worſhipping Jehovah, in his ordinances; from which advantages they themſelves had been cruelly and impiouſly reſtricted by their Egyptian oppreſſors. Thus, whilſt the *judicial* law ſuppoſed the *exiſtence of ſlavery* amongſt the Jews; (*ſee note*, *Exod.* c. xxi. v. 2;) theſe and ſimilar regulations, when duly complied with, were calculated to convert the ſlavery of the *heathens* in Iſrael, into a bleſſing to their ſouls, by bringing them under the means of grace, and putting them in the way of obtaining all the privileges of God's peculiar people. And amidſt the enormities of modern ſlavery, in the appendages of this kingdom, if it could truly be ſaid, that all the ſlaves reſted from all labour on the Lord's day, and were allowed, and required to keep it holy, and were properly inſtructed thereon, in the nature of *genuine Chriſtianity*, ſo as to afford them an adequate, and general opportunity of being made partakers of it's bleſſings; it would plead more powerfully for it's being ſuffered to exiſt, than all other reaſons, which have been urged in it's favour: Though even that could never juſtify ſo flagrant a violation of the law of love. But to return from this digreſſion: the redemption of Chriſt forms now to us another additional reaſon of, and employment for the ſabbath, of which the foregoing was typical. There are ſeveral other verbal variations in the commandments as here recited; but the thing ſignified is the ſame; and the reader muſt be referred to the notes, &c. on *Exodus*, c. xx.

20 Neither

20 Neither ſhalt thou bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.

21 Neither ſhalt thou deſire thy neighbour's wife, neither ſhalt thou covet thy neighbour's houſe, his field, or his man-ſervant, or his maid-ſervant, his ox, or his aſs, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour's.

22 Theſe words the LORD ſpake unto all your aſſembly in the mount out of the midſt of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkneſs, with a great voice; and he added no more: and he wrote them in two tables of ſtone, and delivered them unto me.

23 And it came to paſs, when ye heard the voice out of the midſt of the darkneſs, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, *even* all the heads of your tribes, and your elders,

24 And ye ſaid, Behold, the LORD our God hath ſhewed us his glory, and his greatneſs, and we have heard his voice out of the midſt of the fire: we have ſeen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

25 Now therefore why ſhould we die? for this great fire will conſume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we ſhall die.

26 For who *is there of* all fleſh, that hath heard the voice of the living God ſpeaking out of the midſt of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God ſhall ſay; and ſpeak thou unto us all that the LORD our God ſhall ſpeak unto thee, and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.

28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye ſpake unto me; and the LORD ſaid unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have ſpoken unto thee: they have well ſaid all that they have ſpoken.

29 O that there was ſuch an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

30 Go ſay to them, Get you into your tents again.

31 But as for thee, ſtand thou here by me, and I will ſpeak unto thee all the commandments, and the ſtatutes, and the judgments, which thou ſhalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to poſſeſs it.

32 Ye ſhall obſerve to do therefore as the

V. 28. *They have well ſaid*, &c.] When the people were alarmed with the terror of deſtruction from the voice of God, ſpeaking from mount Sinai; and were conſcious that they could not *thus* approach him, but deſired a mediator, by whom God might ſpeak to them, and promiſed to hear, and obey that mediator, "they ſaid well;" and had they properly underſtood their own requeſt, and been ſuitably, and abidingly ſo diſpoſed, all would have gone on, and terminated well. But in the following verſe the Lord in very affecting language ſuggeſts, that it was not ſo; but that he ſaw, that though they were alarmed, and convinced, they were not duly humbled, or diſpoſed either to receive in faith the promiſed Mediator, whom Moſes typified; nor perſeveringly to walk in the ways of holy obedience. The language ſhews us what God approves, delights in, and accepts, as honourable to his name, ſuitable to his character, and profitable to his creatures: and this way of ſpeaking, after the manner of men, is extremely encouraging to thoſe, who are humbly deſirous of the ſalvation of the goſpel, and feel a willingneſs in their hearts to obey the commands of God, and are taught to pray for grace to enable them ſo to do: as it evinces the Lord's readineſs to aſſiſt, and accept thoſe, who are brought to this diſpoſition: and ſhews that he doth not delight in puniſhment for it's own ſake; but only when the righteous purpoſes of his government render it neceſſary: as the merciful prince delights not in, yea weeps over the death warrant, which a variety of important conſiderations render it indiſpenſably neceſſary he ſhould ſign. But we muſt not attempt to argue any thing from ſuch paſſages reſpecting the conduct of God towards impenitent ſinners, or the method of his diſpenſing his ſpecial bleſſings: many reaſons may determine the divine conduct, which are too deep for us to diſcover, and too myſterious for us to comprehend, and of which we muſt not preſume to judge. This is however evident, and ſufficient, that he certainly will ſave, and delights in ſaving every one who repents, and believes the goſpel. Knowing this, we muſt learn our proper place, and buſineſs, and leave the government of the world to the only wiſe God. (*Pſalm*, lxxxi. v. 13. *Iſaiah*, c. xlviii. v. 18. *Jer.* c. xliv. v. 4. *Matt.* c. xxiii. v. 37.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The word of God is ſpoken to us, that we may attentively liſten to it, that we may learn, and retain, and reduce it to practice: in which all religion is ultimately centred, and without which the whole is but a dead carcaſe, not only worthleſs, but abominable. Of this practice the law of God is the univerſal, immutable, and everlaſting rule: but we have no encouragement, or ability to obey that law, in any meaſure, or in any ſenſe, but what is derived from the new covenant of mercy, and grace, which

LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you: that ye may live, and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* ye may prolong *your* days in the land which ye shall possess.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. Instructions in, and exhortations to obedience from various motives, and mixed with cautions, &c. v. 1—19. 2d. Directions for instructing their children, v. 20—25.

NOW these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it:

2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee; thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged.

3 Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

4 Hear, O Israel; The LORD our God *is* one LORD.

5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

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is made with us, through the mediation of Christ. He continually stands betwixt the holy God, and the sinner, who believes in his name, both to ensure his acceptance, and direct, encourage, and assist his obedience. The words he once spake on earth are written in the Scriptures for our instruction; and from age to age sinners are invited to accede to, and share the blessings of his covenant; which invitation cannot be refused without ensuring eternal destruction; and nothing except such refusal can ruin us. But we must remember that good words may be spoken, and good resolutions formed, and transient convictions experienced; even when the invitation is finally refused, through prevailing pride of heart, and love of sin. Of such we may say "O that there were such an heart in them, &c." But we had better turn it into a prayer for ourselves, and for each other; and beg of the Lord that he would put such an heart inus, "that we may fear him, and keep all his com-"mandments always," &c: and we may present such a petition in faith, assured that the Lord delighteth in giving such blessings to those, who have been taught to value them, and to seek them by faith in Jesus Christ. Let sinners then tremble at this fiery law, and flee for refuge to the Saviour's blood: let professors examine carefully, whether their faith in Christ be accompanied with a desire of having that law written in their hearts, and reduced to practice in their whole conduct: let believers make it more and more their study and delight, that they may do as the Lord God hath commanded them, without turning aside to the right hand, or to the left. Thus by universal godliness, righteousness, temperance, patience, purity, and love, and an exact regard to every relative duty, they will best evince their faith, adorn the gospel, glorify the Lord, benefit their fellow creatures, entail a blessing on their children, and be ripening for glory. In attending to these important concerns we need repeated instructions and admonitions: let us then not deem it tedious to hear, read, and meditate frequently on the same truths and precepts: let us learn ourselves to hallow the Lord's sabbaths, and set an example of attending on his ordinances: and, remembering that our servants are of the same nature with ourselves, let us ever allow them also suitable relaxation from labour, and opportunity for hallowing the sabbath, and learning the way of salvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1.] In this, and similar passages the commandments seem to denote the moral law, the statutes the ceremonial law, and the judgments the judicial law.

V. 4. *The Lord our God*, &c.] The threefold mention of the divine names, and the plural number of the original word, translated God, are supposed by many commentators to be no obscure intimations of a Trinity of persons, even in this express declaration of the *unity* of the Godhead, to the exclusion of, and in opposition to the many lords and gods of the heathens, *(see note, Gen. c. i. v. 1.)*

V. 5. *And thou shalt*, &c.] In the foregoing verse we have the first article of our creed; in this the first, and great commandment; *(Matt. c. xxii. v. 36—38. Mark, c. xii. v. 28—34;)* which briefly comprehends the whole of the first table of the law. This love of God perfectly consists with the reverential fear of him before mentioned, (v. 2.) and the more we love him, the more we shall regard his authority, reverence his majesty, fear to offend or dishonour him, and be disposed to render unto him that adoration and worship, which he requires. Human laws can only take cognizance of the outward conduct, but the law of the heart-searching God requires LOVE, the seat of which is in the inmost soul: that love comprises a supreme valuation of his infinite excellency, and amiableness; an entire desire of the knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God as our felicity; a cordial delight in contemplating his manifested glories, and in worshipping, and obeying him; a glowing gratitude for all his innumerable, and invaluable mercies; a zeal for his glory, and an ardent desire that all our fellow creatures, in conjunction with us, were disposed to love, worship, obey, and serve him. These dispositions, and affections of the soul, are required to be as large, and entire, as the powers of the soul itself; and to engross, and fill the whole, to the entire exclusion of all *contrary* affections, and

6 And

6 And theſe words, which I command thee this day, ſhall be in thine heart.

7 And thou ſhalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up.

8 And thou ſhalt bind them for a ſign upon thine hand, and they ſhall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

9 And thou ſhalt write them upon the poſts of thy houſe, and on thy gates.

10 And it ſhall be, when the LORD thy God ſhall have brought thee into the land which he ſware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities which thou buildedſt not,

11 And houſes full of all good *things* which thou filledſt not, and wells digged which thou diggedſt not, vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedſt not; when thou ſhalt have eaten and be full;

12 *Then* beware leſt thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage.

13 Thou ſhalt fear the LORD thy God, and ſerve him, and ſhalt ſwear by his name.

14 Ye ſhall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

15 (For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous God among you;) leſt the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled againſt thee, and deſtroy thee from off the face of the earth.

16 Ye ſhall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Maſſah.

17 Ye ſhall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his teſtimonies, and his ſtatutes, which he hath commanded thee.

18 And thou ſhalt do *that which is* right and good in the ſight of the LORD; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayeſt go in and poſſeſs the good land which the LORD ſware unto thy fathers;

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to the abſolute regulation, and moderation of all *other* affections, in ſubordination, and ſubſerviency to this leading, and governing principle: ſo that nothing ſhould in any ſenſe, or in any degree, be loved by us, but for the ſake, and according to the commandment, or allowance of God. Thus are we *reaſonably* required to love the Lord our God, both for what he is in himſelf, and what he hath done for us, and what he is, and will be to us; and that uniformly, conſtantly, perfectly, and progreſſively: whatever our natural capacities may be; or to whatever improvements we may in this, or in a future world attain, the Lord commands us to give him the whole: and were our love thus perfect, our worſhip, and obedience, and ſubmiſſion would be perfect alſo; nor could it ever poſſibly vary, be interrupted, or fall ſhort of our whole ſtrength, and power, without a failure, variation, or diminution of this inward principle of love: yet would this admit of degrees, and increaſe both in the principle, and in it's effects, from the firſt dawning of reaſon in the infant, (ſuch as was the child Jeſus,) in progreſſive enlargement to the higheſt poſſible exaltation of the angelic nature. Yet could no creature to all eternity ever love God, in meaſure equal to his loveline's, and excellency, and worthineſs to be loved, which are infinite as his incomprehenſible being: but each might, and ought to love the Lord to the utmoſt extent of all the powers, which the Creator had beſtowed on him. This would at once ſecure to him the glory due to his name, and to his creatures that felicity, of which he hath formed them capable. Thus is it with angels in heaven; thus was it with man in paradiſe; but alas! the carnal mind of fallen man is enmity againſt God: and as we all are by nature entirely deſtitute of the love of God, we all love ourſelves, the world, and our favourite ſinful indulgences, and purſuits, with all our heart, our mind, our ſoul, and ſtrength; and therefore ſacrifice every thing to theſe idols. In regeneration an internal revolution takes place; the uſurpers are dethroned, the Lord himſelf takes poſſeſſion of the heart, and becomes the ſupreme object of our love: but ſo long as ſin dwelleth in us, we never love God according to the perfection of this precept; but our love in all it's exerciſes, and all the effects of it, are variable, interrupted, and comparatively languid. All *that*, in our affections, diſpoſitions, and conduct, which comes ſhort of this perfect love, is ſin, and needs forgiveneſs; and therefore our beſt obedience, though it evidence our faith, and glorify God, can do nothing towards our juſtification. Yet this law is our ſtandard of duty, and in progreſſive ſanctification we are renewed thereto; and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, are in this reſpect already made equal to the angels in heaven.

V. 6. *Shall be in thine heart*, &c.] That is, be treaſured up in the memory, rooted in the judgment, and reigning in the affections; that they may become habitually the ſubjects of converſe, and meditation, to the excluſion of thoſe, which are contrary, or inferior thereto.

V. 8—9.] The Iſraelites were commanded to take every method of making the knowledge of the word of God familiar to them; that every object, which they beheld, and every action, which they performed, might ſerve them as a memorial of it. Some of theſe external methods may be now leſs neceſſary, when copies of the Bible are ſo cheap, and numerous: but the reaſon, and general meaning of the command is ſtill the ſame, and equally obligatory. The ſame ſhould be our valuation of the word of God, our familiar acquaintance with it, and our open profeſſion of our faith in, and regard to it.

V. 13. *And ſhalt ſwear by his name.*] As an act of religious

19 To cast out all thine enemies from before thee, as the LORD hath spoken.

20 *And* when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What *mean* the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you?

21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes;

23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers.

24 And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day.

25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. A charge to the Israelites utterly to destroy the seven devoted nations of Canaan, making no leagues, or marriages with them, v. 1—4. *2d. A repeated charge to destroy their idols, v.* 5. 25, 26. *3d. Promises to them, whilst obedient, and intimations of vengeance on the disobedient, v.* 6—24.

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worship, on important occasions, they were to appeal to Jehovah by a solemn oath; and not to the false, and imaginary deities of the heathen nations around them.

V. 25. *It shall be our righteousness*, &c.] Their believing and penitent attendance on their typical ceremonies, and sacrifices, as productive of a sincere obedience to the moral precepts, would, for the sake of their promised Redeemer, though imperfect, be accepted, as if it had been a perfect righteousness.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the knowledge of the spirituality, and excellency of the holy law of God is suited to shew sinful man his need of a Saviour, and to prepare his heart to welcome a free salvation: so the gospel is calculated to magnify, and honour the law; not only in the perfect obedience to it's precept, and in the willing subjection to it's curse of the incarnate Son of God; but in that it is a plan formed, and continually accomplishing, of bringing back apostate rebels, and enemies, by repentance, faith, forgiveness, and renewing grace, to love God supremely even in this world, and as perfectly, as the law requires, and as angels love him, in the world above; and accordingly to worship and obey him, as their great business, and felicity. Nor is any thing valuable in religion, any further than this end is answered; whatever creed is assented to, whatever forms are observed, or whatever transient emotions are excited: (*Gal.* c. v. ver. 6.) As far as we possess that faith which produceth, and worketh by love, we shall delight in the commands, the ordinances, and the people of God, and shall savour heavenly converse, and heavenly exercises; and our meditation of him will be sweet.—But alas that very conduct, which this chapter prescribes to Israel, could scarce be reduced to practice amongst us, who are called Christians, without exciting *almost* universal contempt, and disgust. To be continually speaking of the truths, and commands of God, upon our journeys, in our families, and in company; to make religion our first subject in the morning, and our last at night; and to be producing quotations from Scripture, on every occasion, and in every way, without reserve, or apology, as those, who glory and delight therein, would certainly bring upon us the charge of affectation, of enthusiasm, nay probably of hypocrisy. This lamentably discovers to how low an ebb religion has fallen amongst professed Christians: but without the truths and precepts of the sacred volume are indeed in our hearts, and practised in our lives, all our profession, and talk will be but lip-labour, and justly to be condemned as hypocritical.—Though every condition in life exposes us to peculiar snares; yet none are so dangerous, and so commonly ruinous, as those of prosperity, and affluence: for pride, love of the world, forgetfulness of God, and disregard to eternal things, and such like poisonous weeds naturally grow from our wicked hearts, when fattened (so to speak) with the rank manure of wealth. So that the more God does for us, in his providence, the more we are ungratefully prone to do against him. Let none of us then be desirous, or in haste to be rich: (*See* 1 *Tim.* c. vi. ver. 9, 10.) Let those, who are rich, or growing rich, tremble, and beware lest they forget the Lord: their danger is great, "but with God all things are possible," let them seek to him for grace sufficient for them. (*Mark*, c. x. ver. 23—27.) Let the poor learn to be content, and thankful for their safer lot: and instead of being anxious to get wealth for our children, (which is like building a wall to keep them out of heaven,) let us be diligent in explaining the truths, precepts, ordinances, and history of God's word to them, and to all committed to our care; in making edifying observations on the occurrences of Providence; and in encouraging their inquiries, by giving them plain, familiar, and full answers to them: endeavouring by every means to shew them the nature, reasonableness, and advantages of true religion; confirming the whole with the example of serious godliness in every part, and in every occurrence of life; with an affectionate exercise of our authority; and with fervent prayers for, and with them. Thus will it be well with us and them; and we may hope for an incorruptible inheritance for them, and for ourselves, when all the wealth of this world shall be no more.

WHEN the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou;

2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, *and* utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them;

3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son.

4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.

5 But thus shall ye deal with them; ye shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire.

6 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that *are* upon the face of the earth.

7 The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; (for ye *were* the fewest of all people;)

8 But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 Know, therefore, that the LORD thy God he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations;

10 And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.

11 Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which I command thee this day to do them.

12 Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers.

13 And he will love thee, and bless thee, and multiply thee: he will also bless the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep, in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee.

14 Thou shalt be blessed above all people: there shall not be male or female barren among you, or among your cattle.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1.] The number and names of these nations are varied from those, which were before mentioned; (*Gen.* c. xv. v. 19—21.) In a course of years many revolutions would take place; some tribes would be extinct, or incorporated with others, and some would have changed their names. But they were the posterity of the same people, inhabiting the same land, and they had now filled up the measure of their iniquities. The Israelites were therefore appointed the executioners of divine vengeance, and were not only justified in all they did; but actually offended, and were themselves chastened, for not more entirely extirpating them, root, and branch. But they would not have been justified, if they had, in their love of conquest, and thirst of dominion, carried on such bloody wars against any nation, not expressly included in their commission: and therefore their conduct can form no precedent to others, nor in the least excuse the murder, and rapine, which mad ambition hath in all ages been committing. The Lord was pleased in this solemn transaction, not only to shew his abhorrence of sin; but, by such an example of executing vengeance upon guilty nations, to give to all, that regard the Scriptures, a key, whereby to explain the real cause of those more ordinary calamities, wherewith in the course of his providence he punishes one kingdom after another, for their sins.

V. 7. *Fewest of all*, &c.] The Lord chose the people of Israel in the single person of Abraham; (*Isaiah*, c. li. v. 2;) from him they were multiplied to seventy persons, when they went down into Egypt; and though they were very numerous in proportion, when he brought them forth thence; yet much less numerous than other more ancient nations; and probably less numerous than either the Egyptians, from whom they were brought forth; or the Canaanites, whose land they were to inherit.

15 And the LORD will take away from thee all ſickneſs, and will put none of the evil diſeaſes of Egypt, which thou knoweſt, upon thee; but will lay them upon all *them* that hate thee.

16 And thou ſhalt conſume all the people which the LORD thy God ſhall deliver thee; thine eye ſhall have no pity upon them; neither ſhalt thou ſerve their gods; for that *will be* a ſnare unto thee.

17 If thou ſhalt ſay in thine heart, Theſe nations *are* more than I, how can I diſpoſſeſs them?

18 Thou ſhalt not be afraid of them; *but* ſhalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt:

19 The great temptations which thine eyes ſaw, and the ſigns and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the ſtretched-out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out; ſo ſhall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

20 Moreover the LORD thy God will ſend the hornet among them, until they that are left, and hide themſelves from thee, be deſtroyed.

21 Thou ſhalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible.

22 And the LORD thy God will put out thoſe nations before thee by little and little: thou mayeſt not conſume them at once, leſt the beaſts of the field increaſe upon thee.

23 But the LORD thy God ſhall deliver them unto thee, and ſhall deſtroy them with a mighty deſtruction, until they be deſtroyed.

24 And he ſhall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou ſhalt deſtroy their name from under heaven: there ſhall no man be able to ſtand before thee, until thou have deſtroyed them.

25 The graven images of their gods ſhall ye burn with fire; thou ſhalt not deſire the ſilver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, leſt thou be ſnared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God.

26 Neither ſhalt thou bring an abomination into thy houſe, leſt thou be a curſed thing like it: *but* thou ſhalt utterly deteſt it, and thou ſhalt utterly abhor it; for it *is* a curſed thing.

V. 15. *All ſickneſs*, &c.] That is, all peſtilential diſeaſes, which make ſuch havock at ſome times, and in ſome places: ſo that they ſhould be ſubject only to the ordinary maladies of fallen man, and ſhould be generally very healthy, and long-lived. This muſt be referred to their national covenant; for though godlineſs ordinarily ſecures the moſt ſolid temporal advantages; yet neither amongſt us, or them, were temporal bleſſings uniformly diſpenſed to individuals according to their obedience: but they were to Iſrael as a nation, and with an exactitude, which is not obſerved towards other nations; for they were under a peculiar covenant.

V. 22. *The Lord thy God will put out*, &c.] They were required to attempt the immediate, and entire extirpation of the devoted nations: and as far as ſloth, cowardice, unbelief, or other corrupt motives induced them to ſpare them, they ſinned, and in puniſhment of this, and their other ſins, as well as to prove them, the Lord was pleaſed to permit many of theſe nations to remain amongſt them: (*Judg.* c. ii. v. 1—3. c. iii. v. 1—4.) His conduct was the reſult of a ſettled plan; but this plan, being ſecret from them, was neither the rule of their duty, nor the motive of their actions. Thus he commands the entire mortification of every ſin, which is our rule of duty; and yet he gives intimations that ſin is never totally deſtroyed in this world even in the beſt of ſaints: and it actually prevails much more in moſt of us, than it would, were we watchful, and diligent, as we ought to be. In all this, the Lord acts according to the counſel of his own will: but that counſel being ſecret from us, forms no excuſe, as it is in no degree the cauſe, or reaſon of our ſloth, and negligence; which he therefore rebukes, and chaſtens.

V. 25. *Nor take it unto thee*, &c.] In deteſtation of idolatry, as utterly ſpoiling the moſt precious things, which had been abuſed therein, the Lord gave them this ſelf-denying command, totally to deſtroy even the metals of their graven images.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

All the commandments of God are equally the reſult of infinite wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs: but not equally level to our comprehenſions, and ſuited to our ideas. Aſſured therefore that the *righteous* Lord will not do *unrighteouſly*; but that he will exerciſe his abſolute ſovereignty with perfect equity, whether we can perceive it, or no; when he commands, our buſineſs is, not to object, or diſpute, but to obey; and this is the never-failing effect of true, and ſtrong faith. (*Gen.* c. xxii.) The rebellion, ingratitude, and wickedneſs of man are ſo atrocious, that it is more admirable that ſo many are ſpared, than that others are puniſhed: and a proper underſtanding of the evil of ſin, and of the myſtery of a crucified Saviour, will enable us to perceive ſomewhat of the juſtice of God in all the puniſhments, temporal and eternal, which he inflicts. However we ſhould be thankful not to be employed as executioners of his vengeance, but rather as the meſſengers of his love, and compaſſion. *We* are called to exerciſe *our* ſeverity

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains exhortations, and cautions, enforced by arguments drawn from the Lord's former dealings with the Israelites, and the good land intended for them; from the dangers they would be exposed to, and from the consequences of disobedience, v. 1—20.

ALL the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.

against our own lusts: with these enemies of the Lord we must wage mortal war, and give them no quarter. Nor need we fear the strongest, and most domineering of them, or of their allies, the powers of darkness: he who first redeemed us from our original bondage, will, as a mighty, and terrible one, fight for us until they are all destroyed. Yet it will be but by little and little, that we shall extirpate them; nor must we expect that the conflict will cease, till we drop our bodies in the grave. The more need therefore have we to live by faith; to watch, and pray, and be diligent: and the more we do so, the less will our sins prevail, or interrupt our enjoyments in religion. Not our merit, or loveliness, but the Lord's free love of us, (of which he hath shewn us no reason, but because he would love us, and choose us for Christ's sake,) forms the source of our redemption, and of all our consequent blessings: that reason still continues, and he will never leave us, nor forsake us. But if we belong to this chosen remnant, which hitherto hath been the fewest of all people, (the Lord increase their numbers an hundred fold!) we shall by this consideration be induced to render him the more unreserved, disinterested, and self-denying obedience, to the contempt of gold, and every earthly good, when they come in competition with his precept, or his glory. And should we ever be tempted in covetousness to do otherwise, we shall soon find that we have brought an accursed thing, and an abomination into our house, which must be cast out with abhorrence, if we would not be an accursed thing like thereunto. For the Lord is no more slack in repaying them, that hate him; than willing to shew mercy to them, who love him, and keep his commandments: nor will he be more severe with any, than with covetous, fraudulent, hypocritical professors.—We cannot be too compassionate to the persons of sinners: but we may easily be too complaisant to them; nor can we stand too much aloof from intimacies, or alliances with unbelievers: for that hath ever been and ever must be a snare to the people of God. All occasions of sin must be shunned; for our hearts are so inflammable, that we should fear every spark, which may light upon them: nor can we be losers by renouncing such sources of gain, as expose us to temptations, which experience shews to be too strong for us: for if we are chosen to be a special, and holy people unto the Lord our God, above all the people of the earth, we shall certainly be blessed above all people: (v. 14:) and we shall experience the present sweetness of this blessedness, in proportion to the number, and value of those things, which we renounce for Christ's sake; as he hath promised to such persons an hundred-fold more in this present world, and in the world to come everlasting life.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 2. *To humble thee, and to prove*, &c.] They were proved, in order that they might be humbled. The Israelites were not previously aware of the wickedness of their own hearts, and never suspected themselves to be capable of such crimes, as they actually committed: but the Lord well knew of what a disposition they were; and for their own good, and for the good of multitudes in every age to the end of the world, he was pleased to put them to the proof; that upon a full, and fair trial, their real character might be ascertained. They were therefore led through a variety of difficult circumstances, and were favoured by manifold miraculous evidences of the Lord's special presence with them, and regard to them: they were sometimes crossed, at other times indulged: they were brought into dangers and straits, and miraculously delivered: they were disappointed in many of their expectations, and favoured in many things beyond their expectation: and they were sometimes severely punished for their sin, that they might take warning; and at other times mercifully pardoned, that they might take courage. But the result of the trial undeniably was this; that they were ever prone to unbelief, to distrust, to murmur, and to be ungrateful: they were ever disposed to depreciate their mercies, and to magnify their trials, and difficulties, as intolerable, and insuperable; to limit the power, and suspect the loving kindness of the Lord, after all their experience of them both; to lust, envy, and rebel; to mutiny, apostatize, and revert to idolatry. In short it appeared that they were so stiff-necked, and hard-hearted, that no patience, but the infinite patience of God, could have borne with them: nor could they be restrained from the most desperate rebellions, but by the terrible examples of thousands, and tens of thousands struck dead by the avenging hand of divine justice. All this had a direct tendency upon recollection to convert their self admiration into self abhorrence; to abate their self confidence; to render them sensible of their guilt, folly, and weakness; and to bring them to a suitable conviction of their entire dependance upon the mercy of the Lord for every thing, and their manifold obligations to him for his goodness to them in times past: and finally to produce, and preserve that poverty of spirit, which is radically necessary to the life of faith, and the walk with God. Nor were they other than a fair specimen of human nature: any other people, any individual proved, as they were, would appear as vile as they do; were the result as impartially recorded. And every one's own experience will have the same effect upon him, except he view himself through a false medium, be lulled asleep in carelessness, or intoxicated

3 And he humbled thee, and ſuffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou kneweſt not, neither did thy fathers know, that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

4 Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot ſwell, theſe forty years.

5 Thou ſhalt alſo conſider in thine heart, that, as a man chaſteneth his ſon, *ſo* the LORD thy God chaſteneth thee.

6 Therefore thou ſhalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains, and depths that ſpring out of valleys and hills;

8 A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil-olive and honey;

9 A land wherein thou ſhalt eat bread without ſcarceneſs, thou ſhalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whoſe ſtones *are* iron, and out of whoſe hills thou mayeſt dig braſs.

10 When thou haſt eaten and art full, then thou ſhalt bleſs the LORD thy God, for the good land which he hath given thee.

11 Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day:

12 Leſt, *when* thou haſt eaten and art full, and haſt built goodly houſes, and dwelt *therein*;

13 And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy ſilver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou haſt is multiplied;

14 Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage;

15 Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderneſs, *wherein were* fiery ſerpents, and ſcorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

16 Who fed thee in the wilderneſs with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

17 And thou ſay in thine heart, My power, and the might of *mine* hand, hath gotten me this wealth.

18 But thou ſhalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may eſtabliſh his covenant, which he ſware unto thy fathers, as *it is* this day.

19 And it ſhall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and ſerve them, and worſhip them, I teſtify againſt you this day, that ye ſhall ſurely periſh.

20 As the nations which the LORD de-

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by pride: for we none of us live one week, without renewed evidences of our own weakneſs, folly, and depravity.

V. 3. *He ſuffered thee to hunger*, &c.] When all ordinary means of ſuſtenance failed, and the people muſt have periſhed with hunger; at the word of the Lord the manna came, and afforded them a ſuitable, ſufficient, and durable ſupply. Their frequent murmurs, and ingratitude, and their inability to help themſelves would upon recollection humble them: and the unexpected method, in which they were provided for, would teach them, that the Lord is not tied to ordinary means, and that they need not uſe ſinful methods of obtaining the neceſſaries of life; for when he ſpeaks the word, a ſupply will be ſent in one way or other; and on that word alone they ought to depend: (*Matt.* c. iv. v. 4.)

V. 4. *Thy raiment*, &c.] The Iſraelites probably brought more raiment out of Egypt, than what they had upon them, and might manufacture the fleeces of their flocks in the wilderneſs; and they were remarkably favoured in God's providence with other ſupplies: yet when we conſider their immenſe numbers, their ſituation and long continuance in the wilderneſs, and the expreſſions here made uſe of, there ſeems no reaſon to queſtion the conſtant miraculous interpoſition of God in this reſpect, as well as in others. But we may ſafely reject the Jewiſh tradition, that the garments grew along with the bodies of their young people: not, becauſe it is too difficult to be credited; but becauſe it wants the warrant of Scripture teſtimony, and does not appear to have been at all neceſſary.

V. 5. *That as a man*, &c.] The puniſhments inflicted upon them, though deſtructive to individuals, were intended for national bleſſings, ſalutary to the ſurvivors, and tending to their warning, preſervation, and proſperity: as the father chaſtiſes his ſon, not for his hurt, but that he may be warned, eſcape ruin, and be wiſe, and happy.

V. 9. *Whoſe ſtones*, &c.] We do not find that in this land of promiſe, the glory of all lands, there were any mines of gold, or ſilver; theſe though more coveted, are much leſs

ſtroyeth

ſtroyeth before your face, ſo ſhall ye periſh; becauſe ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. An aſſurance of victory to Iſrael, not for their righteouſneſs, but through the wickedneſs of their enemies, v. 1—6. 2d. A memorial of their rebellions, and of the Lord's mercies, v. 7—29.

HEAR, O Iſrael; Thou *art* to paſs over Jordan this day, to go in to poſſeſs nations greater and mighter than thyſelf, cities great, and fenced up to heaven.

2 A people great and tall, the children of

uſeful than iron, and braſs. The abundant bleſſedneſs of God's people doth not conſiſt in thoſe things, which man naturally moſt covets; but in thoſe things, which are really moſt valuable.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our obedience cannot be deemed ſincere, until "we "obſerve to do all the commandments of the Lord;" for whilſt any one is broken *with allowance, and habitually*, that ſingle diſobedience is a more concluſive proof of hypocriſy, than all the reſt can be of juſtifying faith. In order to ſinful man's rendering to God this kind of ſincere obedience, he muſt be humbled and proved, and made ſenſible of his weakneſs, folly, guilt, pollution, and miſery. And when the ſevereſt chaſtenings, the greateſt diſtreſſes, and moſt painful experiences are made effectual to produce this conviction; they are evidences of ſpecial love, and of the Lord's merciful intention of doing us good at the latter end, which ſhould reconcile us to them, and make us thankful for them. Indeed it is impoſſible that we can truly repent, or exerciſe true faith in, and love to Chriſt, or become meek, patient, and forgiving; or attain to any part of the Chriſtian temper, and character, without ſuch humiliation: to broken hearted ſouls alone is the Saviour precious indeed. Nor do any behave ſuitably in proſperity, without much previous humbling diſcipline of one kind or other: much more requiſite are ſuch trials in training us up for that good land, which Canaan typified. Nothing indeed can render even the moſt ſuitable outward diſpenſations, and inward exerciſes effectual for theſe ends, but the efficacy of the Spirit of God: but our duty is to be much employed in remembering all the way, in which the Lord hath led us; in recollecting the evidences, which we have abundantly given of our own ingratitude, and perverſeneſs, and of the deceitfulneſs, and wickedneſs of our hearts; and in conſidering the proofs we have had of the Lord's power, and love, in ſupplying our wants, extricating us out of difficulties, preventing the bad effects of our miſconduct, and overruling events for our good, which appeared fraught with ruin, and deſtruction. Hence we may learn to ceaſe from ſelf confidence, and to truſt in the mercy, grace, and providence of God for every thing: hence may we draw arguments againſt ſin, and motives to obedience: hence may we learn watchfulneſs, and caution againſt pride, unbelief, and forgetfulneſs of God; and other leſſons equally ſalutary. The food, which the Lord brings for us out of the earth, the water from the clouds, and the raiment new from year to year, which he provides, cannot call for leſs gratitude from us, than the miraculous proviſion did from Iſrael: though he do not ſuffer us previouſly to hunger, nor confine us to the ſame proviſion, but indulges us in a vaſt variety, which he was pleaſed to deny them. The word of the Lord firſt gave, and ſtill continues to the earth it's fertility: his bleſſing cauſes our food to nouriſh us; and did he command the air to ſuſtain us, it would be equally obedient: he appoints the meaſure of our ſupport, however it be ſent; and his promiſe, that they who truſt in him ſhall want no manner of thing that is good, is our only ſecurity for a future ſufficient ſupply, till we arrive at our journey's end. But in this the believing poor have the advantage: they more eaſily perceive their proviſion coming from the Lord in anſwer to the prayer of faith, and find leſs difficulty in ſimply truſting him for daily bread; and taſte a ſweetneſs in it generally unknown to the affluent, whilſt they are exempt from many of their temptations. For when men poſſeſs large eſtates, or are engaged in extenſive and productive commerce; or when their herds and flocks, and their gold, and ſilver are multiplied, they find it very hard to expect, and receive their daily bread in a way of ſimple dependance, prayer, and thankfulneſs; to remember that the Lord alone gives them the power to get wealth, to give him all the praiſe, and to uſe it all to his glory. When they have eaten, and are full, and have built goodly houſes, and dwelt therein, they will find the temptation to pride, to forgetfulneſs of God, and to carnal mindedneſs, very ſtrong: they will be apt to fail in reducing to practice the humbling leſſons, which they had before learned; but will be prone to grow careleſs, to ſpend their riches upon themſelves, to take them for their portion, and to neglect the one thing needful. This is "a ſlippery place;" (*Pſalm*, lxxiii. v. 18;) whence "many are caſt down into deſtruction;" let thoſe, who are placed therein rejoice with trembling; let them watch and pray always, that they may eſcape the fate of thoſe multitudes, who have "utterly periſhed" through their proſperity. Let us all watch, and be ſober, and continue in prayer, for we tread a dangerous path; let us rather chooſe, and beg of God to be chaſtened with his children, than to be left to grow ſecure in ſin, with his enemies: and may we be taught to hunger after, and feaſt upon the hidden manna, and to drink of the waters of life from the wells of ſalvation; and be encouraged in ſelf denying obedience by the proſpect before our eyes, of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in heaven for all, who are here kept by the power of God, through faith unto ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *Hear, O Iſrael—this day*, &c.] It is generally ſuppoſed that Moſes here began a new diſcourſe; which he introduced, as at firſt, with a recapitulation of their hiſtory, and afterwards in the following chapters practically applied it to their conſciences. But in the former diſcourſe he *mainly* expatiated on the wonderful works of God; in this he dwells *chiefly* upon the wicked works of Iſrael. By "this day," is meant, that the long expected time was juſt at hand.

the Anakims, whom thou knoweſt, and *of whom* thou haſt heard *ſay*, Who can ſtand before the children of Anak?

3 Underſtand therefore this day, that the LORD thy God *is* he which goeth over before thee *as* a conſuming fire; he ſhall deſtroy them, and he ſhall bring them down before thy face: ſo ſhalt thou drive them out, and deſtroy them quickly, as the LORD hath ſaid unto thee.

4 Speak not thou in thine heart, after that the LORD thy God hath caſt them out from before thee, ſaying, For my righteouſneſs the LORD hath brought me in to poſſeſs this land; but for the wickedneſs of theſe nations the LORD doth drive them out from before thee.

5 Not for thy righteouſneſs, or for the uprightneſs of thine heart, doſt thou go to poſſeſs their land; but for the wickedneſs of theſe nations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the LORD ſware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob.

6 Underſtand therefore that the LORD thy God giveth thee not this good land to poſſeſs it for thy righteouſneſs; for thou *art* a ſtiff-necked people.

7 Remember, *and* forget not, how thou provokedſt the LORD thy God to wrath in the wilderneſs: from the day that thou didſt depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious againſt the LORD.

8 Alſo in Horeb ye provoked the LORD to wrath, ſo that the LORD was angry with you, to have deſtroyed you.

9 When I was gone up into the mount, to receive the tables of ſtone, *even* the tables of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights; I neither did eat bread nor drink water:

10 And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of ſtone, written with the finger of God; and on them *was written* according to all the words which the LORD ſpake with you in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire, in the day of the aſſembly.

11 And it came to paſs at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tables of ſtone, *even* the tables of the covenant.

12 And the LORD ſaid unto me, Ariſe, get thee down quickly from hence; for thy people which thou haſt brought forth out of Egypt have corrupted *themſelves:* they are quickly turned aſide out of the way which I commanded them; they have made them a molten image.

13 Furthermore, the LORD ſpake unto me ſaying, I have ſeen this people, and, behold, it *is* a ſtiff-necked people.

14 Let me alone, that I may deſtroy them, and blot out their name from under heaven: and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they.

15 So I turned and came down from the mount, and the mount burned with fire: and the two tables of the covenant *were* in my two hands.

16 And I looked, and, behold, ye had ſinned againſt the LORD your God, *and* had made you a molten calf: ye had turned aſide quickly out of the way which the LORD had commanded you.

17 And I took the two tables, and caſt them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes.

18 And I fell down before the LORD, as at the firſt, forty days and forty nights: I did neither eat bread nor drink water, becauſe of all your ſins which ye ſinned, in doing wickedly in the ſight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger.

V. 18. *Becauſe of all your ſins*, &c.] Their tranſgreſſions rendered this ſecond forty days faſting neceſſary: and though the pardon was ſolicited, and in ſome ſenſe obtained before Moſes aſcended the mount; yet probably much of the time, which he ſpent there, was employed in ſupplication for the people; and when he deſcended the ſecond time with the tables of the law in his hands, the pardon was as it were ratified, and ſealed. Some indeed ſuppoſe that he faſted three times, forty days each, but it is not probable, nor doth there appear any ſufficient reaſon from the narration to conclude that he did. The twenty-fifth verſe is a reſumption of the ſubject after a digreſſion, ſuch as are commonly found, where the heart is much engaged, and the ſpeaker is more ſolicitous to impreſs the hearers for their

19 (For

19 (For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you.) But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also.

20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.

21 And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, and burnt it with fire, and stamped it, *and* ground *it* very small, *even* until it was as small as dust: and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount.

22 And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the LORD to wrath.

23 Likewise, when the LORD sent you from Kadesh-barnea, saying, Go up and possess the land which I have given you; then ye rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and ye believed him not, nor hearkened to his voice.

24 Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

25 Thus I fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, as I fell down *at the first*; because the LORD had said he would destroy you.

26 I prayed therefore unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

27 Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin;

28 Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

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good, than to gain their applause. St. Paul's epistles abound in such digressions, which sometimes obscure the sense to the inattentive reader. As this chapter is mainly an abridgment of the foregoing history, the reader must be referred to the notes, &c. on those chapters, which are here alluded to. (*Exod.* c. xxiv. xxxii. xxxiii. xxxiv. *Numbers*, c. xi. xiii. xiv.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who enlist under the Lord's standard, must not despise their enemies, nor yet be intimidated on account of them. In themselves they are very formidable; but not at all to be dreaded by those, who have the almighty arm engaged on their side. Yet we should count our cost, and consider what our vocation will certainly expose us to, lest we should turn back in the day of battle; (*Luke*, c. xiv. v. 25—33;) for unless we so value the salvation of the Lord, as to be willing to venture, suffer, and sacrifice every thing for the sake of it; our profession will begin with hypocrisy, and probably end in apostacy. Such soldiers the captain of our salvation wants not, and therefore plainly tells us what we are to expect, and even in as strong language, as we can use in our most desponding moments; (v. 1, 2, compared with ch. i. v. 27, 28;) but he proposes an all sufficient remedy to our discouragements, when he engages to go before us as a consuming fire: in that case, hard things will become easy, and we may rejoice and triumph in our sharpest conflicts and severest trials. But so strong is our propensity to pride, that it will creep in under one pretence or other: and if it be evident that the might of our arm hath not got us our wealth; we shall be ready to conceive that our righteousness hath merited the special favour of the Lord, and induced him to give us it; though in reality our wickedness be more evident than our weakness. To remove that ignorance, or forgetfulness, which occasions the increase of this absurd self-adulation, ministers must bestow pains in, and be willing to give offence by declaring unto the people their transgressions; (*Isaiah*, c. lviii. v. 1. *Micah*, c. iii. v. 8;) and must not only lay the facts before their eyes, but call their attention to them, and assist them in drawing inferences from them, and in applying those inferences to their conviction. When the secret history of every man's life shall be produced before him at the day of judgment, every mouth will be stopped, and all the world will be proved guilty before God. As we are spared in infinite mercy, we should anticipate that solemn season, and be glad of every assistance in reviewing the past experience of our lives; that judging and condemning ourselves in this world, we may not be then judged and condemned of the Lord. For at present one intercedeth for us before the mercy seat, who not only fasted, but died upon the cross for our sins: through whom we may approach, though self condemned sinners, and supplicate for unmerited mercy, and for eternal life, *as the gift of God* in him; and for his sake the Lord will give us them, not for our righteousness, but for the praise of his glory, and according to the tenor of the covenant of grace: and notwithstanding that we have the verdict brought in against us by our own consciences, "that we have been rebellious" from the beginning of our lives, yea stubborn and stiff-necked; yet will he save us for his mercies sake, and write his law in our hearts; and not suffer our enemies to triumph in our destruction. Alas! that even believers should have so many Massahs, and Taberahs, and Kibroth-hattaavahs to remember with shame! yet ought we not by any means to forget them: but thence to draw arguments for deeper humility,

29 Yet they *are* thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou broughteſt out by thy mighty power, and by thy ſtretched-out arm.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. A recapitulation of hiſtorical events, v. 1—11. *2d. Practical exhortations deduced from the whole, v.* 12—22.

AT that time the LORD ſaid unto me, Hew thee two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt, and come up unto me into the mount, and make thee an ark of wood.

2 And I will write on the tables the words that were in the firſt tables, which thou brakedſt, and thou ſhalt put them in the ark.

3 And I made an ark *of* ſhittim-wood, and hewed two tables of ſtone like unto the firſt, and went up into the mount, having the two tables in mine hand.

4 And he wrote on the tables, according to the firſt writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD ſpake unto you in the mount, out of the midſt of the fire, in the day of the aſſembly: and the LORD gave them unto me.

5 And I turned myſelf and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made, and there they be, as the LORD commanded me.

6 And the children of Iſrael took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Moſera: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his ſon miniſtered in the prieſt's office in his ſtead.

7 From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters.

8 At that time the LORD ſeparated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to ſtand before the LORD to miniſter unto him, and to bleſs in his name, unto this day.

9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren: the LORD *is* his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promiſed him.

10 And I ſtayed in the mount according to the firſt time, forty days and forty nights; and the LORD hearkened unto me at that time alſo, *and* the LORD would not deſtroy thee.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto me, Ariſe, take *thy* journey before the people, that they may go in and poſſeſs the land which I ſware unto their fathers to give unto them.

12 And now, Iſrael, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to ſerve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy ſoul.

13 To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?

14 Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens *is* the LORD's thy God, the earth *alſo* with all that therein *is*.

15 Only the LORD had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he choſe their ſeed

more lively gratitude, more ſimple dependance on, and earneſt prayers for the upholding grace of God; and for a more watchful walk, and a life more devoted to ſo merciful a God and Saviour. And as this conſideration ſhould endear to us the compaſſionate interceſſor for ſinners, and induce us to deſire and value a place in the prayers of God's people; ſo ſhould we learn to compaſſionate and pray for our fellow Chriſtians, and for all men; and in meekneſs to reſtore ſuch, as have been overtaken in a fault, when there are hopeful tokens of repentance.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 3. *And I made*, &c.] This might be either a temporary ark, or the ark of the covenant framed by Moſes, and taken up by him into the mount, for the reception of the two tables of the law; and afterwards overlaid with gold by Bezaleel: or it may refer to orders given, previous to his ſecond going up into the mount, to Bezaleel to have it prepared, and in readineſs, againſt he came down again: and Moſes may be ſaid to have made it, as having given orders to have it made.

V. 6, 7.] Theſe two verſes ſo break in upon the connexion of Moſes' diſcourſe, and give ſuch an account of the names of places, &c, as has greatly perplexed the commentators. Bleſſed be God neither our ſalvation, nor our peace, are concerned in the ſolution of ſuch difficulties. Several of the places mentioned might have more names than one: and thoſe things, which, for want of further information, we cannot reconcile to other accounts, might be perfectly intelligble to them, whom Moſes addreſſed. And it is evident, either that Moſes himſelf did not much regard exactneſs of method, or connexion in this diſcourſe; or, which is more probable, that by ſome means, or other, ſome tranſpoſition hath taken place: theſe two verſes would come in more regularly after verſe the eleventh.

V. 8. *At that time*, &c.] Not after Aaron's death, but that time, concerning which Moſes had been ſpeaking before, and of which he returned to ſpeak afterwards; namely, when the breach was made up, which the golden calf had occaſioned.

after them, *even* you above all people, as *it is* this day.

16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked.

17 For the LORD your God *is* God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.

18 He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment.

19 Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

21 He *is* thy praise, and he *is* thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen.

22 Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God has made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude.

V. 16. *Circumcise*, &c.] This expression denotes the mortification of our corrupt nature; the removal of that blindness from the understanding, of that perverseness from the will, and of that depravity from the affections, which prevent our supreme love of God: (*see notes, &c. Gen.* c. xvii,) it is therefore the subject both of promises, and of precepts. (c. xxx. v. 6.) As it is our duty to love God with our whole heart; (for this the law commands;) it must be our duty to remove all that, which hinders our love of God; and we are accordingly commanded to do so; (*Ezek.* c. xviii. v. 30, 31. *Acts*, c. iii. v. 19.) But we are naturally of a contrary disposition, which is original sin, the parent of our actual transgressions, and the very essence of our guilt, and misery; "becaufe the carnal mind is enmity against God; "for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can "be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God:" (*Rom.* c. viii. v. 5—9.) In this condition the gospel addresses us with invitations, promises, and precepts: when we are convinced of the reasonableness, and necessity of the required change, and feel our own utter inability to effect it, we have recourse to the promises, and pleading them in prayer, and attending on other appointed means of grace, we wait upon, and trust in the Lord to work it in us; nor do we ever wait and trust in vain.

V. 18. *He loveth the stranger*, &c.] The universal care, and kindness of God in his Providence to persons of all nations, and characters, are intended by such expressions as these: he is represented also as the universal patron of all those, who are peculiarly exposed to oppression, or ill treatment; as strangers are in a foreign country, of which the Israelites had had painful experience in Egypt.—They were therefore required to imitate the example of the Lord, who had been so kind to them; not that of the Egyptians, who had been so cruel to them.—Notwithstanding these plain precepts the Jews in after ages were remarkable for their contempt, hatred, and ill treatment of other nations, and deemed themselves authorised in this conduct; which tended very much to their own ruin after the coming of Christ; as it hardened them against the gospel, when it was preached to the Gentiles also.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The gospel of Christ, when truly believed, prepares the heart to receive, love, and uprightly to obey the holy law of God, in imitation of him, who said, "I delight to do "thy will, yea thy law is within my heart:" (*Psal.* xl. v. 8:) and this forms the conclusive proof that our sins are pardoned, and that our God is reconciled to us. And what doth the Lord require of us even by the strictest precept of the law, as given to his redeemed people through the hands of the Mediator, which should hinder us from delighting therein? Having received so many mercies, and favours; and having such gracious promises of assistance, and acceptance, we cannot say that we want either motive, ability, or encouragement for that obedience, which he requires as the evidence of our faith, and the expression of our gratitude. His majesty and purity, his amiableness and excellency, his loving-kindness and mercy render it equitable, and reasonable, that we should fear and love him with all our soul; and from the united influence of filial fear and love, that we should obey his commandments, worship him in his ordinances, and walk in all his ways. His commandments are also for our good, and restrain us from nothing, but what is destructive of our own happiness, and that of others; and require nothing, but what conduces to inward tranquillity, and present comfort. The more we obey his commandments, the nearer will be our conformity to his image, and the more we shall reflect "the beauty of "the Lord our God," the beauty of his holiness, of his equity, truth, and love; of his compassion, and condescension (though he be so highly exalted!) to the mean, to the vile, to the miserable and oppressed. And what pleasure can be so divine, what honour so exalted, what privilege so desirable, what ornament, praise, or distinction so great, as to have the God of gods, and Lord of lords for our father, and our friend, to walk with him, and become like him? This honour have all his saints! to this they are chosen, this is the fruit of his special love, the effect of his converting grace, and the earnest of his eternal glory. Having had a delight in our fathers, whom he had called by his grace, he hath favoured us their posterity with his gospel, above many of the nations of the earth; he hath established and continued the ministry thereof, and hath had a remnant of true believers amongst us hitherto, (which may he increase to an innumerable multitude!) let us then fear coming short of this great salvation; for the Lord is terrible, as well as merciful. Let us use the means, and pray earnestly for that grace, which may circumcise our hearts, and wash them from every wickedness: let us without delay, or reserve come to him, and cleave to him, as our reconciled God in Jesus Christ, that we may love, serve, and obey him acceptably; and be daily changed into his image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. The love of God enforced from the conſideration of his kindneſs to them, v. 1—7. *2d. Exhortations to obedience, mixed with gracious promiſes, ſolemn warnings, and repeated inſtructions, v.* 8—25. *3d. A bleſſing, and a curſe ſet before the people, with orders to publiſh them from mount Gerizzim, and mount Ebal, v.* 26—32.

THEREFORE thou ſhalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his ſtatutes, and his judgments, and his commandments alway.

2 And know ye this day; for *I ſpeak* not with your children which have not known, and which have not ſeen the chaſtiſement of the LORD your God, his greatneſs, his mighty hand, and his ſtretched-out arm;

3 And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midſt of Egypt unto Pharaoh the king of Egypt, and unto all his land;

4 And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horſes, and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red ſea to overflow them as they purſued after you, and *how* the LORD hath deſtroyed them unto this day;

5 And what he did unto you in the wilderneſs, until ye came into this place;

6 And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the ſons of Eliab, the ſon of Reuben; how the earth opened her mouth, and ſwallowed them up, and their houſeholds, and their tents, and all the ſubſtance that *was* in their poſſeſſion in the midſt of all Iſrael.

7 But your eyes have ſeen all the great acts of the LORD, which he did.

8 Therefore ſhall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be ſtrong, and go in and poſſeſs the land whither ye go to poſſeſs it:

9 And that ye may prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD ſware unto your fathers to give unto them, and to their ſeed, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 For the land whither thou goeſt in to poſſeſs it *is* not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou ſowedſt thy ſeed, and wateredſt *it* with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

11 But the land whither ye go to poſſeſs it, *is* a land of hills and valleys, *and* drinketh water of the rain of heaven;

12 A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

13 And it ſhall come to paſs, if ye ſhall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to ſerve him with all your heart, and will all your ſoul,

14 That I will give *you* the rain of your land in his due ſeaſon, the firſt rain and the latter rain, that thou mayeſt gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil.

15 And I will ſend graſs in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayeſt eat, and be full.

16 Take heed to yourſelves, that your heart be not deceived, and ye turn aſide, and ſerve other gods, and worſhip them;

17 And *then* the LORD's wrath be kindled againſt you, and he ſhut up the heaven that

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1. *Therefore*, &c.] This verſe properly belongs to the foregoing chapter, and is the practical inference from the concluding words of it; whilſt the next verſe proceeds to another view of the ſubject.

V. 2. *Your Children*, &c.] We may ſuppoſe that Moſes addreſſed theſe words particularly to the elders, who had in their youth witneſſed the wonderful works, which the Lord had wrought both for them, and amongſt them; and who were therefore bound to remember them for their own warning, and inſtruction, and to teſtify of them to the riſing generation, who had not been eye witneſſes of them.

V. 10. *Wateredſt it*, &c.] There is ſeldom any rain falls in Egypt, but it is mainly watered by the inundations of the river Nile, which indeed cauſe great fertility, but occaſion the people much labour, in digging trenches, and forming conveyances for the water into the different parts of the country, as if they were watering a garden; from all which the Iſraelites in Canaan would be exempted.

V. 12.] Theſe expreſſions imply that the fruitfulneſs of that favoured land aroſe from an eſpecial attention of the providence of God thereto, as the intended reſidence of his people: and at this day the ſame country is remarkably barren, that ſpecial favour being withdrawn. But we may alſo conſider Canaan as a type of heaven, and theſe expreſſions, as relating to that typical meaning.

V. 14. *In his due ſeaſon*, &c.] Neither in too great, or in too ſmall proportion, nor out of ſeaſon; but eſpecially to prepare the ground for the ſeed, and to bring forward the harveſt.

there

there be no rain, and that the land yield not her fruit, and *leſt* ye periſh quickly from off the good land which the LORD giveth you.

18 Therefore ſhall ye lay up theſe my words in your heart, and in your ſoul, and bind them for a ſign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

19 And ye ſhall teach them your children, ſpeaking of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up.

20 And thou ſhalt write them upon the door poſts of thine houſe, and upon thy gates;

21 That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD ſware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth.

22 For if ye ſhall diligently keep all theſe commandments which I command you to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;

23 Then will the LORD drive out all theſe nations from before you, and ye ſhall poſſeſs greater nations, and mightier than yourſelves.

24 Every place whereon the ſoles of your feet ſhall tread ſhall be yours: from the wilderneſs, and Lebanon, from the river, the river Euphrates, even unto the uttermoſt ſea, ſhall your coaſt be.

25 There ſhall no man be able to ſtand before you: *for* the LORD your God ſhall lay the fear of you, and the dread of you upon all the land that ye ſhall tread upon, as he hath ſaid unto you.

26 Behold, I ſet before you this day a bleſſing, and a curſe;

27 A bleſſing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day;

28 And a curſe, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aſide out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods which ye have not known.

29 And it ſhall come to paſs when the LORD thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it, that thou ſhalt put the bleſſing upon mount Gerizzim, and the curſe upon mount Ebal.

30 *Are* they not on the other ſide Jordan, by the way where the ſun goeth down in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the champian over againſt Gilgal, beſide the plains of Moreh?

31 For ye ſhall paſs over Jordan, to go in

V. 18—21. *(See notes,* &c. ch. vi. v. 6—9.)

V. 29—30.] This ceremony is more explicitly commanded, ch. xxvii. and the obſervance of it is recorded, *Joſhua*, c. viii. v. 30—35. The appointment of it at this time was a pledge of their paſſage over Jordan. In this world we believe, and in part experience that the righteous are bleſſed, and the wicked are accurſed: but beyond the grave the reality, and extent of the bleſſing, and of the curſe will be more perfectly apprehended.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

There are certain grand principles in true religion, which muſt be introduced upon every ſubject; and repetitions in this caſe are ſo neceſſary, and becoming, that no learning, ingenuity, or eloquence can compenſate for the omiſſion of them. Such are repentance of ſin; faith in Jeſus Chriſt, with thoſe things, which relate to his perſon, love, atonement, and grace; regeneration; love to God and man, &c. The more full the heart of the ſpeaker, or of the writer is of "the good treaſure," *(Matt.* c. xii. 35. c. xiii. v. 52;) the more will he enlarge on theſe, and ſimilar ſubjects, to the diſguſt of thoſe, who, being under the influence of pride, and worldly affections, ſavour not heavenly things. In one way, or other, ſuch topics will be continually reſumed in connection with every doctrine, that is explained, and every precept, that is enforced; and as introducing the practical improvement of every mercy received, of every chaſtiſement or judgment inflicted, of every threatening denounced, of every example, hiſtory, warning, caution, or exhortation. Theſe ſubjects muſt be uſed as the bread, and ſalt are to all our meals, of whatever occaſional topic we diſcourſe: and they, who are duly aware of their vaſt importance, will watch for opportunities of introducing them, as unwilling to relinquiſh the hope of gaining attention from their hearers, or readers to them as, to matters of indiſpenſable neceſſity. All the Lord's kindneſs to us in providence, or by redemption, is intended to teach, and induce our love, and obedience to him: without which our faith, and our knowledge, are vain; our hope is deluſion and preſumption, and we muſt be miſerable for ever: theſe are the ſure effects of repentance, and faith, the ornament of our profeſſion, and the preparation for, and earneſt of heaven; where love, obedience, and felicity will be alike perfect.—Upon condition of ſuch perfect love, and obedience, the law of God ſets before us a bleſſing; and in caſe of diſobedience denounces a curſe againſt us: but we have broken the law, and are under it's curſe, without remedy from ourſelves: in infinite mercy the goſpel again ſets before us a bleſſing, and a curſe; a bleſſing if we obey the call to repentance, to faith in Chriſt, and newneſs of

to poſſeſs the land which the LORD your God giveth you, and ye ſhall poſſeſs it, and dwell therein.

32 And ye ſhall obſerve to do all the ſtatutes and judgments which I ſet before you this day.

CHAP. XII.

Contains laws repeated, explained, enacted, or enforced, concerning, 1ſt. The deſtroying of the monuments of idolatry, v. 1—3. 2d. The place where their ſacrifices were to be offered, their oblations preſented, and their holy things eaten; with allowance to eat fleſh in other places, but without the blood, v. 4—28. 3d. Againſt imitating the Canaanites, v. 29—32.

THESE *are* the ſtatutes and judgments which ye ſhall obſerve to do in the land which the LORD God of thy fathers giveth thee to poſſeſs it, all the days that ye live upon the earth.

2 Ye ſhall utterly deſtroy all the places wherein the nations which ye ſhall poſſeſs ſerved their gods, upon the high mountains, and upon the hills, and under every green tree.

3 And ye ſhall overthrow their altars, and break their pillars, and burn their groves with fire, and ye ſhall hew down the graven images of their gods, and deſtroy the names of them out of that place.

4 Ye ſhall not do ſo unto the LORD your God.

5 But unto the place which the LORD your God ſhall chooſe out of all your tribes, to put his name there, *even* unto his habitation ſhall ye ſeek, and thither thou ſhalt come:

6 And thither ye ſhall bring your burnt-offerings, and your ſacrifices, and your tithes, and heave-offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your free-will offerings, and the firſtlings of your herds, and of your flocks.

7 And there ye ſhall eat before the LORD your God; and ye ſhall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your houſeholds, wherein the LORD thy God hath bleſſed thee.

8 Ye ſhall not do after all *the things* that we do here this day, every man whatſoever *is* right in his own eyes.

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heart and life through him: an awful curſe, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation. Let us then thankfully welcome theſe glad tidings of great joy; and "give the more earneſt heed "to the things that we have heard, leſt at any time we "ſhould let them ſlip;" let us not harden our hearts, but hear this voice of God whilſt it is called to day, and whilſt he ſo kindly invites us to come to him upon a mercy-ſeat. Urged on by fear of coming ſhort, animated by hope of obtaining the prize, drawn on by love, let us give diligence to make our calling, and election ſure. And calling to our remembrance all that we have heard, learned, and experienced of the Lord's power, faithfulneſs, righteouſneſs, and mercy from our very youth, let us bear teſtimony of them to the riſing generation; let us then make them the ſubject of our daily converſe, and endeavour to bequeath them as a legacy to our children after us; that they, as well as we, may be ſtrong in the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, encouraged in fighting the good fight of faith, made conquerors over every enemy, and obtain an inheritance in that better land, which the eyes of the Lord watch over, and the glory of the Lord ſhineth upon, and beatifieth to all eternity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. V. 2, 3.] As amongſt theſe monuments of idolatry no mention is made of temples, it is probable that the tabernacle made in the wilderneſs was the firſt habitation for the Deity, which was erected; and that a miſunderſtanding of it's meaning, and intention gave riſe to the practice of building temples in after ages. (*See note, Exod.* c. xxv. v. 8.) Previous to this, they worſhipped in high, or in ſhady places, as favourable to contemplation, or as ſuppoſed peculiarly ſacred to the Deity: which cuſtom was in many places retained long afterwards.

V. 5. *Unto the place*, &c.] The command had before been given them to bring all their ſacrifices to the door of the tabernacle. (*Lev.* c. xvii. v. 1—9.) But at this time the general command was particularly explained with reference to their ſituation in the promiſed land, and was expatiated upon in a manner, which evidenced that it was to be conſidered as a matter of the firſt importance. (1.) Idolatry, and ſuperſtition would be prevented, and the true object, and preſcribed method, of worſhip adhered to, when all their ſacrifices were offered at the ſame place, by the prieſts appointed for that purpoſe. (2.) Brotherly love, and harmony in religion would be promoted by theſe conſtant opportunities of meeting together from every part of the land, and joining in their ſacred inſtitutions. And (3.) The temple, ſacrifices, prieſts, and eſpecially the ark of the covenant were typical of Chriſt, through whom alone God can be acceptably worſhipped by ſinners. Where the ark was ſituated, God would accept their ſacrifices, but *ordinarily* no where elſe. Yet prayer, and praiſe might be offered elſewhere, with reference to the ſacrifices at the altar, and the ſprinkling of the blood before the ark. The place was not at this time appointed; that was left to be done after they had got poſſeſſion of the land: accordingly Shiloh was long the appointed place, and afterwards Jeruſalem.

V. 8. *Ye ſhall not do*, &c.] The ceremonial obſervances were interrupted in the wilderneſs by the want of many things requiſite to the due performance of them, when they had no corn-fields, vineyards, or olive-yards: or by their con-

9 For

9 For ye are not as yet come to the reſt and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you.

10 But *when* ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and *when* he giveth you reſt from all your enemies round about, ſo that ye dwell in ſafety;

11 Then there ſhall be a place which the LORD your God ſhall chooſe, to cauſe his name to dwell there, thither ſhall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt-offerings, and your ſacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD.

12 And ye ſhall rejoice before the LORD your God, ye, and your ſons, and your daughters, and your men-ſervants, and your maid-ſervants, and the Levite that *is* within your gates; foraſmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you.

13 Take heed to thyſelf, that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings in every place that thou ſeeſt:

14 But in the place which the LORD ſhall chooſe in one of thy tribes, there thou ſhalt offer thy burnt-offerings, and there thou ſhalt do all that I command thee.

15 Notwithſtanding, thou mayeſt kill and eat fleſh in all thy gates, whatſoever thy ſoul luſteth after, according to the bleſſing of the LORD thy God, which he hath given thee: the unclean and the clean may eat thereof, as of the roe-buck, and as of the hart.

16 Only ye ſhall not eat the blood; ye ſhall pour it upon the earth as water.

17 Thou mayeſt not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firſtlings of thy herds, or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou voweſt, nor thy free-will offerings, or heave-offering of thy hand:

18 But thou muſt eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God ſhall chooſe, thou and thy ſon, and thy daughter, and thy man-ſervant, and thy maid-ſervant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates: and thou ſhalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou putteſt thine hands unto.

19 Take heed to thyſelf that thou forſake not the Levite as long as thou liveſt upon the earth.

20 When the LORD thy God ſhall enlarge thy border, as he hath promiſed thee, and thou ſhalt ſay, I will eat fleſh, (becauſe thy ſoul longeth to eat fleſh,) thou mayeſt eat fleſh, whatſoever thy ſoul luſteth after.

21 If the place which the LORD thy God hath choſen to put his name there be too far from thee; then thou ſhalt kill of thy herd, and of thy flock, which the LORD hath given thee, as I have commanded thee, and thou ſhalt eat in thy gates whatſoever thy ſoul luſteth after.

22 Even as the roe-buck and the hart is eaten, ſo thou ſhalt eat them; the unclean and the clean ſhall eat *of* them alike.

23 Only be ſure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayeſt not eat the life with the fleſh.

24 Thou ſhalt not eat it; thou ſhalt pour it upon the earth as water.

25 Thou ſhalt not eat it; that it may go

ſtant removals from place to place. But it is plain that in the beſt of times hitherto many things have been neglected, or defective in the church of God: and that the typical meaning of theſe inſtitutions was the main thing intended by them; for they never were very exactly obſerved in any age of the Jewiſh church, except it were in the days of Joſhua.

V. 17. *The tithe*, &c.] Probably this means the ſecond tithe; (c. xiv. v. 23—29;) For the Levites were wholly to receive the other; (*Num.* c. xviii. v. 20—32.) Somewhat of the ſame kind ſeems to have been the caſe, in reſpect of the firſtlings here mentioned: for every male firſtling was to be food for the prieſts only. (*Num.* c. xviii. v. 17, 18.) Either the female firſtling, or ſome other of their young cattle, being preſented as peace-offerings, were thus to be feaſted on before the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot ſerve God, and mammon; nor worſhip the true God, and idols; nor depend upon Chriſt Jeſus, and ſuperſtitious, or ſelf-righteous confidences. No coalition is to be attempted in theſe caſes. True religion ſprings from the ſubverſion of every falſe dependance, and the dethroning of every idol, and tends to the total extirpation of every rival, and opponent; that the Lord may be our only portion and ſalvation, and receive all our worſhip, and obedience. Nor can we ever approach the Lord with acceptance, but in a way of his revealing, and in ordinances of his appoint-

well with thee, and with thy children after thee, when thou ſhalt do *that which is* right n the ſight of the LORD.

26 Only thy holy things which thou haſt, and thy vows, thou ſhalt take, and go unto the place which the LORD ſhall chooſe.

27 And thou ſhalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the fleſh and the blood, upon the altar of the LORD thy God: and the blood of thy ſacrifices ſhall be poured out upon the altar of the LORD thy God, and thou ſhalt eat the fleſh.

28 Obſerve and hear all theſe words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doeſt *that which is* good and right in the ſight of the LORD thy God.

29 When the LORD thy God ſhall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs them, and thou ſucceedeſt them, and dwelleſt in their land;

30 Take heed to thyſelf that thou be not ſnared by following them, after that they be deſtroyed from before thee; and that thou enquire not after their gods, ſaying, How did theſe nations ſerve their gods? even ſo will I do likewiſe.

31 Thou ſhalt not do ſo unto the LORD thy God: for every abomination to the LORD which he hateth, have they done unto their gods: for even their ſons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods.

32 What thing ſoever I command you, obſerve to do it: thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains the law for the puniſhment of thoſe, who tempted to, or were guilty of idolatry, in the caſe, 1ſt. Of a falſe prophet, v. 1—5. 2d. Of a near relation, v. 6—11. 3d. Of a whole city, v. 12—18.

IF there ariſe among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a ſign or a wonder;

2 And the ſign or the wonder come to paſs whereof he ſpake unto thee, ſaying, Let us go after other gods, which thou haſt not known, and let us ſerve them:

3 Thou ſhalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams:

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ing; for our own wiſdom, or imagination are not in the leaſt to be truſted in matters of this nature. In Chriſt Jeſus, as in the true temple, all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells bodily: to whom we come by humble faith, and receive the pardon, the reconciliation, and the grace, which he beſtows from his mercy-ſeat: thus we learn to love him, to obey his commandments, and to preſent our ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer, and praiſe, and of every work of compaſſion and kindneſs, performed for his ſake. There we find acceptance of our imperfect ſervices, and learn to take delight therein; for the ways of our reconciled Father are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all his paths are peace. And our inward ſatisfaction will be augmented in proportion as we abound in love, and good works, which ſpring from faith, and the in-dwelling Spirit of Chriſt. But we muſt not be ſatisfied with that meaſure of diligence, which paſſes current in the church of God itſelf; wherein too often, many allow themſelves, and are connived at by others, in doing whatſoever is right in their own eyes: but we muſt look to the law of God, and conſider what it requires: we muſt remember thoſe primitive times, when great grace was upon all the company of Chriſtians, and reflect how they lived; and we muſt look upward to thoſe, who have arrived at their reſt, and inheritance, and endeavour to conceive how they love, rejoice in, and ſerve the Lord, and be preſſing forward after ſuch perfection.—If we would have a comfortable uſe of our poſſeſſions, and be happy in domeſtic life, we ſhould honour God with our ſubſtance, worſhip him in our families, and train up our children and ſervants to attend upon all his ordinances. Nay, "whether we eat, "or drink, or whatever we do," we are commanded "to "do all to the glory of God:" this cannot be done without obſerving the rules of ſtrict temperance, and ſubmiſſion to God's providence in our freeſt uſe of his good creatures; nor without having all ſanctified by the word of God and Prayer: Nor without ſeparating a portion for the poor, and for the proviſion of ſuch, who labouring in the word and doctrine, ſeek not an inheritance of temporal things among their brethren, and may not be forgotten by them. And we muſt do all in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, giving thanks to the Father through him: and exerciſe in every thing that dominion over our appetites, which becomes his diſciples, and thoſe who ſavour heavenly things. Nor muſt we fail to watch againſt being enſnared by the examples, maxims, faſhions, and perſuaſions of the world; nor yield at all to them, or they will draw us into further abominations. But whatſoever the Lord commands, that muſt we obſerve, and do, without adding to it, or diminiſhing from it, that it may be well with us, and with our children after us for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. V. 3. *The Lord your God proveth you*, &c.] That which is once demonſtrated to be true, can by no evidence be ſhewn to be falſe: the grand principles of religion may be demonſtrated to be true: the exiſtence of God, from the exiſtence of the creation; and the grand principles of revelation, from the external and internal evidences of that revelation. Unleſs theſe evidences could be ſhewn inſufficient, all objections are futile, or malicious; though (as in the caſe of an incendiary,) malevo-

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for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your ſoul.

4 Ye ſhall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye ſhall ſerve him and cleave unto him.

5 And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams ſhall be put to death, (becauſe he hath ſpoken to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the houſe of bondage, to thruſt thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in,) ſo ſhalt thou put the evil away from the midſt of thee.

6 If thy brother, the ſon of thy mother, or thy ſon or thy daughter, or the wife of thy boſom, or thy friend, which *is* as thine own ſoul, entice thee ſecretly, ſaying, Let us go and ſerve other gods, which thou haſt not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

7 *Namely*, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the *one* end of the earth, even unto the *other* end of the earth;

8 Thou ſhalt not conſent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither ſhall thine eye pity him, neither ſhalt thou ſpare, neither ſhalt thou conceal him;

9 But thou ſhalt ſurely kill him; thine hand ſhall be firſt upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people.

10 And thou ſhalt ſtone him with ſtones, that he die; becauſe he hath ſought to thruſt

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lence may more eaſily do miſchief, than benevolence can retard, or counteract it's efficacy. So far are we to be from liſtening to the ſophiſtical reaſonings of atheiſts, or infidels, againſt the plain truths, and precepts of Scripture; that even miracles are not in this caſe to be noticed. The revelation given by Moſes to the Iſraelites had been *ſufficiently authenticated:* it eſpecially required faith in, and the worſhip of Jehovah alone, to the excluſion of other objects of faith, and worſhip.—Some parts of the revelations then given, being of another nature, might hereafter by a future revelation be altered, to make way for a fuller diſcovery of divine truth, and a more enlarged diſpenſation: this would be introduced, and authenticated by miracles. But theſe firſt principles were immutable in their nature and obligation; and no miracles were to be admitted in oppoſition to them. We are too much in the dark to determine in all caſes, how far created power can reach, and where the effect can only be produced by the power of God. I think it is undeniable that ſatan, if permitted, could produce alterations in the ordinary courſe of nature, which would appear to us miraculous: and it is intimated in the New Teſtament, as well as in this place, that in ſome caſes he hath ſuch permiſſion granted him; (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 24. 2 *Theſſ.* c. ii. v. 9. *Rev.* c. xiii. v. 13—15;) though we may ſuppoſe, that there was always an obſervable difference between theſe ſatanical deluſions, and true miracles, provided the mind was diſpoſed to note it. We may be ſure that this enemy of God, and holineſs will never interpoſe to ſupport a doctrine, whoſe evident tendency is to ſubvert his own kingdom of darkneſs, and wickedneſs. (*Matt.* c. xii. v. 24—30.) We may ſafely conclude that in difficult caſes, in which an upright inquirer might be miſled, God will never permit him thus to intrude: but that the Lord, in order to prove his profeſſing people, whether they really love his truth, worſhip, and ſervice, or not; and to diſtinguiſh betwixt thoſe who do, and thoſe who do not, hath been, and ſtill may be pleaſed to permit ſatan to imitate his divine operations in different ways. (2 *Theſſ.* c. ii. v. 10—12.) In all caſes therefore, where the evident teſtimony of authenticated revelation is not contradicted, or evaded, miracles are to be conſidered as the ſeal of heaven atteſting the doctrine, in proof of which they are wrought: but when that doctrine militates againſt the evident principles of ſuch revelation, we are to conſider, that the Lord our God proves us, whether we love him or not. This ſtatement, which I truſt is ſcriptural, would guide the upright believer, who kept cloſe to the written word, and the throne of grace, through every perplexity, even when true miracles might be expected, and falſe miracles were permitted. But the revelation of God's truth and will ſeems to be now completed, and the cloſing diſpenſation introduced: and all miracles therefore pretended to be wrought in favour of any alteration therein, or addition thereto; or by any perſons in favour of their own ſenſe impoſed thereon, in defect of other arguments, are to be rejected as impoſtures of men, or deluſions of ſatan: nor have we reaſon to expect any more miracles; except the Lord ſhould ſee them needful, in the future deſtruction of Antichriſt, converſion of the Jews, and calling of the Gentiles; or on ſome ſuch extraordinary occaſions. All the pretended miracles of the Roman church wrought in favour of it's idolatry, and ſuperſtition, are only ſo many proofs, that that church is the grand antichriſt foretold in Scripture: and all pretences to impreſſions, viſions, &c. as far as they are adduced in proof of any particular tenets, weaken the ſcriptural proof of them, if of ſuch they are capable; and diſgrace, and oppoſe the cauſe, which they are brought to ſupport. And the more the true Chriſtian diſregards the charge of enthuſiaſm, which is beſtowed upon him, for his profeſſed belief and experience, of the teaching, ſanctifying, and comforting influences of the Holy Ghoſt, according to the word of God: the more ſhould he ſhun, and proteſt againſt all appearances of real enthuſiaſm, which is pregnant with impoſture, and deluſion, and gives ſuch cauſe to the enemies of religion to ſtumble, and to blaſpheme.

V. 6—11.] By this law every Iſraelite was bound in conſcience to proſecute, to inform againſt, and to aſſiſt at thee

thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt from the houſe of bondage.

11 And all Iſrael ſhall hear and fear, and ſhall do no more any ſuch wickedneſs as this is among you.

12 If thou ſhalt hear *ſay* in one of thy cities which the LORD thy God hath given thee to dwell there, ſaying,

13 *Certain* men, the children of Belial, are gone out from among you, and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city, ſaying, Let us go and ſerve other gods, (which ye have not known:)

14 Then ſhalt thou enquire and make ſearch, and aſk diligently: and, behold, *if it be* truth, *and* the thing certain, *that*, ſuch abomination is wrought among you;

15 Thou ſhalt ſurely ſmite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the ſword, deſtroying it utterly, and all that is therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the ſword.

16 And thou ſhalt gather all the ſpoil of it into the midſt of the ſtreet thereof, and ſhalt burn with fire the city, and all the ſpoil thereof every whit, for the LORD thy God; and it ſhall be an heap for ever, it ſhall not be built again.

17 And there ſhall cleave nought of the curſed thing to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceneſs of his anger, and ſhew thee mercy, and have compaſſion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath ſworn unto thy fathers;

18 When thou ſhalt hearken to the voice

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the execution of any one, though a near relation, who attempted to perſuade him to idolatry. Yet it is obſervable that parents, and huſbands are not mentioned in the liſt of thoſe, who were to be thus accuſed; perhaps out of deference to the divine appointment of authority, and ſubordination in families. This law would powerfully operate to fill their minds with abhorrence of the ſin of idolatry, and render every one afraid of harbouring a thought in their hearts, which they could not diſcloſe to their neareſt relation, without riſquing their lives. Iſrael was under a peculiar covenant, of which idolatry was the grand forfeiture: which could not be prevented from becoming a national ſin, unleſs individuals, or even cities, that were guilty of it, were puniſhed by public authority. They were in a ſpecial manner under the government of God, as a nation, and this crime was as it were high treaſon. They were alſo a ſingle nation ſurrounded by idolaters, and prone thereto themſelves in a ſurpriſing degree. Theſe reaſons for puniſhing this crime by death do not now exiſt; and there is no command, nor precedent in the New Teſtament in ſupport of magiſtrates uſing the ſword of public juſtice, in puniſhing their ſubjects for matters *merely* of conſcience towards God, nor does it ſeem at all to accord with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. Much leſs can this authoriſe perſecution in it's larger ſenſe: the Iſraelites were not commanded, nor even allowed to puniſh idolaters as ſuch, but merely apoſtates from the worſhip of the true God to idolatry, within the limits of their own nation; nor were they required to propagate the worſhip of Jehovah, and his true religion by any ſuch methods; which ought to be left untouched by the ſervants of God, for the ſole uſe of his enemies.

V. 13. *Children of Belial*, &c.] That is the children of rebellion, who caſt off the yoke of the Lord, and of his law: another name for the children of the wicked one. (2 Cor. c. vi. v. 15.) If ſuch a caſe aroſe, it was to be fairly inveſtigated, and fully proved, before ſo terrible an execution took place; and if any perſons remained uninfected with the general contagion, they would doubtleſs be allowed to ſeparate themſelves, and probably ſome ſpace would be left them for repentance. But afterwards the whole city, with all its inhabitants, and all its riches, were as an accurſed thing to be utterly deſtroyed: and this would prove that the private accuſation, and public execution were the effect of zeal for God, and not of covetouſneſs, which might have been ſuſpected, had they ſeized upon the ſpoil. We never read of this law being carried into execution; and have reaſon to think that the neglect thereof was a national ſin, which haſtened the Babyloniſh captivity: had ſome mortified limbs been cut off, the life of the ſtate might have been prolonged.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is of vaſt importance for us to be well acquainted with, and eſtabliſhed in the truths, and precepts of revelation: for we may expect to be proved, not only with that trial of our faith, which requires us to ſuffer, or to renounce our worldly intereſts for conſcience ſake; but by being expoſed to ſuch plauſible temptations, as ſatan, transformed into an angel of light, can ſet before us, to impoſe upon us, with evil in the guiſe of good, of error in the appearance of truth: nor can any thing be effectually oppoſed to ſuch temptations, but a plain expreſs teſtimony of God's word to the contrary. In order to render ſuch temptations more dangerous, our crafty foe will ſend them to us by perſons, whom we have been accuſtomed to look up to, as ſuperiors, teachers, and men of God; or by thoſe, for whom we entertain the moſt tender affection: the former we can ſcarce think capable of deceiving, or of being deceived; to the latter we can hardly find in our hearts to refuſe any requeſt. But we muſt remember, that in all this, the Lord our God doth prove us: he is our maſter, and we muſt call no man maſter upon earth; if the ſervant therefore contradicts the Lord, we muſt believe the latter, and not the former; and that the love of God, and the duty, which we owe to him, are ſo im-

of the LORD thy God, to keep all his commandments, which I command thee this day, to do *that which is* right in the eyes of the LORD thy God.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. Laws repeated concerning Israel's distinction from other nations, in their mourning, and in their diet, v. 1—21. 2d. A law concerning their tithing their increase, &c. v. 22—29.

YE *are* the children of the LORD your God. Ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes, for the dead:

2 For thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that *are* upon the earth.

3 Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.

4 These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat: the ox, the sheep, and the goat,

5 The hart, and the roe-buck, and the fallow-deer, and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois.

6 And every beast that parteth the hoof, and cleaveth the cleft into two claws, *and* cheweth the cud among the beasts; that ye shall eat.

7 Nevertheless, these ye shall not eat, of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the cloven hoof; *as* the camel, and the hare, and the coney: for they chew the cud, but divide not the hoof; *therefore* they *are* unclean unto you.

8 And the swine, because it divideth the hoof, yet cheweth not the cud, it *is* unclean unto you: ye shall not eat of their flesh, nor touch their dead carcase.

9 These ye shall eat of all that *are* in the waters, all that have fins and scales shall ye eat.

10 And whatsoever hath not fins and scales ye may not eat; it *is* unclean unto you.

11 *Of* all clean birds ye shall eat.

12 But these *are they* of which ye shall not eat: the eagle, and the ossifrage, and the ospray,

13 And the glede, and the kite, and the vulture after his kind,

14 And every raven after his kind,

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menfely ſuperior to all other obligations, that we muſt even act towards our deareſt friends, as though we mortally hated them, when our love to God requires it; (*Luke* c. xiv. v. 26.) If then the offending relative was not to be ſpared, or pitied, but put to death by the law of God: ſurely we are called upon, not only to refuſe compliance with ſuch temptations, as are enforced by our affections; but plainly to proteſt againſt, ſharply to reprove, and, if we cannot reclaim, to renounce the friendſhip of ſuch dangerous tempters. Nor may we render any ſuperior regard to the example of numbers, who eſtabliſh *faſhions* of ungodlineſs, and put piety out of countenance, as a ſingularity, a preciſeneſs, an unneceſſary ſcrupuloſity. Still we muſt cleave to the Lord, and ſhew our love to him, by walking after him, and not after the world; and by keeping his commandments, and attending on his worſhip, how much ſoever others deſert, or deſpiſe them, and revile us for our adherence thereto. Nay, the fear, love, and worſhip of God form the true intereſt of communities, as well as of individuals; and the progreſs of ungodlineſs precedes the approach of public calamities, both in the nature of things, and in the juſt judgment of God: and the magiſtrate is, in good policy, as well as in duty, bound to employ his authority to repreſs wickedneſs, and promote religion; which may be done by various means, without wielding the perſecutor's ſword, or violating the rights of private judgment, and liberty of conſcience; eſpecially by countenancing, and encouraging the faithful preaching of God's word. But the end of all human puniſhments, yea of all the threatnings and judgments of God is this: "that men "ſhould hear, and fear, repent of, and forſake their ſins, "that the fierce wrath of God may be averted, whether "from individuals, or from nations." However enormous any crime may be, and however neceſſary the puniſhment of it, none muſt be proceeded againſt, but upon diligent inveſtigation, and full proof: and every one concerned in the proſecution of criminals, ſhould be careful to make it evident, that they are influenced, not by ſelfiſh motives, but by a regard to public juſtice. Such as connive at, and conceal thoſe enormous crimes, that ought to be puniſhed by the magiſtrate, become partakers of the guilt: and the obſtinate in wickedneſs are near to deſtruction; from whom we muſt ſeparate, if we would eſcape their doom. Nor ſhould we forget that we have no leſs, but indeed greater reaſon to fear the wrath of this holy Lord God, under the Chriſtian diſpenſation; becauſe thoſe ſpiritual judgments which are thereby inflicted, are infinitely more terrible, than the moſt ſolemn execution of criminals by the ſword of juſtice: and the more entirely wicked people eſcape puniſhment in this world, the greater will be their miſery in the world to come. Let us then fear the *ſpiritual idolatry* of covetouſneſs, and the love of worldly pleaſure; and be careful not to countenance it in our families, by our example, or education of our children: and may the Lord write his law, and truth in our hearts, there ſet up his throne, and ſhed abroad his love, and thence expel all uſurpers and rivals, that we may be his alone; as a full proof that our ſins are forgiven, and as a gracious preparation for future chearful obedience.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 1. *Ye are the children*, &c.] (*See notes Gen.* c. vi. v. 2. *Lev.* c. xix. v. 28. c. xxi. v 5.)

15 And the owl, and the night hawk, and the cuckow, and the hawk after his kind,

16 The little owl, and the great owl, and the ſwan,

17 And the pelican, and the gier-eagle, and the cormorant,

18 And the ſtork, and the heron after her kind, and the lapwing, and the bat.

19 And every creeping thing that flieth *is* unclean unto you: they ſhall not be eaten.

20 *But of* all clean fowls ye may eat.

21 Ye ſhall not eat *of* any thing that dieth of itſelf: thou ſhalt give it unto the ſtranger that *is* in thy gates, that he may eat it: or thou mayeſt ſell it unto an alien: for thou *art* an holy people unto the LORD thy God. Thou ſhalt not ſeethe a kid in his mother's milk.

22 Thou ſhalt truly tithe all the increaſe of thy ſeed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

23 And thou ſhalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he ſhall chooſe to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firſtlings of thy herds, and of thy flocks; that thou mayeſt learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

24 And if the way be too long for thee, ſo that thou art not able to carry it; *or* if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God ſhall chooſe to ſet his name there, when the LORD thy God hath bleſſed thee:

25 Then ſhalt thou turn *it* into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and ſhalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God ſhall chooſe.

26 And thou ſhalt beſtow that money for whatſoever thy ſoul luſteth after, for oxen, or for ſheep, or for wine, or for ſtrong drink, or for whatſoever thy ſoul deſireth: and thou ſhalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou ſhalt rejoice, thou and thine houſehold.

27 And the Levite that *is* within thy gates, thou ſhalt not forſake him: for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

28 At the end of three years thou ſhalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increaſe the ſame year, and ſhalt lay *it* up within thy gates.

29 And the Levite, (becauſe he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the ſtranger, and the fatherleſs, and the widow, which *are* within thy gates, ſhall come, and ſhall eat and be ſatisfied; that the LORD thy God may bleſs thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doeſt.

V. 21. *Thou ſhalt give it*, &c.] This allowance evinces, that the law reſtricting their diet was entirely ceremonial, though it conveyed moral inſtruction, and anſwered, at that time, valuable religious purpoſes: for, had the violation of it been ſinful in its own nature, it would have been ſinful in the heathens, as well as in the Iſraelites; and they muſt no more have been acceſſory to others committing ſin, than have committed it themſelves. (*See notes, &c. Lev.* c. xi.)

V. 22—29.] Theſe verſes contain a requiſition of a ſecond tithe from the produce of their land, which, with that appropriated for the maintenance of the Levites, amounted to a fifth part thereof. Two years together they were to bring this ſecond tithe to Jeruſalem, either in kind or in money, and thereon to feaſt religiouſly before the Lord, that they might be drawn to ſpend the more time at the Temple, in the ſociety of the prieſts, in the ordinances of God, and in the company of his people. The third year they were required to ſpend this tithe in hoſpitably entertaining and relieving the Levite, the ſtranger, the fatherleſs, and the widow; that is, in every kind of charity. This whole appointment was evidently intended to counteract the covetouſneſs, diſtruſt, and ſelfiſhneſs of the human heart; to promote friendlineſs, liberality, and chearfulneſs; to raiſe a perpetual fund for the uſe of the poor; to teach them that they never ſo comfortably would enjoy their worldly portion, as when they ſhared it with their neceſſitous brethren: and they were taught to convert the common bleſſings of providence into a ſacred ordinance, by accompanying their moſt free, but temperate uſe of them, with the exerciſe of religion: and this was the way to learn to fear God always, and to obtain his bleſſing upon all the works of their hands.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Thoſe, whom God hath choſen to be his children, he will form to be an holy people, and of a peculiarly heavenly diſpoſition, and zealous of good works. As their character and privileges are therefore ſo diſtinguiſhed from thoſe of other people, they muſt be careful to maintain that diſtinction in its utmoſt extent; to ſhew to the world an evident example of holy moderation in all their affections, and to avoid every thing which may diſgrace their profeſſion in the ſight of thoſe, whoſe eyes are watching for their halting. Having a Father in heaven, who ever liveth to ſupply all their wants, and to repair every breach, they need not mourn the loſs of earthly friends in that diſconſolate manner, in which others do. Our heavenly Father prohibits us nothing, but in a wiſe and kind regard to our welfare; nothing but what is debaſing, or hurtful, or leads us into temptation; the language of his prohibitions, rightly interpreted, is, "Do thyſelf no harm; do not wound thy-

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1st. A judicial law for the release of debts every sabbatical year, with a moral injunction of lending liberally notwithstanding, v. 1—11. *2d. The laws of releasing slaves repeated, and enforced; with additions, v.* 12—18. *3d. The firstlings commanded to be devoted to the Lord, v.* 19—23.

AT the end of *every* seven years thou shalt make a release.

2 And this *is* the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth *ought* unto his neighbour shall release *it*; he shall not exact *it* of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the LORD's release.

3 Of a foreigner thou mayest exact *it again:* but *that* which is thine with thy brother, thine hand shall release;

4 Save when there shall be no poor among you; for the LORD shall greatly bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to possess it:

5 Only If thou carefully hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day.

6 For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee; and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.

7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother;

8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, *in that* which he wanteth.

9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought, and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.

"self; do not ruin thy health, thy reputation, thy domestic "comfort, thy peace of mind; especially do not murder "thy soul; do not be the vile slave of thy appetites and "passions, do not render all around thee miserable, and "thyself the most wretched of all; but aspire at that which "is noble, excellent, permanent, and useful." Considering these prohibitions, in connexion with the indulgences which he allows us, we must acknowledge, that we should all be happy, if we consulted our own, and each other's welfare, as much as the law of God doth; making that our *rule of enjoyment*, we should use providential blessings, in subserviency to religious edification, to our own inward peace and satisfaction, to the promotion of brotherly love, to our mutual usefulness, and to the production of fruit, which will at length abound to our own account. That "Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness," is a truth, of which every man will have experimental proof, in proportion to his devotedness to God. May we then choose and pursue this happiness, and compassionate and pray for those deluded millions, who seek for pleasure in sin, which is the only cause of all the misery in the universe: and let us learn to value every earthly advantage as enabling us to glorify God, by disseminating the knowledge of his truth, and by communicating to the relief of our distressed brethren and fellow creatures.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 2. *He shall not exact it*, &c.] The debtor was bound in conscience to pay the debt, if he were able at that time, or perhaps at any future time; but the creditor was not allowed to sue for it, nor the magistrate to enforce the payment of it; at least if it appeared that the debtor could not with conveniency part with the money; for some such limitation the word "exact" seems to admit of; and the law was evidently intended for the relief of the indigent, not for the security of the fraudulent.

V. 3. *Of a foreigner*, &c.] Though the Israelites were not allowed to oppress, or do injustice to foreigners, yet in *these laws of love* a difference was made betwixt strangers and their brethren. We must do exact justice to all; but in shewing kindness, we must especially regard the household of faith.

V. 4. *Save when*, &c.] Had the Israelites fully performed the terms of their national covenant, their great prosperity would have entirely banished poverty from among them, (V. 5, 6.) But the Lord foresaw that they would not thus be obedient, and foretold them, that "the poor should "never cease from amongst them," but ever remain as a trial of their disposition to do good for his sake, (V. 11.) This expression may also mean, that they ought so liberally to relieve every poor brother, that all being comfortably provided for, no poverty might be visible amongst them.

V. 9. *That there be not a thought*, &c.] The righteous demands of God's law rouse the dormant enmity of man's wicked heart, and prove an occasion of increasing his guilt, (*Rom.* c. vii. v. 8—13;) for the same law condemns every rising thought of sin. They were therefore to beware lest this should be the case with them, lest this equitable statute should occasion their covetousness to work; and lest they should evade it, by refusing to lend the poor in their distress, or by only lending them in a niggardly and grudging manner, because of this law. This caution forms a divinely inspired interpretation of the law of "loving our neighbour as ourselves," which is still in full force, (*Matth.* c. vi. v. 12. c. xviii. v. 35. *Luke* c. vi. v. 35;) though the judicial law, upon which

10 Thou ſhalt ſurely give him, and thine heart ſhall not be grieved when thou giveſt unto him: becauſe that for this thing the LORD thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto.

11 For the poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the land: therefore I command thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

12 *And* if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be ſold unto thee, and ſerve thee ſix years; then in the ſeventh year thou ſhalt let him go free from thee.

13 And when thou ſendeſt him out free from thee, thou ſhalt not let him go away empty:

14 Thou ſhalt furniſh him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-preſs: *of that* wherewith the LORD thy God hath bleſſed thee thou ſhalt give unto him.

15 And thou ſhalt remember that thou waſt a bond man in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to-day.

16 And it ſhall be, if he ſay unto thee, I will not go away from thee, (becauſe he loveth thee and thine houſe, becauſe he is well with thee,)

17 Then thou ſhalt take an awl, and thruſt *it* through his ear unto the door, and he ſhall be thy ſervant for ever: and alſo unto thy maid-ſervant thou ſhalt do likewiſe.

18 It ſhall not ſeem hard unto thee, when thou ſendeſt him away free from thee; for he hath been worth a double hired ſervant *to thee*, in ſerving thee ſix years: and the LORD thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all that thou doeſt.

19 All the firſtling males that come of thy herd, and of thy flock, thou ſhalt ſanctify unto the LORD thy God: thou ſhalt do no work with the firſtling of thy bullock, nor ſhear the firſtling of thy ſheep.:

20 Thou ſhalt eat *it* before the LORD thy God, year by year, in the place which the LORD ſhall chooſe, thou and thy houſhold.

21 And if there be *any* blemiſh therein, *as if it be* lame, or blind, *or have* any ill blemiſh, thou ſhalt not ſacrifice it unto the LORD thy God.

22 Thou ſhalt eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean *perſon ſhall eat it* alike, as the roe-buck, and as the hart.

23 Only thou ſhalt not eat the blood thereof; thou ſhalt pour it upon the ground as water.

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it was grafted, be no longer the magiſtrate's rule in adminiſtring juſtice, (*ſee notes*, &c. *Ex.* c. xxiii. v. 10, 11. *Lev.* c. xxv. v. 2—7.)

V. 14, 15.] This addition to the law before commented on, (*Exod.* c. xxi. V. 6.) is likewiſe a divine interpretation of the law of love, which was enforced upon them by the conſideration of their redemption from the Egyptian bondage, and the manner in which the Egyptians were conſtrained to pay them their wages, and the proſperity to which the Lord had advanced them. But the ſpirit of the precept is obligatory upon the redeemed of the Lord, upon higher and more powerful motives.

V. 17. *And alſo unto thy maid-ſervant*, &c.] It appears hence, that female ſervants were purchaſed for their labour, without any purpoſe of eſpouſing them, and that they were under the ſame law with the men ſervants, (*ſee Exod.* c. xxi. v. 7—11.)

V. 18. *In ſerving thee*, &c.] It ſeems that it was not cuſtomary for hired ſervants to agree to ſerve longer than three years at one time, leſt their condition ſhould too much reſemble that of thoſe, who ſold themſelves through poverty, or were ſold for their debts or crimes.

V. 19—23.] The firſtling, being a male, was to be ſacrificed, and what was not burnt upon the altar, was to be eaten by the prieſts; but, being a female, it was to be offered as a peace-offering, and feaſted upon by the offerer, and his friends; except it were blemiſhed, and then it was to be ſlain when young, and eaten as ordinary food, but without the blood.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are here called upon to remember, that we are debtors to divine juſtice, and have got nothing to pay, (*Luke* c. vii. v. 41, 42;) and are liable to be ſent to the priſon of hell on that account: that we are ſlaves, and poor, and periſhing; but the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by becoming poor, and ſhedding his blood, hath made an infinite proviſion for the payment of our debts, the ranſom of our ſouls, and the full and everlaſting ſupply of all our wants. This proviſion is revealed, and propoſed in the goſpel, and we are invited to partake of all theſe bleſſings, freely, without money, and without price. When this goſpel is clearly preached, then, and there is proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of releaſe of our debts, of the deliverance of our ſouls, and of obtaining reſt in him. To every true believer, the Lord frankly forgives the whole debt, and he becomes a partaker of Chriſt, of his freedom, and of all his unſearchable riches. To theſe perſons he commands with the mild accents of love,

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. A repetition of the laws concerning the three great annual feasts, 1—17. *2d. Orders for the appointment, and concerning the duties of inferior magistrates,* 18—20. *3d. Groves near God's altar, and images prohibited,* 21—22.

OBSERVE the month of Abib, and keep the passover unto the LORD thy God: for in the month of Abib the LORD thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night.

2 Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the LORD thy God, of the flock and the herd, in the place which the LORD shall choose to place his name there.

3 Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it: seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread therewith, *even* the bread of affliction; (for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste:) that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life.

4 And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days; neither shall there *any thing* of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning.

5 Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee:

6 But at the place which the LORD thy God shall choose to place his name in, there thou shalt sacrifice the passover at even, at the going down of the sun, at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt.

7 And thou shalt roast and eat *it* in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents.

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those very duties, which the law required under awful penalties. Thus we are to prove that our faith is not that dead faith, which as a worthless putrifying carcase must be carried out of the church of God; but that it works by love, and that our love is proved sincere, by these fruits of kindness to our brethren. To favour this trial of our faith, the poor continuing amongst us, are appointed the Lord's representatives and receivers: (*Matth.* c. xxv. v. 31—46:) and to relieve their wants, and remit their debts, according to the measure of our ability, is appointed as one grand expression, and test of our love to the Saviour. Upon the most powerful motives, and with the most encouraging promises, the professed disciples of Christ are called upon to abound in this grace also. In proportion as faith and love prevail, they will triumph over the selfishness of the heart, and over the ingratitude of the world; and exclude those numerous excuses, which result from unbelief, distrust, and covetousness. The aim of every Christian should be to do daily good to all men, especially to them, that are of the household of faith: and to open his hand liberally, in giving, or in lending according to his ability, and according to the necessity of his brethren, that distressing poverty may have no place amongst the followers of Christ; especially searching out such as are most modest, humble, and backward to complain, or obtrude upon the notice of others. Though this be only a proper acknowledgment of obligations already received, yet it shall be considered as lending to the Lord, and shall abundantly be recompensed. Let all then beware of covetousness, and watch and pray against the workings of an envious, grudging, selfish heart. We need never fear being losers, when the Lord stands security for the debt: nor carrying matters to excess, whilst we fall so short of his measure of love to us, (1 *John*, c. iii. v. 16—18;) and that, which the world calls prudence will be found the greatest folly. In the exercise of this loving kindness, those should especially be provided for, who have been useful to us, and spent their strength in our service; nor should we think it hard, but rather rejoice, in contributing to their comfort, though at some expence, who have so good a claim upon our generosity: and Christians should be ambitious of rendering all, who live in their families, or are connected with them, so comfortable, that they may love them, and their houses, and count it their privilege to abide there. Such a master is our God: all, who make trial of his service, will account it perfect freedom, and consider it their happiness to join themselves to him, to serve him with all they have, and are, and to dwell in his house as his willing servants for ever, and ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1. *By night.*] Though the Israelites did not set forward till the morning, yet whilst they were eating the passover, and holding themselves in readiness, during the night, the first-born of Egypt were destroyed, which made way for their release: and afterwards by night they passed the Red Sea, whereby it was completed. Moses repeated these laws, as with his dying lips, to this new generation, just upon their entrance into Canaan, to leave the deeper impression. (*See Notes on Exod.* c.xii. *Lev.* c. xxiii. *Numb.* c. xxviii. v. 16—30.)

V. 5. *Thou mayest not*, &c.] The use of unleavened bread was general through the whole land, (v. 4,) by which they, who were confined at home, testified their concurrence with those, who eat the passover at the tabernacle: but that was to be slain, and eaten only in the place, where the tabernacle was situated. Thither the males were required to come both at this, and the two other great feasts, unless unavoidably prevented: and the women, though not commanded frequently attended them, (1 *Sam.* c. i. v. 7. *Luke*, c. ii. v. 41. *See note Deut.* c. xii. v. 5.)

V. 7. *In the morning*, &c.] In case of urgent necessity, they might return home the next morning after eating the passover: or this may mean the morning after

8 Six days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *shall be* a solemn assembly to the LORD thy God; thou shalt do no work *therein*.

9 Seven weeks shalt thou number unto thee: begin to number the seven weeks from *such time as* thou beginnest *to put* the sickle to the corn.

10 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God with a tribute of a free will-offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give *unto the LORD thy God*, according as the LORD thy God hath blessed thee:

11 And thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that *is* within thy gates, and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* among you, in the place which the LORD thy God hath chosen to place his name there.

12 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bond-man in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

13 Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine.

14 And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that *are* within thy gates.

15 Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD shall choose; because the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands; therefore thou shalt surely rejoice.

16 Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the LORD empty.

17 Every man *shall give* as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee.

18 Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment.

19 Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous.

20 That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

21 Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees near unto the altar of the LORD thy God, which thou shalt make thee.

22 Neither shalt thou set thee up *any* image, which the LORD thy God hateth.

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the conclusion of the feast; which consisted of the day on which the passover was eaten, six intervening days, and the last concluding day of a solemn assembly, being eight in the whole; from the fourteenth to the twenty-first day of the month, both inclusive.

V. 9. *Put the sickle*, &c.] That is to reap the sheaf of first-fruits, which was presented on the first day of unleavened bread.

V. 18. *Judges and Officers*, &c.] Inferior magistrates residing all over the country, to decide causes, with appeal in difficult and important cases to the superior courts. (*See notes, &c. Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 6—8.)

V. 21. *A grove*, &c.] These having been abused to idolatry, were prohibited in the worship of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The frequent repetition of the same laws forms an humiliating reproach of man's unteachableness in spiritual things; for God doeth nothing in vain. From the example of Moses, ministers and parents may learn to renew their instructions, and admonitions with their latest breath, that the survivors may have them associated with every remembrance of them. Never should a believer forget for one day, his original low estate of guilt, and misery, his gracious deliverance, and the price, which it cost the Redeemer; that gratitude, and joy in the Lord may all his days be mingled with sorrow for, and mortification of sin, and with humble patience under the tribulations, which lie in the way to the kingdom of heaven. Every one of our services must be performed in communion with the church of Christ; and in dependance on him, our temple, altar, sacrifice, and passover; and with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. We should indeed be thankful that our attendance on God's ordinances doth not require such long, and expensive journeys, as those of Israel did: but if our hearts be right with God, we shall so delight in his service, that the labour required in it will be our pleasure; or we shall be ashamed that it is not: and the expence incurred in making the heart of the poor, and destitute rejoice with us, according to the Lord's blessing

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains laws, 1st. That their sacrifices should be of unblemished animals, 1. *2d. For the punishment of idolaters,* 2—7. *3d. For appeal to the priests, &c, and the punishment of such, as refused to submit to their decision,* 8—13. *4th. Concerning the appointment, and duty of their kings,* 14—20.

THOU shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God *any* bullock or sheep wherein is blemish, *or* any evil-favouredness: for that *is* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

2 If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,

3 And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;

4 And it be told thee, and thou hast heard *of it*, and enquired diligently, and, behold, *it be* true, *and* the thing certain, *that* such abomination is wrought in Israel:

5 Then shalt thou bring forth that man, or that woman, (which have committed that wicked thing,) unto thy gates, *even* that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones till they die.

6 At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; *but* at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death.

7 The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people: so thou shalt put the evil away from among you.

8 If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, *being* matters of controversy, within thy gates; then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which the LORD thy God shall choose:

9 And thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and enquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment.

10 And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the LORD shall choose shall shew thee; and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee;

11 According to the sentence of the law

upon us, will be our own heartfelt satisfaction.—Let us also note that magistracy is the appointment of God; as such we are to submit to it, being thankful for its advantages, patient under its inconveniencies, and praying for those placed over us. But magistrates should consider their accountableness to God for the use of their authority; and study to know and do their duty in uprightness, disinterestedness, and impartiality; that they may both be public blessings to others, and may inherit everlasting life themselves, as the true disciples of him, who loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity: nor indeed should any of us fear any thing so much as doing that, which the Lord our God hateth.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 2. *Thy gates*, &c.] That is, amongst those, who went in, and out of the gates of any of their cities, which included all the inhabitants of the whole land. This law enjoined that those, who committed idolatry, should be stoned, as well as those, who seduced others to commit it: for that crime especially "transgressed the co-"venant," and would become a national forfeiture, if not thus punished. The Lord says (v. 3.) "that he never "commanded it." Had men been commanded to worship creatures, however exalted, it might have been complained of, as a degradation: much more if they had been required to worship beasts, inanimate figures, and stocks and stones; these were none of God's commands, but of man's foolish inventions, and of satan's abominable suggestions. This law was the magistrate's rule in administering justice to individuals; as that, which was before considered, (c. xiii.) regulated informations of idolatry, and the punishment of cities, which were become guilty of that crime.—In both cases the witnesses were required to take the lead in the execution of the criminal, that they might be, by that consideration, rendered more cautious in their testimony; for though the false witness were the actual murderer of the person put to death unjustly, yet he would perhaps not be so much shocked by it, when another was the executioner of the sentence, as when he himself was required to perform that painful office.

V. 8—11.] This law is addressed to the inferior magistrates before mentioned; (c. xvi. v. 18.) In many cases of life, and death, or of property, or concerning the law of retaliation, they might find perplexing difficulties. Such causes were to be referred to the decision of the superior tribunals, which were held at the place where the tabernacle was fixed.—The priests and Levites, having the most leisure, and being especially appointed to the study of the law, which was not only the rule of conscience, but the law of the land, by their superior learning would be best qualified to act as judges; and probably the superior courts of justice were composed of them *chiefly*; and especially the Sanhedrim; though not without some persons of the

which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, *to* the right hand nor *to* the left.

12 And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.

13 And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously.

14 When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that *are* about me:

15 Thou shalt in any wise set *him* king over thee whom the LORD thy God shall choose; *one* from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which *is* not thy brother.

16 But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

18 And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of *that which is* before the priests the Levites:

19 And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life; that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them:

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other tribes. The judge here mentioned may either mean the High Priest, or some other supreme magistrate, whom God, from time to time, would raise up amongst them. To them the appeal was to be made; and with all their advantages, they were not likely to give a false sentence, whilst they continued free from gross apostacy in religion, and corruption in morals. But as this law related not to matters of faith, and conscience, but merely to the administration of justice in the land; it would be better that an individual should sometimes be aggrieved, than that the advantages of magistracy should be abridged: therefore he, who presumptuously refused to submit, was ordered to be put to death, as a rebel against the government. In every state there must be some final award, from which there lies no appeal, but which must be submitted to, even though in some cases it should be unjust: but this gives no countenance to the monstrous claim, which some have made of being absolute interpreters of doctrines, and precepts, in matters of conscience, to which all must submit, however evidently their decisions contradict the word of God. In this argument it is enough to say, "we must obey," and believe "God, rather than man;" as Peter replied to the successors of those very persons, to whom the authority in question was given, and on whom it had at that time devolved.

V. 14. *King*, &c.] The appointment of a king is not here commanded, nor so much as counselled; nay it is implied that such a change in their government would originate from a desire of being like the nations, to whom God would have them unlike; and we know that they sinned when they asked a king; (*1 Sam.* c. xii. v. 19.) But God foresaw that this would actually take place, and he previously gave these rules respecting it. We should argue therefore very inconclusively, if we should infer the lawfulness of slavery, polygamy, &c, from those judicial laws, which *suppose their existence, and establish regulations concerning them.*

V. 15. *Thou mayest not set a stranger*, &c.] Not only lest he should oppress them, but lest he should lead them into idolatry. This refers to a king, whom they should choose, and appoint for themselves; not to a power which in the providence of God, was placed over them without their own concurrence: but their interpreters of the law, in the days of Christ, deduced from this clause the unlawfulness of submitting to a foreign yoke, and incited the people to continual rebellions, which at length terminated in their ruin.

V. 16. *Multiply horses*, &c.] This would increase the pomp, and splendour of his kingdom, and form a ground of confidence distinct from, and inconsistent with a proper confidence in God, and with considering him, as the glory of Israel. And as Egypt abounded in horses, it would induce such a trade with that kingdom, from which they were to be totally separated, as might end in their being again brought into bondage thereto; (*1 Kings*, c. x. v. 26. 28, 29.)

V. 18. *A copy of this law*, &c.] Some interpret this command of the book of Deuteronomy alone; but it is most probable that the whole law was intended: and if Moses with his immense engagements found time for compiling, and writing the whole; it could not be an intolerable task imposed upon any future prince, if he were required to transcribe it. This would have a great effect in rendering him well acquainted with the law; for writing not only assists the memory, but causes us to notice every single word of what we transcribe: but it is probable, that this law was very seldom observed by their princes.

20 That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, *to* the right hand or *to* the left; to the end that he may prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Rules concerning the perquisites of the priests, and Levites, v. 1—8. 2d. Idolatry, and witchcraft prohibited, v. 9—14. 3d. A prophet like unto Moses promised, v. 15—19. 4th. The detection and punishment of false prophets prescribed, v. 20—22.

THE priests the Levites, *and* all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance.

2 Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD *is* their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.

3 And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer a sacrifice, whether *it be* ox or sheep: and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw.

4 The first-fruit *also* of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the first of the fleece of thy sheep, shalt thou give him.

5 For the LORD thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes, to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons for ever.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are continually called upon to remember the perfect, pure, and spotless sacrifice of Christ: and reminded to serve God with the best of our abilities, time, and possessions: or our supposed obedience will be an abomination. To him all worship, and love belong, and all idolatry, and irreligion of every kind are offensive in the greatest degree, and will assuredly be punished in this world, or in the next, as well as those crimes which disturb the peace of society; nay with greater severity, as being of deeper malignity. We are also repeatedly cautioned against rashness in bearing testimony, or in punishing supposed criminals, that the innocent may not be involved in the same doom with the guilty. The ministers of religion, and civil magistrates should, in their several places, give diligence to obtain exact, and extensive knowledge, as well as to act with integrity, and impartiality; that they may not mislead, or injure those, who place confidence in their decisions. However in both cases there lies an appeal to the infallible teacher, and judge of the world, who here, or hereafter will set right, and do justice to those, who trust in him. The presumptuous offender, who refused to submit to the award of human justice, with all it's imperfections, was condemned to die: of what punishment then will the obstinate rebel against the righteous governor of the universe be adjudged worthy? and with what vengeance will he be repayed, who despises, or abuses the grace of the gospel? The Lord sees the hearts of his own people too much disposed to be like the world around them; and, for their chastisement, frequently permits them to obtain the objects of their foolish, and sinful desires; yet regulating the whole ultimately for their good. But the higher any person is exalted, the more strongly will he be tempted to pride, covetousness, luxury, and lust, those fatal enemies to true godliness, whose tendency is to rivet the chains of satan upon the soul. Against these things princes have especially need to watch, and to be cautioned; lest the extensive influence of their example, and authority should become ruinous to millions, who look up to them for protection, and prosperity. But alas! who hath boldness, disinterestedness, and zeal sufficient to venture the loss of their favour, and the consequences of their displeasure, by reminding them of such salutary, but disrelishing truths? *almost* all men will rather occupy the more pleasing, and profitable place of flatterers; the remaining few will either observe a timid silence, or soon be driven from the verge of courts: (*Amos*, c. vii. v. 12, 13.) They have therefore the more need *themselves* to be employed in the daily study of the Scriptures, that they may become well acquainted with the truth, and will of God: that they may learn thence the true wisdom, which begins in the fear of God, in habitual regard to his authority, and to that great day of account, in which there will be no respect of persons; that from thence may result a conscientious worship of, and universal obedience to him. And seeing the welfare of kingdoms is so intimately connected with the character of their princes, we ought all to pray to the Lord to place such kings over us, or to give such wisdom and grace to those, who are placed over us, and to increase unto them every good, and perfect gift; and to be especially thankful when such prayers are answered, and the blessing of good governors is bestowed upon us. But alas! how much of God's word is overlooked by his professed people: one is tempted to think that this chapter was expunged from Solomon's Bible, and those of other Jewish kings. And might not an impartial, and well-informed person suppose the same respecting some of our Bibles, with reference to those chapters, which immediately instruct us in our duties? we have therefore all need more carefully, and exactly to study the Scriptures, to examine ourselves; to watch our hearts, to avoid temptations to pride, and the love of this present world; and to pray for faith, and grace, by which we may be enabled to observe all the commandments of God; for in keeping of them there is great reward.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 3. *The two cheeks*, &c.] These are supposed to be here granted out of the peace-offerings in addition to what had before been allotted them; (*Lev.* c. vii. v. 31—34.)

6 And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Iſrael, where he ſojourned, and come with all the deſire of his mind unto the place which the LORD ſhall chooſe;

7 Then he ſhall miniſter in the name of the LORD his God, as all his brethren the Levites *do*, which ſtand there before the LORD.

8 They ſhall have like portions to eat, beſide that which cometh of the ſale of his patrimony.

9 When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou ſhalt not learn to do after the abominations of thoſe nations.

10 There ſhall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his ſon or his daughter to paſs through the fire, *or* that uſeth divination, *or* an obſerver of times, or an enchanter, or a witch,

11 Or a charmer, or a conſulter with familiar ſpirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.

12 For all that do theſe things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and becauſe of theſe abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

13 Thou ſhalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

14 For theſe nations, which thou ſhalt poſſeſs, hearkened unto obſervers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not ſuffered thee ſo *to do*.

15 The LORD thy God will raiſe up unto thee a Prophet from the midſt of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye ſhall hearken:

16 According to all that thou deſiredſt of the LORD thy God in Horeb, in the day of the aſſembly, ſaying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God; neither let me ſee this great fire any more, that I die not.

17 And the LORD ſaid unto me, They have well *ſpoken that* which they have ſpoken.

18 I will raiſe them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he ſhall ſpeak unto them all that I ſhall command him.

19 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* whoſoever will not hearken unto my words, which he ſhall ſpeak in my name, I will require *it* of him.

20 But the prophet which ſhall preſume to ſpeak a word in my name which I have not commanded him to ſpeak, or that ſhall

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V. 6. *With all*, &c.] It ſeems that the Levites officiated by turns, or according to ſome rule, from their firſt eſtabliſhment in Canaan: but if any one out of his courſe, from his cordial love of the ordinances, and courts of the Lord, preferred officiating as a ſervant to the prieſts at the ſanctuary, before living at home with his family, he was to be encouraged by an addition to his maintenance, above his ſhare of the tithes, which regularly was allotted him.

V. 10, 11.] The ſeveral names here given are ſuppoſed to include every ſpecies of that ſuperſtition, or idolatry, which conſiſts in ſeeking that information, or help from other inviſible beings, real, or ſuppoſed, which cannot be obtained from God; from whom nothing can be expected, but either in the uſe of means, which have a *natural* efficacy; or in ordinances of his own appointment: or in having other rules of conduct, than his precepts, and the dictates of human prudence. And the tranſlation of the original terms indiſputably prove that the venerable tranſlators ſuppoſed, that all calculations of lucky, or unlucky days, for undertaking any enterprize; all attempts to *charm* away agues, or other diſeaſes by unmeaning obſervances: all amulets, or ſpells by way of preſervative, as well as every kind of fortune telling, &c. were thereby prohibited: and not only would ſuch practices be abominable in the Iſraelites; but they were ſo offenſive even in the Canaanites, as to form a chief cauſe of their dreadful extirpation: being all of them either human impoſture, or diabolical deluſion; and either way conducive to the gratification of that ambitious ſpirit, who aſpires in every form to be the god and prince of this world.

V. 13. *Be perfect*, &c.] That is, be ſingly dependant on him, and devoted to him.

V. 18. *I will raiſe them up*, &c.] Whether a ſucceſſion of true prophets, in aid of the prieſts and Levites, when they did their duty, or in correction of their errors, and ſupply of their omiſſions, when they neglected it, be here implied, or not; we are ſure that this promiſe eſpecially related to Jeſus Chriſt: (*Acts*, c. iii. v. 23. c. vii. v. 37. *Heb.* c. iii. v. 1.) He was like unto Moſes, as his great antitype, in more particulars, and with greater exactneſs, than were found in his reſemblance to any of the prophets, or typical perſons, mentioned in the Old Teſtament.—Born in the reign of a perſecuting tyrant, his life was ſought in his infancy, and wonderfully preſerved, whilſt many other infants were deſtroyed: at the entrance of his work he rejected the propoſal of the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; as Moſes did the proſpect of honour, and affluence in Egypt; and preferred thereto a ſuffering, poor, and deſpiſed life, ſpent, and ended for the benefit of the people of God; (*Heb.* c. xi. v. 23—27.) He was rejected by, and ſuffered greatly from thoſe very perſons, for whoſe ſake he had thus voluntarily impoveriſhed himſelf; yet, in the appointed time, and manner, he accompliſhed the redemption of the whole Iſrael of God. His

ſpeak

ſpeak in the name of other gods, even that prophet ſhall die.

21 And if thou ſay in thine heart, How ſhall we know the word which the LORD hath not ſpoken?

22 When a prophet ſpeaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to paſs, that *is* the thing which the LORD hath not ſpoken, *but* the prophet hath ſpoken it preſumptuouſly; thou ſhalt not be afraid of him.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1ſt. The law concerning the cities of refuge enforced, and explained, v. 1—13. *2d. Laws againſt removing land marks, and for the puniſhment of falſe witneſſes, v.* 14—21.

WHEN the LORD thy God hath cut off the nations, whoſe land the LORD thy God giveth thee, and thou ſucceedeſt them, and dwelleſt in their cities, and in their houſes;

2 Thou ſhalt ſeparate three cities for thee in the midſt of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to poſſeſs it.

3 Thou ſhalt prepare thee a way, and divide the coaſts of thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee to inherit, into three parts, that every ſlayer may flee thither.

4 And this *is* the caſe of the ſlayer which ſhall flee thither, that he may live: whoſo killeth his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time paſt;

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character was remarkable for meekneſs, and patience, and every excellency, in meaſure far exceeding that of the deliverer of Iſrael. For our benefit he united in one perſon the offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King; all which concentre in his being the mediator of the covenant, and the eſtabliſher of a new diſpenſation. He feeds his people with the true manna, and gives them the true living water to drink; and in many of his miracles repreſented, but ſurpaſſed thoſe of Moſes.—He was oppoſed by his brethren, as well as by the people, and was eſpecially objected to for eſpouſing the Gentiles, as his church. All miniſters obtain their authority, derive their commiſſion, and receive their inſtructions from him. His knowledge of, and intimacy with the Father are unexampled, and appropriate: his life was ſpent, cloſed, and laid down for the people's benefit, and for their ſins; and his reſurrection precluded the exact knowledge of, and ſhould have prevented the ſuperſtitious veneration for his ſepulchre: and finally as he alone could approach God upon mount Sinai, according to the law of works; ſo it will moſt awfully be required of thoſe, who reject his ſalvation, who will not hearken to his inſtructions, or who refuſe to have him to reign over them.

V. 22. *Nor come to paſs*, &c.] The failure of the predictions evinced the falſe prophet, except when repentance averted threatened judgments: the accompliſhment of them approved the true prophet, unleſs attended with a temptation to idolatry. (*Note*, c. xiii. v. 1—3.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The miniſters of the goſpel ſhould, by a decent proviſion, be preſerved from the preſſing temptations to entangle themſel es with the affairs of this life, that they may be more at leiſure for their proper work: and they are abſolutely inexcuſable, if covetouſneſs, or other carnal principles engage them in contentions, law-ſuits, or ſelfiſh projects; for a worldly-minded miniſter is a ſcandal to his profeſſion, a living lie.—We do nothing to good purpoſe, that we do not engage in "with all the deſire of our mind." It is well when this carries us forward in leaving all, for the ſake of Chriſt, and the goſpel. He will not ſuffer ſuch diſciples to loſe their reward, and it his appointment, that thoſe miniſters, who *labour* moſt in the word, and doctrine, ſhould be beſt provided for. Yet they, who will do no more in God's ſervice, than man will pay them for, are not worthy of being called the miniſters of Chriſt at all. (*Mal.* c. i. v. 10.) Chriſtians are required ſimply to truſt in, and ſubmit to the Lord, and cannot want any information, ſecurity, or aſſiſtance, which he will not afford them: and the Lord their God not only doth not ſuffer them to do ſuch things, as he abhorred in Canaanites, and will much more abhor in them, but he calls upon them to bear teſtimony againſt them. We have a prophet like unto, but far ſuperior to Moſes, to ſhew us the truth, and will of God, the way of acceptance, and of holineſs: nay to "ſhew unto us the Father" himſelf, for "he that hath "ſeen him, hath ſeen the Father:" (*John*, c. xiv. v. 9, 10.) "For he dwelleth in the Father, and the Father in him." Yet is he raiſed up from among his brethren, and dwells in human nature: that view of God, which he gives will not terrify, or overwhelm, but encourage us: he ſpeaks with fraternal affection, and divine authority conjoined. Wo be then to thoſe, who refuſe to hearken to his voice, to accept of his ſalvation, or yield obedience to his ſway. But happy they, who truſt in, and obey him; he will lead them into the paths of ſafety, and of peace; he will teach them to diſtinguiſh his miniſters from thoſe of ſatan, however diſguiſed; and will preſerve them from every deluſion, until he bring them to the land of perfect light, purity, and felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 2, 3.] (*See notes*, &c. *Num.* xxxv.) Three of theſe cities had already been allotted, eaſt of Jordan, (c. iv. v. 41—43.) The other three were to be ſet apart as ſoon as they were ſettled in poſſeſſion of the country weſt of Jordan: and in caſe their boundaries ſhould in after ages be enlarged, three more were to be added, (v. 8—10.) In pitching upon them they were commanded to be careful in proportioning the diſtances, (v. 3.) "that "the way might not be too long" to ſome one of them, from any part of the land, (v. 6.) and the way was alſo to be prepared: and the reaſon of all this was, "that inno-

5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a ſtroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head ſlippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he ſhall flee unto one of thoſe cities and live:

6 Leſt the avenger of the blood purſue the ſlayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, becauſe the way is long, and ſlay him; whereas he *was* not worthy of death, inaſmuch as he hated him not in time paſt.

7 Wherefore I command thee, ſaying, Thou ſhalt ſeparate three cities for thee.

8 And if the LORD thy God enlarge thy coaſt, as he hath ſworn unto thy fathers, and give thee all the land which he promiſed to give unto thy fathers;

9 (If thou ſhalt keep all theſe commandments to do them, which I command thee this day, to love the LORD thy God, and to walk ever in his ways;) then ſhalt thou add three cities more for thee, beſide theſe three;

10 That innocent blood be not ſhed in thy land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and *ſo* blood be upon thee.

11 But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and riſe up againſt him, and ſmite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of theſe cities;

12 Then the elders of his city ſhall ſend and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die.

13 Thine eye ſhall not pity him; but thou ſhalt put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Iſrael, that it may go well with thee.

14 Thou ſhalt not remove thy neighbour's land-mark, which they of old time have ſet in thine inheritance, which thou ſhalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to poſſeſs it.

15 One witneſs ſhall not riſe up againſt a man for any iniquity, or for any ſin, in any ſin that he ſinneth: at the mouth of two witneſſes, or at the mouth of three witneſſes, ſhall the matter be eſtabliſhed.

16 If a falſe witneſs riſe up againſt any man, to teſtify againſt him *that which is* wrong;

17 Then both the men, between whom the controverſy *is*, ſhall ſtand before the LORD, before the prieſts and the judges which ſhall be in thoſe days.

18 And the judges ſhall make diligent inquiſition: and, behold, *if* the witneſs *be* a falſe witneſs, *and* hath teſtified falſely againſt his brother;

19 Then ſhall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: ſo ſhalt thou put the evil away from among you.

20 And thoſe which remain ſhall hear, and

" cent blood ſhould not be ſhed in their land," by the avenger of blood overtaking the unfortunate man-ſlayer, before he arrived at a place of refuge. The typical intention of this appointment hath already been conſidered.

V. 8, 9.] This promiſe of ſtill further enlarging their poſſeſſions was conditional, and by their diſobedience they ſo far forfeited it, that theſe additional cities of refuge were never appointed. The Jews flatter themſelves with the expectation of a future accompliſhment of thoſe promiſes, when this addition will be made.

V. 14. *Thy neighbour's land mark*, &c.] As this was the cuſtomary method of diſtinguiſhing landed property in thoſe days, removing land marks would be a crime amongſt them, ſimilar to forging, altering, deſtroying, or concealing the title deeds of eſtates at this day: and would occaſion injuſtice, diſpute, and law-ſuits.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In conveying inſtruction, familiar examples, and illuſtrations, though taken from the moſt ordinary occupations, or ſcenes of life, are of very great uſe to give determinate ideas of the thing intended to be inculcated: and in laws eſpecially preciſion ſhould be chiefly ſtudied, that the diſtinction betwixt the innocent and the guilty; and betwixt a man's crime, and his calamity, may be as plainly ſpecified, as is poſſible. For whether the criminal eſcape unpuniſhed, or the innocent ſuffer, injuſtice is committed; and in caſe of bloodſhed, guilt is brought upon the land, where it takes place. On ſuch occaſions compaſſion for the offender may be ſinful, and become even cruelty to others, and muſt therefore be moderated, and counteracted by the love of juſtice, general benevolence, and the fear of God. But to avoid the horrid crime of murder, we muſt watch and pray againſt the firſt emotions of hatred, and anger: and to be preſerved from injuſtice, we muſt beware of covetouſneſs, which is wonderfully ingenious in deviſing ſuch methods of defrauding, as may eſcape detection, cenſure, or human puniſhment. Alas, what a reproach is it to the whole human ſpecies, that God himſelf forbids the teſtimony of any one man to be taken in matters of importance! Verily he adjudges all men to be lyars, and none abſolutely, and in all caſes to be truſted: which is not only

fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.

21 And thine eye shall not pity; *but* life *shall go* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st, Rules for the encouragement and selection of their soldiers, v. 1—9. 2d. For their conduct towards those nations with whom they went to war, v. 10—20.

WHEN thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses and chariots, *and* a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

2 And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle, that the priest shall approach, and speak unto the people,

3 And shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel; Ye approach this day unto battle against your enemies: let not your hearts faint; fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them:

4 For the LORD your God *is* he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man *is there* that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it.

6 And what man *is he* that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not *yet* eaten of it? let him *also* go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.

7 And what man *is there* that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her.

8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man *is there that is* fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethrens heart faint as well as his heart.

9 And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

10 When thou comest nigh unto a city to

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a caution to judges, and juries, but matter of watchfulness, and humiliation to us all. Few crimes are more atrocious in their nature, pernicious in their effects, or affronting to God, than bearing false witness, in matters of moment, and with us especially, where it is *always* connected with perjury. It were to be wished that it were more commonly, and severely punished by man, according to this most excellent, and equitable law: but it will assuredly meet with it's due punishment from a righteous God. However let all Christians, not only be cautious in bearing public testimony, but be careful not to propagate private slanders; (*see note Exod.* c. xx. v. 16;) and let all, whose conscience accuses them of these, or of other crimes, without delay flee for refuge to the hope set before us in Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1—4.] In the wars wherein Israel engaged, according to the will of God, they might expect his especial assistance; and this was to be their only confidence; of this his former wonderful works were their assurance; and of these things the priests were to remind them for their encouragement. In all these respects they were apt types of the Christian's spiritual warfare.

V. 5. *Dedicated it*, &c.] The Israelites were accustomed to enter their houses when finished, by making a chearful feast for their friends, accompanied, as it seems reasonable to conclude, with a solemn act of devotion, whereby their habitations were put under the immediate protection of God, and the blessings of his grace and peace were supplicated, that they might prove houses of harmony and of true godliness, (*Psalm* xxx. title.) This and the following regulations were probably not to take place in the first wars of Canaan, in which all must fight who were able; but in those in which they might afterwards engage: and they not only condescended to the allowable affections of human nature, and were calculated to compose armies constituted of persons, whose minds were free from discomposure and dismay; but they also typified the true character and frame of mind, which befits the soldier of Jesus Christ. Some suppose that the fearful were such, as were intimidated by a guilty conscience; and they infer, that atrocious sinners are an incumbrance and a curse to armies, (*see* c. xxiii. v. 9,) as well as churches: but this is very different from the principles of modern tactics, and the practice of modern statesmen and commanders. Howe er, until the cowards were dismissed, the subordinate officers were not to be appointed; for they who preside either in armies or in churches, should be especially valiant in the cause wherein they are engaged.

V. 10—15.] We must suppose that the Israelites would have some warrantable cause of levying war, which covetousness, ambition, and the thirst of dominion, cannot be; when therefore they had been injured, or assaulted by any foreign nation, they were to proceed in the manner here prescribed: for the Lord intended by these means to

fight againſt it, then proclaim peace unto it.

11 And it ſhall be, if it make thee anſwer of peace, and open unto thee, then it ſhall be, *that* all the people *that is* found therein ſhall be tributaries unto thee, and they ſhall ſerve thee.

12 And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war againſt thee, then thou ſhalt beſiege it:

13 And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou ſhalt ſmite every male thereof with the edge of the ſword.

14 But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, *even* all the ſpoil thereof, ſhalt thou take unto thyſelf: and thou ſhalt eat the ſpoil of thine enemies, which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

15 Thus ſhalt thou do unto all the cities *which are* very far off from thee, which *are* not of the cities of theſe nations.

16 But of the cities of theſe people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for* an inheritance, thou ſhalt ſave alive nothing that breatheth:

17 But thou ſhalt utterly deſtroy them; *namely*, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebuſites, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee:

18 That they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; ſo ſhould ye ſin againſt the LORD your God.

19 When thou ſhalt beſiege a city a long time, in making war againſt it to take it, thou ſhalt not deſtroy the trees thereof by forcing an ax againſt them: for thou mayeſt eat of them, and thou ſhalt not cut them down, (for the tree of the field *is* man's *life*,) to employ *them* in the ſiege.

20 Only the trees which thou knoweſt that they *be* not trees for meat thou ſhalt deſtroy, and cut them down; and thou ſhalt build bulwarks againſt the city that maketh war with thee, until it be ſubdued.

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enlarge their dominions, whilſt they continued obedient, (c. xix. v. 8, 9.) There were doubtleſs wiſe reaſons why they were not only allowed, but commanded, (v. 13,) to put to death all the males who were capable of reſiſtance. The lives and property of all men are the Lord's, forfeited to his juſtice, and to be diſpoſed of at his pleaſure, and for his glory. But theſe particular regulations are not the rule of our conduct; but the general law of love, which prohibits unneceſſary bloodſhed and plunder, in war, as well as in peace. One reaſon of theſe appointments might be, to ſhadow forth the fatal conſequences of perſiſting in rebellion and enmity againſt God, in contempt of the goſpel propoſal of peace and reconciliation. Some ſuppoſe that no terms of peace were in any caſe whatſoever to be offered or allowed to the devoted inhabitants of Canaan, becauſe their meaſure of wickedneſs was filled up, and they would be a conſtant temptation to the Iſraelites: but we ſhall meet with ſome events, in the courſe of this hiſtory, which will not eaſily comport with this abſolute interpretation. Others, therefore ſuppoſe the meaning to be, that in caſe the Canaanites rejected peace and ſervitude, this intire extirpation was to take place; whereas only the grown males were to be ſlaves in other cities in ſimilar circumſtances.

V. 19. *The tree of the field is man's life.*] The original words have here exceſſively puzzled the critics; and our tranſlation gives us one opinion of their meaning, about as probable as any other. The inſtruction evidently is, that they ſhould not make unneceſſary waſte of things uſeful unto man's life, as the fruit trees were; and therefore in their ſieges ſhould form their machines of timber trees only.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

War is an appeal to the righteous governor of the world, and ſhould be undertaken and conducted only upon ſuch principles, as he approves. When the cauſe will warrant ſuch an appeal, the Lord himſelf may ſafely be truſted, for the event; and confidence ſhould be placed, not in chariots and horſes, not in fleets and armies, not in experienced commanders, and brave ſoldiers; but in the Lord of Hoſts himſelf. Though religion, and its faithful miniſters are ſo generally ſlighted by thoſe, who jeopardy their lives in the high places of the field; yet in reality, no people ſo much want their inſtructions, counſels, and prayers, as they do, both individually, and with reſpect to the common cauſe, which God himſelf will entirely decide. Nor is any valour *rational*, but that which ſprings from faith, a good conſcience, a ſenſe of duty, a confidence in God, and a hope of heaven: for he who neither fears thoſe who kill the body, nor *him* who is able to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell, is not valiant, but abſolutely mad; whilſt in the former caſe intrepidity is reaſon and wiſdom, and reſts on an immoveable baſis. In war itſelf, juſtice and the love of peace, ſhould dictate every meaſure; the voice of humanity ſhould be heard diſtinctly, even in the noiſe of the battle; and wanton cruelty or waſte, ſhould never ſully the ſoldier's reputation. After all, the horrors of war muſt fill the feeling heart with anguiſh upon every recollection, and can only be conſidered as evidences of the depravity of man, the power of ſatan, and the juſt vengeance of God, who thus ſcourges a guilty world. May he haſten the time when ſwords ſhall be beaten into plowſhares, and they ſhall learn war no more! But how dreadful their caſe who are engaged in unequal conteſt with their Maker,

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains laws, 1ſt. For purging the land from the guilt of murder, when the murderer was concealed, v. 1—9. 2d. For regulating the marriage of an Iſraelite with a captive maid, v. 10—14. 3d. For regulating the inheritance of children, v. 15—17. 4th. For the puniſhment of the rebellious ſon, v. 18—21. 5th. For the interment of malefactors, v. 22, 23.

IF *one* be found ſlain in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee to poſſeſs it, lying in the field, *and* it be not known who hath ſlain him;

2 Then thy elders and thy judges ſhall come forth, and they ſhall meaſure unto the cities which *are* round about him that is ſlain.

3 And it ſhall be, *that* the city *which is* next unto the ſlain man, even the elders of that city, ſhall take an heifer which hath not been wrought with, *and* which hath not drawn in the yoke;

4 And the elders of that city ſhall bring down the heifer into a rough valley, which is neither eared nor ſown, and ſhall ſtrike off the heifer's neck there in the valley:

5 And the prieſts the ſons of Levi ſhall come near, (for them the LORD thy God hath choſen to miniſter unto him, and to bleſs in the name of the LORD;) and by their word ſhall every controverſy and every ſtroke be *tried*.

6 And all the elders of that city, *that are* next unto the ſlain *man*, ſhall waſh their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley:

7 And they ſhall anſwer and ſay, Our hands have not ſhed this blood, neither have our eyes ſeen *it*.

8 Be merciful, O LORD, unto thy people Iſrael, whom thou haſt redeemed, and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Iſrael's charge. And the blood ſhall be forgiven them.

9 So ſhalt thou put away the *guilt of* innocent blood from among you, when thou ſhalt do *that which is* right in the ſight of the LORD.

10 When thou goeſt forth to war againſt thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou haſt taken them captive,

who refuſe his propoſals of peace, who will not ſubmit to be his ſervants, and render him the eaſy tribute of worſhip and praiſe! Inevitable ruin awaits them. May we be at peace with the Lord, and wage war with his enemies, our luſts, and the powers of darkneſs, with undaunted courage and unrelenting ſeverity; let neither the number or power of our enemies diſmay us; nor let even our own weakneſs cauſe us to tremble or to faint: the Lord himſelf will fight for us, and ſave us; and all his wonders wrought for his church enſure our victory. In this war let none pretend to engage, whoſe hearts are attached inordinately to worldly objects, or who are afraid of the croſs, or the conflict; they will themſelves deſert, and will diſcourage others. Let miniſters above all be valiant in this warfare, and by their example, as well as their exhortations, encourage the people to fight the good fight of faith. And, finally, whilſt we ſhew no mercy to any ſin, and will have no friendſhip with any tempter, let us ſhew a ſpirit of peace, forgiveneſs, and benevolence towards all mankind.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—9.] This law was intended to increaſe the horror of the Iſraelites for the crime of murder; and to promote the detection of the criminal, by making the affair public and ſolemn, by putting every one upon the inquiry, by calling upon every one to clear themſelves, and by warning every one not to conceal the criminal. The heifer, that had never drawn in the yoke, repreſented the murderer, the ſon of Belial, who refuſed to bear the yoke of God's law: the rough valley denoted the worthleſſneſs of his character, and the diſagreeableneſs of the buſineſs: the cutting off the neck of the heifer, not by the prieſts, but by the elders, expreſſed the deſert of the criminal, and their readineſs thus to puniſh him, if they could detect him. The waſhing of their hands was a proteſtation of their innocence and ignorance concerning the murder and the murderer; and the prayers which the prieſts offered for the people as the redeemed of the Lord, ſhewed how murder contaminates and leaves guilt upon every land, and every perſon that does not every thing proper to bring the criminal to condign puniſhment; and the whole ſhadowed forth the atonement and interceſſion of Chriſt, through which iniquity is pardoned by a merciful God to his redeemed people. The buſineſs devolving upon that city, which was found by meaſuring, (if there were any doubt,) to be the neareſt to the murdered perſon, might alſo denote, that they ſhould keep at the utmoſt diſtance from ſuch crimes, and from every thing which could excite ſuſpicion of them.

V. 10—14.] The caſe here regulated would inevitably take place on ſome occaſions; nor does this ſtatute imply any approbation of it. It never could be good for an Iſraelite to marry an heathen captive, induced thereto merely by her beauty; eſpecially as the regulation does not even exclude the caſe of thoſe, who were previouſly married. However if ſuch an extravagant paſſion were conceived, they were not allowed to uſe force, or authority to gratify their inclination, nor to proceed with precipitation; but, by delay, opportunity was to be given to the violent affection

11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy wife;

12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house, and she shall shave her head and pare her nails;

13 And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month: and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife.

14 And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandize of her, because thou hast humbled her.

15 If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, *both* the beloved and the hated: and *if* the first-born son be her's that was hated;

16 Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit *that* which he hath, *that* he may not make the son of the beloved first-born, before the son of the hated, *which is indeed* the first-born:

17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated *for* the first-born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he *is* the beginning of his strength; the right of the first-born *is* his.

18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and *that*, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them;

19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place:

20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son *is* stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; *he is* a glutton and a drunkard.

21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.

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to subside, and for reason and religion to resume their influence. By taking the captive into the house, her disposition would better be discovered; and, if that proved disagreeable, the passion might thereby be abated. The embellishments of her person being changed for the mean and unsightly habit of a mourner, might tend to diminish her attraction: in the mean time she would have an opportunity of learning the Jewish religion; and some think that the change of her attire, the cutting off her hair, and the pareing of her nails, were the external signs of her renouncing the Gentile worship, and becoming a proselyte to the Jewish religion, without which the marriage was not allowable. Her grief also for the death of her parents, if slain, or for her separation from them would subside, and her mind be more reconciled to her condition; and if at last the Israelite continued in the same mind, he might marry her: but in case either beforehand, (as some think is implied,) or after this ceremony, he "humbled her," that is, bereaved her of her chastity, and did not choose to continue her as his wife, he must not keep her as a slave, nor sell her, but give her her liberty, and treat her as other women were when divorced by their husbands; all which would help to increase their caution against rashly entering into such improper connexions.

V. 15—17.] As this passage may with equal propriety be translated, "if a man have had two wives," &c, it doth not *exclusively* apply to the case of polygamy, but equally to that of him, who had two wives in succession. In either case the double portion, which customarily was given to the heir, was to be given to the eldest, though he were not the son of the best beloved wife; which would counteract the effect of such unjust and unreasonable partialities, as are frequently entertained, and be a sort of compensation to her who had the misfortune to be *comparatively slighted, and hated.*

V. 18—21.] This law, though its aspect be severe, has mercy couched under that severity; prevention was its tendency, and it could not fail of producing most salutary effects, as far as any regard was paid to it. As the parent was the only prosecutor, natural affection would prevent its frequent execution; and, if that event ever took place, it must excite general attention, and even terror. Whilst even being held *in terrorem* over the heads of the Israelitish youth, it must corroborate the parents authority, give weight to their commands, reproofs, and corrections, and create an additional fear of provoking their deep resentment. It would also fortify them against the enticements of bad companions, and the force of strong temptations, and thus check the progress of wickedness amongst them. Moreover, it would be a constant admonition to parents to watch over their children very narrowly, and not improperly to indulge them, or withhold correction, but to establish their authority over them whilst young, to pray for them, and give them proper admonitions, and to check the first buddings of vice, and to set them a wholesome example. These effects the very existence of this law would have upon them, in proportion as they regarded the word of God; and the same it ought to have upon us.

22 And

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree;

23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged *is* accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

CHAP. XXII.

Contains laws, 1st. For restoring strayed cattle, or lost property, and for raising up the cattle, which was fallen, v. 1—4. 2d. For the distinction of the sexes by their apparel; for sparing the old bird, when caught upon the nest; for making battlements to their houses; forbidding needless mixtures, and commanding fringes upon their garments, v. 5—12. 3d. Concerning a woman accused by her husband of fornication before marriage, v. 13—21. 4th. For the punishment of adulteries, rapes, fornication, and incest, v. 22—30.

THOU shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother.

2 And if thy brother *be* not nigh unto thee,

V. 22, 23.] The Israelites did not execute criminals by hanging, as amongst us, nor by crucifixion; yet after they were dead, in detestation of their crimes, their bodies were ignominiously suspended, or gibbeted on a tree: but in honour of human nature, which was at first formed after the image of God; was afterwards made the temple, in which all the fulness of the Godhead dwells; and will hereafter in innumerable instances partake of a glorious resurrection, the body of an Israelite was not to hang all night in this situation, whatever his crimes had been, as that would even defile the land. Perhaps in the current opinion, they, who were thus suspended, were deemed accursed of God, and devoted to utter destruction: but the Spirit of God dictated this expression with reference to him, who was made a curse for us, (*Gal.* c. iii. v. 13.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Prevention of crimes is always preferable to punishment, and the wisdom of laws is to be judged of by this tendency. Whatever can increase the horror, which we naturally feel of enormous wickedness, or cause the conscience to recoil at the thought of it, must tend to counteract the violence of the passions, and the force of temptations, and to excite watchfulness against the occasions of, and inlets to vice. Such are the laws of God enacted for Israel; and it were well if the spirit of them were more infused into our modern statutes: especially should the dread of murder be deeply impressed on every heart: and in detecting and punishing all who *in any form* are guilty of it, magistrates, ministers, old and young, should concur; and that man should be adjudged a public enemy, not only, who is accessory to the commission of this crime, but who assists the criminal in eluding or escaping justice, by which the guilt of innocent blood rests upon the land. But alas! all that most of us can do in preventing the increase of this national guilt, is by our secret earnest prayers. Reason and religion, with combined force, forbid us to lay the reins upon the neck of our headstrong lusts, and command us to teach our strongest inclinations to brook denial or delay, and to view the objects of our inordinate affections as stript of all their adventitious charms, and as they really are in themselves, with all their defects and deformities, in order to abate the vehemency of passion. Considered thus coolly, we may perhaps, before it is too late, have our admiration changed into disgust, and many fatal consequences prevented. But inhumanity, treachery, and injustice, can in no case be palliated or excused, though called by soft names, and varnished over with plausible pretences. Irregular indulgences frequently end in dislike, and ill treatment of that very object, who was inordinately loved; and instead of compensation for the injury, (for which indeed no adequate compensation can be rendered,) more injuries are committed: but for all these things God will bring men into judgment. How much more reasonable and comfortable is it to observe the original appointment of marriage, than either to be involved in such circumstances, or to occasion domestic broils, by deviating from it. The Lord will plead the cause of the oppressed, and will not allow of any injustice being done to any one, out of partiality, any more than out of covetousness. Such injustice may be committed by men in disposing of their substance by will, and it may form the last action of their lives, which all who fear God would carefully avoid. Disobedience to parental authority must be extremely evil, when such a punishment was denounced by God himself; nor is it less provoking to him now, though it escapes punishment in this world. But when young people become early slaves to their sensual appetites, the heart soon grows hard, and the conscience callous, and we can expect no other but obstinate rebellion and utter destruction. They who would escape ruin must flee youthful lusts, and must listen to the instructions of their parents, and submit to their reproof and correction; and if parents would not have their children their greatest sorrow, they should train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. What then do we deserve for our rebellion against the Father of our Spirits? We were indeed under an awful curse; but Christ hath purchased redemption, by becoming a curse for us; yet whilst we continue in sin, we have no reason to suppose, that any benefit will thence accrue to us; rather our condemnation will thereby be aggravated. Let us then fear adding obstinacy to our rebellion, and remember, that though the human body, after death, is not to be treated with degradation by man; yet God will doom both the bodies and souls of the wicked, "to depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for "the devil and his angels," whilst "the righteous shall "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

or if thou know him not, then thou ſhalt bring it unto thine own houſe, and it ſhall be with thee until thy brother ſeek after it, and thou ſhalt reſtore it to him again.

3 In like manner ſhalt thou do with his aſs, and ſo ſhalt thou do with his raiment; and with all loſt things of thy brother's, which he hath loſt, and thou haſt found, ſhalt thou do likewiſe: thou mayeſt not hide thyſelf.

4 Thou ſhalt not ſee thy brother's aſs or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyſelf from them; thou ſhalt ſurely help him to lift *them* up again.

5 The woman ſhall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither ſhall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do ſo *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

6 If a bird's neſt chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, *whether they be* young ones, or eggs, and the dam ſitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou ſhalt not take the dam with the young:

7 *But* thou ſhalt in any wiſe let the dam go, and take the young to thee; that it may be well with thee, and *that* thou mayeſt prolong *thy* days.

8 When thou buildeſt a new houſe, then thou ſhalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine houſe, if any man fall from thence.

9 Thou ſhalt not ſow thy vineyard with divers ſeeds; leſt the fruit of thy ſeed which thou haſt ſown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled.

10 Thou ſhalt not plow with an ox and an aſs together.

11 Thou ſhalt not wear a garment of divers ſorts, *as* of woollen and linen together.

12 Thou ſhalt make thee fringes upon the four quarters of thy veſture, wherewith thou covereſt *thyſelf*.

13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her,

14 And give occaſions of ſpeech againſt her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and ſay, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid:

15 Then ſhall the father of the damſel and her mother take and bring forth *the tokens of* the damſel's virginity, unto the elders of the city in the gate:

16 And the damſel's father ſhall ſay unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her;

17 And, lo, he hath given occaſions of

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 5. *The woman*, &c.] This prohibition might have ſome reſpect to the cuſtoms of the heathen worſhippers, who ſhamefully violated it for the worſt of purpoſes: but the law is of moral tendency, and of general obligation, or it would not have been added, "for all that do ſo are an abomination unto the Lord," which is never annexed to a mere ceremonial inſtitution. The practice here prohibited is not only indecent, and of bad appearance, but it hath in all ages been made ſubſervient to lewdneſs, and to obtain opportunities of perpetrating the groſſeſt crimes: to prevent which it is of vaſt importance, that the diſtinction of the ſexes ſhould be viſibly marked in their garments, without variation. Let ſtage-players, and ſuch ſort of perſons, look to it, how they will anſwer to God, their continual violation of this his expreſs commandment; nor are thoſe altogether guiltleſs, who encourage and reward them for ſuch diſobedience; and let young people remember that this change of apparel is not to be conſidered as a frolic, but as an act of rebellion againſt God.—The ſpirit of the commandment alſo requires the diſtinction of the appearance, deportment, and occupations of the ſexes: a man appearing effeminate, and affecting the appropriated employments of women: and a woman of a maſculine appearance, and behaviour, who engages in the exerciſes of men, are unnatural, and offenſive characters.

V. 6, 7.] This law might be intended to cultivate tenderneſs, and prevent the deſtruction of any ſpecies. But ſuch minute requirements were probably intentional teſts, by which it would be proved, whether they would prefer God's will to their own inclination, when the reaſon of the commandment was not obvious: therefore the promiſe is annexed to the obedient.

V. 8.] (*See Ex.* xxi. v. 28—36.) They, who are wanting in circumſpection to preſerve man's life, are adjudged acceſſories to it's deſtruction.

V. 9—12.] (*See notes Lev.* c. xix. v. 19. *Numb.* c. xv. v. 38, 39.)

V. 13—21.] This law, like many others, was intended to prevent wickedneſs, by the fear of detection and puniſhment. The dread of a future diſcovery productive of ſuch tremendous conſequences, could not fail but much increaſe the natural barriers of chaſtity, and counteract the effects of ſinful paſſions, and ſtrong temptations, amongſt the Hebrew young women. And it would alſo prevent a hard-hearted huſband from robbing his injured wife of her reputation, when his affections were transferred to another object. The impoſition practiſed upon the man, whom ſhe

ſpeech

ſpeech *againſt her*, ſaying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet theſe *are the tokens of* my daughter's virginity: and they ſhall ſpread the cloth before the elders of the city.

18 And the elders of that city ſhall take that man, and chaſtiſe him.

19 And they ſhall amerce him in an hundred *ſhekels* of ſilver, and *give* them unto the father of the damſel, becauſe he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Iſrael, and ſhe ſhall be his wife: he may not put her away all his days.

20 But if this thing be true, *and the tokens of* virginity be not found for the damſel;

21 Then they ſhall bring out the damſel to the door of her father's houſe, and the men of her city ſhall ſtone her with ſtones that ſhe die; becauſe ſhe hath wrought folly in Iſrael, to play the whore in her father's houſe: ſo ſhalt thou put evil away from among you.

22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an huſband, then they ſhall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman. So ſhalt thou put away evil from Iſrael.

23 If a damſel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an huſband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;

24 Then ye ſhall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye ſhall ſtone them with ſtones that they die; the damſel, becauſe ſhe cried not, *being* in the city; and the man, becauſe he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: ſo thou ſhalt put away evil from among you.

25 But if a man find a betrothed damſel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her; then the man only that lay with her ſhall die:

26 But unto the damſel thou ſhalt do nothing; *there is* in the damſel no ſin *worthy* of death: for as when a man riſeth againſt his neighbour, and ſlayeth him, even *ſo* is this matter:

27 For he found her in the field, *and* the betrothed damſel cried, and *there was* none to ſave her.

28 If a man find a damſel, *that is* a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found;

29 Then the man that lay with her ſhall give unto the damſel's father fifty *ſhekels* of ſilver, and ſhe ſhall be his wife; becauſe he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

30 A man ſhall not take his father's wife, nor diſcover his father's ſkirt.

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married, was conſidered as equivalent to infidelity to his bed after marriage.

V. 25. *Betrothed*, &c.] In all theſe laws the betrothed damſel was conſidered as his wife, to whom ſhe was engaged, though they had not come together; and therefore the crime was adjudged adultery. But a charitable ſuppoſition is admitted in the damſel's favour in caſe ſhe was found in a ſolitary place.

V. 28—30.] *See Ex.* c. xxii. v. 16—17. *Lev.* c. xvii.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we duly regarded the golden rule of "doing to others, "as we would they ſhould do unto us," many particular precepts of God's word might be omitted: equity, and benevolence would teach us not to regard trouble, and expence in doing a kind action to our neighbour: and remind us that we can have no property in any thing that is found, ſo long as there is any probability of diſcovering the owner. If a merciful man would aſſiſt another's beaſt, that was fallen down; much more ſhould we haſten to the relief of a brother, who is fallen into diſtreſs, or poverty: and moſt of all ſhould we be ready to reſtore, in the ſpirit of meekneſs him, who hath been overcome by temptation, and fallen into ſin; as conſcious that we may ſoon want the ſame aſſiſtance. If we would approve ourſelves to be God's peculiar people, we muſt have reſpect to the will, and glory of God, and not to the vain faſhions of the world, even in putting on our garments, as well, as in eating, and drinking: all muſt be done with a ſerious regard to the preſervation of our own, and others purity, in heart, and action; and that our garb may teſtify whoſe ſervants we are, and remind us what our conduct ought to be. Our obedience ſhould alſo be univerſal, not only to the weightier, but even to the minuter matters of the law, that it may be well with us. Yea our eye ſhould be ſingle, our heart ſimple, and our behaviour all of a piece. The violation of chaſtity being ſo great a wickedneſs, and in females eſpecially of ſuch fatal conſequences: how cautious ſhould they be what company they keep, what places they frequent, to what language they liſten, what books they read, and into what enſnaring ſituations they venture! ſeriouſly ſhould they daily meditate of God's abhorrence of ſuch crimes, the certain detection, and puniſhment of the wicked in a future ſtate, and the fatal effects, which will probably follow in this world; that their minds may be fortified againſt temptation, by a dread of ſin, and it's conſequences. How carefully ſhould parents keep out of their ſight, and way whatever can pollute their imagina-

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains laws, 1ſt. Concerning thoſe, who were not to enter into the congregation, 1—8. *2d. For keeping their camps free from moral, ceremonial, and natural pollution,* 9—14. *3d. For protecting ſlaves from cruelty, and oppreſſion; and againſt whoredom, ſodomy, and uſury, v.* 15—20. *4th. For the performance of vows, v.* 21—23. *5th. For regulating their conduct in their neighbour's vineyard, and cornfield, v.* 24—25.

HE that is wounded in the ſtones, or hath his privy member cut off, ſhall not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

2 A baſtard ſhall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation ſhall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.

3 An Ammonite or Moabite ſhall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation ſhall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever;

4 Becauſe they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and becauſe they hired againſt thee Balaam the ſon of Beor of Pethor of Meſopotamia, to curſe thee.

5 Nevertheleſs, the LORD thy God would not hearken unto Balaam; but the LORD thy God turned the curſe into a bleſſing unto thee, becauſe the LORD thy God loved thee.

6 Thou ſhalt not ſeek their peace nor their proſperity all thy days for ever.

7 Thou ſhalt not abhor an Edomite; for he *is* thy brother: thou ſhalt not abhor an Egyptian; becauſe thou waſt a ſtranger in his land.

8 The children that are begotten of them ſhall enter into the congregation of the LORD in their third generation.

9 When the hoſt goeth forth againſt thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing.

10 If there be among you any man that is not clean, by reaſon of uncleanneſs that chanceth him by night, then ſhall he go abroad out of the camp; he ſhall not come within the camp:

tions, or inflame their paſſions! and how ſhould all join in execrating thoſe wretches, who wantonly bring ſuch ruin upon their fellow creatures, for the ſake of gratifying a mean ſenſual inclination: nor is their cruelty much leſs to be abhorred, who rob the innocent of their reputation by infamous ſlanders, to gratify their malice, or any other vile paſſion. Nor let us forget the peculiar atrociouſneſs of adultery in every form, and the puniſhment, which awaits thoſe, who are guilty of it. We may alſo recollect that all deception in contracting marriage is both very wicked, and a ſource of future miſery: that the nearer we ſtand related to God, the more inexcuſable are our crimes, "folly in "Iſrael" being worſe than elſewhere: that the moſt favourable conſtruction ſhould be put on doubtful actions; and a diſcrimination made betwixt different degrees of criminality. Finally our purity ſhould be dearer to us than our life; and our cry to God for help in temptation ſhould be no leſs earneſt, than the cry of a perſon in danger of being murdered. When we thus call upon him, he is ever near, and ready to aſſiſt us, and his grace will be always ſufficient for us.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1. *Shall not enter*, &c.] We cannot ſuppoſe that by this law any Iſraelites were deprived of the benefits of civil ſociety, or of the advantages of divine ordinances for the ſalvation of their ſouls: nor that perſons of the after-mentioned nations were totally rejected from becoming proſelytes to the true religion. But they were probably excluded from places of truſt, and authority in church, or ſtate, and were not permitted to enter into the court of the tabernacle, or in ſome other reſpects reſtricted from full communion with their church. However it was ſome diſgraceful diſtinction intelligible enough to the Iſraelites, though, like ſeveral other of the injunctions in this part of the law, not ſo eaſily underſtood by us at preſent. Theſe ſtatutes ſeem alſo to have been intended for the prevention of ſin, as well as for preſerving the church and ordinances of God in purity and honour. Parents would thereby be checked from mutilating their children out of lucrative motives, a practice very common in thoſe ages, and countries; as well as from ſuch other crimes, as thus marked their innocent offſpring with diſgrace. And the Lord was pleaſed to diſtinguiſh the deſcendants of thoſe nations, who oppoſed, or tempted his people, by ſimilar tokens of his diſapprobation.—Ammonites and Moabites were not to enjoy the full benefits of Iſraelites till the tenth generation, after they had been proſelyted: and no amicable alliance was to be made with thoſe nations, ſo long as they exiſted. Edom, though unkind, being more nearly related, was to be forgiven. And as the Iſraelites had at firſt, in their extreme diſtreſs, been hoſpitably entertained in Egypt, they were to forgive the conſequent oppreſſion, which they had ſuffered, and to requite the preceding kindneſs; and an Egyptian in the third generation might become entitled to all the privileges of a native Iſraelite.

V. 9—14.] Theſe precepts not only relate to the camp of Iſrael, whilſt they continued together, previous to their conqueſt of, and ſettlement in the land; but at all times when they went forth to fight with their enemies. They were firſt to be reminded to exert vigorous meaſures for reformation; then to pay a ſtrict attention to their ceremonial purifications; and not to forget a due regard to natural cleanlineſs: not only from decency, and for health's

11 But it ſhall be, when evening cometh on, he ſhall waſh *himſelf* with water; and, when the ſun is down, he ſhall come into the camp *again*.

12 Thou ſhalt have a place alſo without the camp, whither thou ſhalt go forth abroad.

13 And thou ſhalt have a paddle upon thy thy weapon: and it ſhall be when thou wilt eaſe thyſelf abroad, thou ſhalt dig therewith, and ſhalt turn back, and cover that which cometh from thee:

14 For the LORD thy God walketh in the midſt of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee: therefore ſhall thy camp be holy, that he ſee no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.

15 Thou ſhalt not deliver unto his maſter the ſervant which is eſcaped from his maſter unto thee:

16 He ſhall dwell with thee, *even* among you, in that place which he ſhall chooſe, in one of thy gates where it liketh him beſt: thou ſhalt not oppreſs him.

17 There ſhall be no whore of the daughters of Iſrael, nor a ſodomite of the ſons of Iſrael.

18 Thou ſhalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the houſe of the LORD thy God for any vow; for even both theſe *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

19 Thou ſhalt not lend upon uſury to thy brother; uſury of money, uſury of victuals, uſury of any thing that is lent upon uſury.

20 Unto a ſtranger thou mayeſt lend upon uſury, but unto thy brother thou ſhalt not lend upon uſury; that the LORD thy God may bleſs thee in all that thou ſetteſt thine hand to, in the land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it.

21 When thou ſhalt vow a vow unto the LORD thy God, thou ſhalt not ſlack to pay it: for the LORD thy God will ſurely require it of thee; and it would be ſin in thee.

22 But if thou ſhalt forbear to vow, it ſhall be no ſin in thee:

23 That which is gone out of thy lips thou ſhalt keep and perform, *even* a free-will offering, according as thou haſt vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou haſt promiſed with thy mouth.

24 When thou comeſt into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayeſt eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleaſure; but thou ſhalt not put *any* in thy veſſel.

25 When thou comeſt into the ſtanding corn of thy neighbour, then thou mayeſt pluck the ears with thine hand; but thou ſhalt not move a ſickle unto thy neighbour's ſtanding corn.

ſake; but from reſpect to that God of purity, who as it were, headed their armies, and encamped among them: and as an emblem of their inward purity.

V. 15, 16.) We cannot ſuppoſe that this law required them to entertain ſlaves, who had robbed their maſters, or left their ſervice without any cauſe; but ſuch only as were cruelly intreated, and fled to them for protection, eſpecially from the heathen nations. To them they were to afford ſhelter, and ſhew kindneſs, both in order to recommend their religion, and to give theſe ſtrangers an opportunity of learning it.

V. 17, 18.] The magiſtrate was not to connive at, much leſs to licenſe houſes of proſtitution, and uncleanneſs; nor allow any perſon to carry on the infamous trade of a pimp, proſtitute, or ſodomite: but to expel, and extirpate them, to the uttermoſt. The prieſts muſt not accept any oblations, or ſacrifices brought by perſons of ſuch vile characters, for God would not; though they ſhould attempt to cloke their wickedneſs, or compenſate for it, by making, and performing religious vows. (*Prov.* c. vii. v. 14.) If "the price of a dog" be underſtood literally; not only the vileneſs of the animal, but their greedineſs, and their apt reſemblance of *ſhameleſsly lewd* perſons, muſt be conſidered as the reaſon of the reſtriction: (*Phil.* iii. v. 2. *Rev.* c. xxii. v. 15.)

V. 19, 20.] (*See notes, Exod.* c. xxii. v. 25, 26.)

V. 24, 25.] This law would be a kindneſs to the labourers, the poor, the widows, and the travellers: it was a pledge given them of the fruitfulneſs of their land, whilſt they continued obedient: it inculcated liberality, and inſtructed them not to encroach upon each other.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to value the participation of the privileges of God's people both for ourſelves, and for our children, above all other advantages: and ſhould carefully avoid whatever may throw a bar in our way, or in theirs. No perſonal blemiſhes, no crimes of our progenitors, no difference of nation can ſeclude us under the Chriſtian diſpenſation: but an unſound heart will deprive us; and a bad example, an improper education, and even unſuitable marriages, may exclude our children from thoſe bleſſings. The conduct of God, as *the righteous governor of the univerſe*, is not recorded for the imitation of *private perſons*; but all men ought to follow the example of his patience, lenity, readineſs to forgive, and kindneſs to his enemies. Nor ſhould

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains laws, 1ſt. For regulating divorces, and granting exemptions to newly married men, v. 1—5. *2d. For puniſhing men-ſtealers, regulating the matter of pledges, and reminding the people of the inſtitutions concerning leproſy, v.* 6—13. *3d. Regulating the treatment of hired ſervants, reſtricting the execution of criminals, and prohibiting the perverting of judgment, v.* 14—17. *4th. Requiring that the gleanings ſhould be left for the poor: the whole being enforced by the conſideration of their redemption from Egypt, v.* 18—22.

WHEN a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to paſs that ſhe find no favour in his eyes, becauſe he hath found ſome uncleanneſs in her; then then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give *it* in her hand, and ſend her out of his houſe.

2 And when ſhe is departed out of his houſe, ſhe may go and be another man's *wife*.

3 And *if* the latter huſband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth *it* in her hand, and ſendeth her out of his houſe; or if the latter huſband die, which took her *to be* his wife:

4 Her former huſband, which ſent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that ſhe is defiled: for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou ſhalt not cauſe the land to ſin which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance.

5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he

we ever forget how he turns the curſes of oppoſers into bleſſings in behalf of thoſe, whom he loves, and teaches to love him. The more imminent, and evident danger we are expoſed to, the greater ſhould be our watchfulneſs, ſelf examination, and earneſtneſs in prayer for forgiveneſs, peace with, and the protection of God: and the ſcourge of war ſhould remind the governors of kingdoms, and the commanders of armies to exert themſelves for reformation, and an attendance upon the ordinances of God. Nor can the help of the Lord be warrantably depended on by ſocieties, or by individuals, whilſt iniquity is indulged and connived at. No natural filthineſs is ſo lothſome to our ſenſes, as the uncleanneſs of the heart is offenſive to an holy God: in vain therefore do pompous forms of godlineſs, coſtly oblations, or multiplied acts of ſhewy beneficence ſtrive to compenſate for, or cover the iniquity of thoſe, who indulge unlawful luſts. Such ſervices are an attempt to bribe the judge of the earth to acquit the wicked, but he abhors the blaſphemous endeavour. And whether magiſtrates can or cannot extirpate ſuch receſſes of licentiouſneſs, as are here forbidden; God will exclude for ever from the holy city, and ſhut up for ever in the lake of fire, all who are guilty of, or encourage ſuch abuſes. The people of God muſt alſo keep at a diſtance from all cruelty, and oppreſſion; and ever be ready to patronize the cauſe of the oppreſſed. Fidelity to all their engagements, and liberality, without grudging, to all around them ſhould mark their characters; for God is able to make all ſufficiency to abound towards them: and at the ſame time they ſhould be the laſt perſons to encroach upon others. In fine temperance, chaſtity, purity, equity, mercy, and truth, are the never failing fruits of that Spirit, which dwells in all the true diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1—4.] Divorces were an abuſe of marriage, conſequent upon man's depravity, the inconſtancy of his mind, and the impetuoſity of his paſſions. This cuſtomary abuſe God did not pleaſe, in the judicial law, the magiſtrates rule, totally to prohibit; leſt it ſhould occaſion the cruel treatment, or even the murder of thoſe women, who were become diſagreeable to their huſbands. The uncleanneſs, for which Moſes by God's authority *ſuffered* them, for the hardneſs of their hearts, to put away their wives, is not ſuppoſed to have been adultery, or any ſuſpicion of it; for theſe caſes were otherwiſe provided againſt; (*Num.* c. v. ver. 11—31.) but probably ſome ceremonial uncleanneſs, which barred cohabitation, (*Lev.* c. xv. v. 25—28;) or ſome other natural or moral objection, which formed a real grievance. In the days of Chriſt the Jewiſh teachers, having conſtrued the *permiſſion* into *a commandment*, interpreted it ſo largely, as to extend it to the mereſt trifle; ſo that a licentious mind, could not deſire more allowance. Hence it prevailed to the diſuſe of polygamy, and to the ſtill greater hardſhip of the women, who were turned adrift, one after another, under colour of this law, for the moſt trivial cauſes, to make way for another object of the roving affections. This accounts for the diſcourſes of Chriſt being more explicitly againſt divorces, though the reaſon of them equally determines againſt polygamy; "for from the beginning it was ſo." (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 3—10. *Mark*, c. x. v. 2—12.) But whilſt divorces were allowed, they were alſo regulated. A bill of divorce was given, properly authenticated, and probably ſpecifying the reaſon; and we may ſuppoſe ſome proviſion was alſo made the repudiated woman out of her huſband's ſubſtance. Nor was it any part of God's law to prohibit either party from marrying again: which abſurd human policy is often no better than authorizing fornication. The woman might marry again, and again, if ſet at liberty; but never more muſt return to her former huſband: which reſtriction, whilſt it would operate as a check to inconſtancy, and raſhneſs in the huſband, would prevent the ſhameful practice of exchanging, and lending wives, which was the cuſtom in many places; and thus they would be preſerved from that national guilt, which ſuch practices contracted: and ſo far as theſe regulations were adhered to, ſome of the worſt effects of divorces would in good meaſure be prevented.

V. 5.] This conſiderate, and condeſcending exemption would operate, in fixing the affections of married perſons, and in preventing of divorces; for early, or long ſepara-

ſhall not go out to war, neither ſhall he be charged with any buſineſs: *but* he ſhall be free at home one year, and ſhall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

6 No man ſhall take the nether or the upper millſtone to pledge: for he taketh *a man*'s life to pledge:

7 If a man be found ſtealing any of his brethren of the children of Iſrael, and maketh merchandiſe of him, or ſelleth him; then that thief ſhall die, and thou ſhalt put evil away from among you.

8 Take heed in the plague of leproſy, that thou obſerve diligently and do according to all that the prieſts the Levites ſhall teach you: as I commanded them, *ſo* ye ſhall obſerve to do.

9 Remember what the LORD thy God did unto Miriam by the way, after that ye were come forth out of Egypt.

10 When thou doſt lend thy brother any thing, thou ſhalt not go into his houſe to fetch his pledge.

11 Thou ſhalt ſtand abroad, and the man to whom thou doſt lend ſhall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee.

12 And if the man *be* poor, thou ſhalt not ſleep with his pledge.

13 In any caſe thou ſhalt deliver him the pledge again when the ſun goeth down, that he may ſleep in his own raiment, and bleſs thee: and it ſhall be righteouſneſs unto thee before the LORD thy God.

14 Thou ſhalt not oppreſs an hired ſervant *that is* poor and needy, *whether he be* of thy brethren, or of thy ſtrangers that *are* in thy land within thy gates:

15 At his day thou ſhalt give *him* his hire, neither ſhall the ſun go down upon it; for he *is* poor, and ſetteth his heart upon it: leſt he cry againſt thee unto the LORD, and it be ſin unto thee.

16 The fathers ſhall not be put to death for the children, neither ſhall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man ſhall be put to death for his own ſin.

17 Thou ſhalt not pervert the judgment of the ſtranger, *nor* of the fatherleſs, nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:

18 But thou ſhalt remember that thou waſt a bond-man in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

19 When thou cutteſt down thine harveſt in thy field, and haſt forgot a ſheaf in the field, thou ſhalt not go again to fetch it: it ſhall be

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tions tend to alienate the affections, and form temptations to inconſtancy.

V. 6. *For he taketh*, &c.] Hand mills were generally uſed in every family for grinding their own corn, and men would be deprived of the means of preparing their neceſſary food, if the millſtones were taken from them. But the ſame reaſon holds good againſt receiving in pledge, or diſtraining for debt any of thoſe inſtruments of labour, by which men are accuſtomed to earn their livelihood.

V. 7. *Stealing any of his brethren*, &c.] Chriſtianity has annihilated thoſe diſtinctions of nations, which, for typical, and political reaſons, were for a time eſtabliſhed; and in ſuch matters every man is now our brother; whatever be his nation, complexion, or creed. And how the merchandiſe of men and women can be carried on, without tranſgreſſing this commandment, or abetting thoſe, who do, is worthy the conſideration of ſuch, as grow rich by this diſgraceful traffic. An inhabitant of England, if he ſtay at home, and ſteals a horſe, or ſheep, is condemned to death: but if he take a voyage to Africa, he may ſteal, or purchaſe of thoſe, who do ſteal, hundreds of men, and women, and not only eſcape with impunity, but grow great like a prince by the traffic. Contraſt this with the law of God: whoever ſtole cattle reſtored four, or five fold; whoever ſtole one human being, though an infant, or an ideot, muſt die.—May we not call upon Britiſh legiſlators to rectify this flagrant abuſe! I truſt we may, and not call long in vain; a more generous ſpirit is diffuſing itſelf among us.

V. 9. *Unto Miriam*, &c.] Her leproſy was a judgment inflicted of God; under this rebuke ſhe humbled herſelf, notwithſtanding her rank, and character; and ſhe was excluded from the camp, but ſubmitting was reſtored. Hence they might learn how to conduct themſelves in ſimilar circumſtances.

V. 10—13.] Though the Iſraelites might not take intereſt of their brethren, they might take a pledge, provided it were of ſomething, which the borrower could conveniently ſpare, and which he willingly propoſed. But if, in his neceſſity, he brought what he could not well ſpare, they were commanded to reſtore it without delay: and this being done from a right motive, would be accepted as an act of righteouſneſs by a merciful God, and rewarded accordingly; he would alſo puniſh the neglect of it.

V. 16.] God himſelf, who can bring good to individuals out of public calamities, might juſtly involve the children in the parent's puniſhment: but he would not allow the magiſtrate to do it, eſpecially in matters of life, and death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The impetuous luſts, and ſelfiſh hardneſs of men's hearts, if not reſtrained by a conſtant miracle, or ſubdued by divine grace, will inevitably occaſion manifold abuſes in

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for the ſtranger, for the fatherleſs, and for the widow; that the LORD thy God may bleſs thee in all the work of thine hands.

20 When thou beateſt thine olive-tree, thou ſhalt not go over the boughs again: it ſhall be for the ſtranger, for the fatherleſs and for the widow.

21 When thou gathereſt the grapes of thy vineyard, thou ſhalt not glean *it* afterward: it ſhall be for the ſtranger, for the fatherleſs, and for the widow.

22 And thou ſhalt remember that thou waſt a bond-man in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

CHAP. XXV.

Contains laws, 1ſt. For regulating the ſcourging of malefactors, v. 1—3. *2d. Againſt muzzling the oxen, which trode out the corn, v.* 4. *3d. Reſpecting the marriage of the widows of their brethren, who died childleſs, v.* 5—10. *4th. For the puniſhment of an immodeſt woman, v.* 11—12. *5th. Requiring juſt weights, and meaſures, v.* 13—16. *6th. For deſtroying the Amalekites, v.* 17—19.

IF there be a controverſy between men, and they come unto judgment, that *the judges* may judge them, then they ſhall juſtify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.

2 And it ſhall be if the wicked man *be* worthy to be beaten, that the judge ſhall cauſe him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number.

3 Forty ſtripes ye may give him, *and* not exceed: leſt, *if* he ſhould exceed, and beat him above theſe with many ſtripes, then thy brother ſhould ſeem vile unto thee.

4 Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the corn.*

5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die and have no child, the wife of the dead ſhall not marry without unto a ſtranger: her huſband's brother ſhall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an huſband's brother unto her.

6 And it ſhall be, *that* the firſt-born which ſhe beareth ſhall ſucceed in the name of his brother *which is* dead, that his name be not put out of Iſrael.

7 And if the man like not to take his bro-

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every ſociety, contrary to the moral law of God; nor can the beſt human laws prevent them.—But theſe abuſes proportionably mar all our comforts, and neither conſcience, nor prudence will permit a true Chriſtian to fall in with them.—Even where the providence of God, or his own indiſcreet choice in marriage hath allotted a Chriſtian a trial inſtead of an help-meet; he will from his heart prefer bearing the croſs, to ſuch relief as tends ultimately to licentiouſneſs, confuſion, and miſery: and divine grace will ſanctify this croſs, ſupport him under it, and teach him ſo to behave, as will gradually render it more tolerable.—But every method ſhould be uſed to cement the affections of married perſons, and to exclude every temptation to inconſtancy.—Whilſt we leave thoſe, to the tribunal of God, who proſper by the moſt horrible oppreſſion, or moſt infamous traffic: it ſuffices here to obſerve, that there are readers, who would be diſguſted, were we to follow the inſpired writer, in his repeated exhortations to humiliation before God, to purity, piety, juſtice, mercy, kindneſs, impartiality to, and conſideration of the poor and deſtitute, and to large generoſity of ſpirit.—It is not hard to prove theſe things to be pleaſing unto God, and becoming his redeemed people; the difficulty is, to bring our minds to attend to them in our daily walk and converſation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 2, 3.] Many crimes had been mentioned, for which no puniſhment had been ſpecified: in all theſe caſes it is ſuppoſed that ſcourging was to be uſed at the diſcretion of the magiſtrate, according to the degree and aggravations of the crime. This puniſhment was inflicted in open court, under the inſpection of the judge, and without reſpect to the rank of the criminal. But leſt the malefactor ſhould ſeem vile, as a ſlave, or a beaſt, the number of forty ſtripes was not to be exceeded. Leſt they ſhould miſcount, the Jewiſh magiſtrates always confined themſelves to thirty-nine ſtripes, which Paul repeatedly endured.—It were to be wiſhed that there were amongſt us more of this chaſtiſement of petty crimes, and fewer inſtances of capital puniſhment.

V. 4. *Muzzle*, &c.] The Iſraelites, and moſt of the ancients were accuſtomed to beat out their grain by the feet of oxen, and by inſtruments drawn by them.

V. 5—10.] The cuſtom here regulated had long prevailed; (*Gen.* xxxviii, v. 8;) and was probably introduced to preſerve ſome remembrance of thoſe who died childleſs; and it ſeems to have been adopted into the Moſaic law, mainly to preſerve the diſtinction of inheritances, and to favour the regularity of their genealogies, until the coming of Chriſt, as well as to provide for the deſtitute, when the eſtate devolved to the next heir. When a married man died without iſſue, his brother was required to marry the widow; and the eldeſt ſon of ſuch a marriage inherited the eſtate of the deceaſed, and thus preſerved his name in the genealogies.—If any one refuſed to comply with this cuſtom, being averſe to the perſon, or character of the widow, he was to be publickly diſgraced; by pulling off his ſhoe, he was rendered like the ſlaves, who generally went barefoot, and the widow even ſpit in, or before his face, in contempt of him, who had thus diſ-

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ther's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and ſay, My huſband's brother refuſeth to raiſe up unto his brother a name in Iſrael, he will not perform the duty of my huſband's brother.

8 Then the elders of his city ſhall call him, and ſpeak unto him: and *if* he ſtand *to it*, and ſay, I like not to take her;

9 Then ſhall his brother's wife come unto him in the preſence of the elders, and looſe his ſhoe from off his foot, and ſpit in his face, and ſhall anſwer and ſay, So ſhall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's houſe.

10 And his name ſhall be called in Iſrael, The houſe of him that hath his ſhoe looſed.

11 When men ſtrive together, one with another, and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her huſband out of the hand of him that ſmiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the ſecrets;

12 Then thou ſhalt cut off her hand, thine eye ſhall not pity *her*.

13 Thou ſhalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a ſmall.

14 Thou ſhalt not have in thine houſe divers meaſures, a great and a ſmall.

15 *But* thou ſhalt have a perfect and juſt weight, a perfect and juſt meaſure ſhalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

16 For all that do ſuch things, and all that do unrighteouſly, *are* an abomination unto the LORD thy God.

17 Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;

18 How he met thee by the way and ſmote the hindmoſt of thee, *even* all *that were* feeble behind thee, when thou *waſt* faint and weary; and he feared not God.

19 Therefore it ſhall be, when the LORD thy

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graced her, and ſhewn diſreſpect to the memory of the deceaſed. It is not agreed amongſt commentators, whether married men were concerned in this law, or not: and it is not material which way it is determined: as it had reference to a particular caſe, which no longer exiſts, and therefore *our duty* is not in the leaſt affected by the determination.

V. 13—16.] They were not only not to uſe unjuſt weights, and meaſures; but they were not to keep them in the houſe. It is obſervable that this too common practice is branded as "abomination to the Lord" equally with idolatry, adultery, ſodomy, &c. (*Amos*, c. viii. v. 4—6. *Micah*, c. vi. v. 10. 1 *Cor.* c. vi. v. 8, 9.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In adminiſtering juſtice, equity, and impartiality are required to diſtinguiſh betwixt the innocent, and the guilty, and to proportion puniſhments to crimes; ſtill leaning to the ſide of lenity, rather than to that of ſeverity, as aiming at the reformation, and not the deſtruction of the criminal himſelf, as far as public ſecurity will admit.—Every infliction of puniſhment ſhould be with ſolemnity, that all the ſpectators may be impreſſed with dread, and be warned not to offend in like manner. And though the criminals muſt be ſhamed, as well as put to pain, for their warning and humiliation; yet care ſhould be taken, if poſſible, that they do not appear totally vile; leſt having no further reputation to loſe, they ſhould become deſperate. Happy are they who are chaſtened of the Lord for their humiliation, that they ſhould not be condemned with the world to utter deſtruction. But kindneſs is not only due to men, but even to the beaſts; and whatever living creature contributes to our eaſe, pleaſure, or advantage, ſhould receive from us ſuch reciprocal ſatisfactions, as they are capable of, in proportion to the benefit conferred. How equitable then is it, that miniſters, who are inſtrumental to men's ſalvation, ſhould be maintained comfortably at their expence!—In all our actions we ſhould ſeek the good of all, around us, eſpecially of the Lord's people, and the ſpread, and continuance of true religion in the next generation: and in contracting marriage eſpecially ſhould ſeek a godly ſeed, who may preſerve the name of deceaſed believers, and fill up their places in the church: in every way ſhewing reſpect to dead, and kindneſs to living relatives: for whatever diſgrace we without cauſe put upon others, will in the event rebound upon ourſelves.—A ſolemn, and teſtified ratification ſhould diſtinguiſh the honourable relation of marriage, from all illicit connexions; and married perſons ſhould be known, to preſerve them, and others from temptation: and though affections cannot be forced, yet they ſhould be ſubordinated to reaſon, and religion.—The cuſtoms, and manners of different ages, may render that conſiſtent with female delicacy at one time, which would not be deemed ſo at another: but there are certain outrages to modeſty, which no age can tolerate, no provocation, or extremity palliate, but which muſt ever be branded with infamy, and ſhould be puniſhed with unpitying ſeverity. Every degree of fraudulency is abhorred of God, and ſhould be dreaded by us; for diſhoneſt gain always brings a curſe upon men's property, families, and ſouls: and the day of judgment will bring ſtrange things to light in this reſpect. Happy they, who now judge themſelves, repent of, and forſake their ſins, and put away every evil thing, that they may not then be condemned of the Lord. Let every perſecutor, and injurer of God's people hear, and take warning from the example of the Amalekites; however they now caſt off the fear of God, and behave with cruelty, and deſpite to the meek, and poor; the Lord

God hath given thee reſt from all thine enemies round about, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance to poſſeſs it, *that* thou ſhalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven; thou ſhalt not forget *it*.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. The preſcribed form of preſenting an oblation of the firſt-fruits, v. 1—11. 2d. The preſcribed proteſtation to be uſed every third year reſpecting their ſecond tithes, v. 12—15. 3d. A ſummary of their covenant, v. 16—19.

AND it ſhall be when thou *art* come in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance, and poſſeſſeſt it, and dwelleſt therein:

2 That thou ſhalt take of the firſt of all the fruit of the earth, which thou ſhalt bring of thy land that the LORD thy God giveth thee, and ſhalt put *it* in a baſket, and ſhalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God ſhall chooſe to place his name there.

3 And thou ſhalt go unto the prieſt that ſhall be in thoſe days, and ſay unto him, I profeſs this day unto the LORD thy God, that I am come unto the country which the LORD ſware unto our fathers for to give us.

4 And the prieſt ſhall take the baſket out of thine hand, and ſet it down before the altar of the LORD thy God.

5 And thou ſhalt ſpeak, and ſay before the LORD thy God, A Syrian ready to periſh *was* my father, and he went down into Egypt, and ſojourned there with a few, and became there a nation, great, mighty, and populous:

6 And the Egyptians evil intreated us, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage:

7 And when we cried unto the LORD God of our fathers, the LORD heard our voice, and looked on our affliction, and our labour, and our oppreſſion:

8 And the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outſtretched arm, and with great terribleneſs, and with ſigns, and with wonders.

9 And he hath brought us into this place, and hath given us this land, *even* a land that floweth with milk and honey.

10 And now, behold, I have brought the firſt-fruits of the land which thou, O LORD, haſt given me. And thou ſhalt ſet it before the LORD thy God, and worſhip before the LORD thy God.

11 And thou ſhalt rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine houſe, thou, and the Levite, and the ſtranger that *is* among you.

12 When thou haſt made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increaſe the third year, *which is* the year of tithing, and haſt given *it* unto the Levite, the ſtranger, the fatherleſs,

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will one day plead their cauſe, avenge all the injuſtice done them, and blot out the name of every enemy from under heaven: and the longer judgment tarries, the more dreadful will be it's execution at laſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 2. *Thou ſhalt take*, &c.] This probably relates to the offering of the firſt-fruits, at the day of Pentecoſt, (*Ex.* c. xxiii. v. 16—19. *Deut.* c. xvi. v. 10.) Some of every kind, and the firſt ripe of each ſort, was to be preſented, of which the prieſts had the uſe: but the quantity is not preſcribed; for it was a free-will offering, a thankful acknowledgment, to the denial of their own appetite, which would eſpecially crave the firſt ripe fruit: and therefore their liberality was put to the trial. But as every kind of production could not be ripe at the ſame time; and ſome could not be preſerved till the reſt were ready; we muſt admit ſome limitation, and ſuppoſe that the beſt, and choiceſt, and ſuch as could beſt be preſerved, were thus to be preſented; and the reſt, as occaſion required, were offered, to the prieſts in their ſeveral cities. Some ſuppoſe likewiſe, that in caſe of hindrance this baſket might be preſented at another time, than at the feaſt of Pentecoſt; but that every Iſraelite, who poſſeſſed land, was required annually to make this preſentation.

V. 5. *A Syrian ready*, &c.] Jacob is called a Syrian becauſe he lived ſo long in Syria, or Meſopotamia, which was one diſtrict of that country. He was diſtreſſed when he went to Laban; his life was afterwards endangered both from him, and from his brother Eſau: he was afterwards ready to periſh by famine in Canaan, which occaſioned his removal into Egypt, where his poſterity were miſerably enſlaved: yet notwithſtanding all theſe hindrances, the Lord's promiſes had been punctually performed. This the Iſraelites were to acknowledge annually in this ſolemn manner: to keep up amongſt them a remembrance of theſe events, and to remind them of their obligations to love, and ſerve God; that he might receive from them the due tribute of praiſe and gratitude.

V. 12—15.] This related to the ſecond tithe, (*ſee note*, c. xiv. v. 22—29.) Every three years this ſolemn proteſtation was required from each of them, probably in the pre-

and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

13 Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of *mine* house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten *them*;

14 I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away *ought* thereof for *any* unclean *use*, nor given *ought* thereof for the dead; *but* I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, *and* have done according to all that thou hast commanded me:

15 Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

16 This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes, and judgments; thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.

17 Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice:

18 And the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people; as he hath promised thee, and that *thou* shouldest keep all his commandments;

19 And to make thee high above all nations which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour; and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the LORD thy God, as he hath spoken.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains injunctions, 1st. To write the law upon plaistered stones in Canaan, with certain solemnities, v. 1. 10. 2d. To pronounce blessings upon the obedient from mount Gerizzim, and curses upon the disobedient from mount Ebal, 11—26.

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fence of the priests in the court of the tabernacle. Thereby they declared that the whole had been employed to those purposes, for which it was appropriated: and that no part had been used by them in mourning, or at funerals, which rendered them unclean; nor in any superstitious ceremony. As this matter lay very much betwixt God, and their conscience, this protestation was the more suitable, and would both tend to remind them of their duty, and render them more afraid of neglecting it.

V. 17. *Thou hast avouched*, &c.] By their national covenant they openly professed themselves the servants, and worshippers of Jehovah, and engaged to walk obediently in his commandments: and he avowed himself to be their God, their protector, and portion; and engaged that, whilst they were obedient, he would prosper, and advance them, as well as continue to them their distinguishing religious advantages. All this was an external representation of that covenant relation, which subsists betwixt a reconciled God, and every true believer; and of the privileges, and duties belonging to, and resulting from it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whatever God at any time hath promised, will assuredly in due season be fulfilled to the persons specified, notwithstanding all obstacles, improbabilities, and apparent delays: and in all our comforts we should observe, and give God the glory of the faithfulness, as well as of the goodness displayed therein. It is advantageous to ourselves frequently to meditate on the Lord's dealings with us, and to consider from how low an estate, and through what impediments, he hath brought us to our present comforts, and prospects: and it is so edifying to others, on proper occasions, to speak of these things, that whatever leads to such humiliating, and enlivening subjects, is well worthy of our regard. And nothing can be more reasonable, than that we should both by word and deed render our God the glory due unto his name. Him should we honour with our first and best in every thing, to the denial of our own appetites and passions: on some occasions it is honourable to God, and edifying to his church, when this is done publicly: it is always a source of rejoicing to ourselves, when it is done properly. At the day of judgment we must render an account of our whole stewardship; and it is therefore our wisdom to be frequently calling ourselves to a previous account, how we employ our time, possessions, or endowments. We must be watchful, not only to avoid dishonesty, but that our conversation be without covetousness; that pious and charitable uses have their portion; and that temperance, and beneficence have been duly regarded by us, according to the commandments of God. Thus shall we evince that, according to the covenant of grace in Jesus Christ, the Lord is our God, and we are his people; and that we are waiting in his appointed way, for the performance of his gracious and glorious promises. It may at some times consist with humility, and tend to edification, openly to protest our integrity, and at all times the consciousness of it is matter of rejoicing, (2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 12,) and of confidence at the throne of grace, (1 *John*, c. iii. v. 20—22;) and in all our supplications we should remember to plead for peculiar blessings on our fellow Christians, and the extending of our privileges to our fellow sinners unto the ends of the earth.

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AND Moſes, with the elders of Iſrael, commanded the people, ſaying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day.

2 And it ſhall be, on the day when ye ſhall paſs over Jordan, unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou ſhalt ſet thee up great ſtones, and plaiſter them with plaiſter:

3 And thou ſhalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art paſſed over; that thou mayeſt go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promiſed thee.

4 Therefore it ſhall be, when ye be gone over Jordan, *that* ye ſhall ſet up theſe ſtones which I command you this day, in mount Ebal, and thou ſhalt plaiſter them with plaiſter.

5 And there ſhalt thou build an altar unto the LORD thy God, an altar of ſtones: thou ſhalt not lift up *any* iron *tool* upon them.

6 Thou ſhalt build the altar of the LORD thy God of whole ſtones; and thou ſhalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the LORD thy God.

7 And thou ſhalt offer peace-offerings, and ſhalt eat there, and rejoice before the LORD thy God.

8 And thou ſhalt write upon the ſtones all the words of this law very plainly.

9 And Moſes, and the prieſts the Levites, ſpake unto all Iſrael, ſaying, Take heed, and hearken, O Iſrael; this day thou art become the people of the LORD thy God.

10 Thou ſhalt therefore obey the voice of the LORD thy God, and do his commandments and his ſtatutes, which I command thee this day.

11 And Moſes charged the people the ſame day, ſaying,

12 Theſe ſhall ſtand upon mount Gerizzim to bleſs the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Iſſachar, and Joſeph, and Benjamin.

13 And theſe ſhall ſtand upon mount Ebal to curſe; Reuben, Gad, and Aſher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

14 And the Levites ſhall ſpeak, and ſay unto all the men of Iſrael with a loud voice,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *Moſes with the elders*, &c.] In the foregoing chapter Moſes finiſhed his repetition and explanation of the law, with thoſe particular exhortations, which he annexed thereto. Here, in conjunction with the ſeventy elders, (*Num.* c. xi,) he proceeded to enjoin two ſolemn obſervances, which were to be attended to after their entrance into Canaan, the former to aſſiſt their memories, the latter to affect their hearts.

V. 3. *All the words of this law*, &c.] It is much diſputed what was written upon theſe plaiſtered ſtones, nor is the ſolution very eaſy. Some ſuppoſe that the whole book of Deuteronomy was thereon inſcribed; others the preceptive part of it; others the ten commandments only; and others reſtrict the writing to the latter part of this chapter. And indeed whatever elſe was intended, as the ſtones were placed upon mount Ebal, whence the curſes were denounced, it is probable that they were added: but it is alſo probable that at leaſt the ten commandments, and the great outlines of the whole law, were inſcribed thereon.

V. 5. *An altar of ſtones*, &c.] *See Exod.* c. xx. v. 25.) Ordinarily no altar was to be uſed, but that at the door of the tabernacle, which was made of wood and braſs; but the Lord reſerved to himſelf the privilege of diſpenſing with his own laws: and he, on this occaſion, ordered an altar of rough ſtones to be formed, in order to this renewed confirmation of the covenant, ſimilar to that uſed, when it was firſt ratified at mount Sinai, (*Exod.* c. xxiv.) This altar built upon mount Ebal, and the ſacrifices of burnt-offerings, on this occaſion offered thereon, aptly taught them, that the curſe of the law could only be removed by him, who, by the ſacrifice of himſelf, was made a curſe for ſinners: and the peace-offerings, &c, (v. 7,) implied that joyful communion with a reconciled God may be maintained through Jeſus Chriſt, notwithſtanding the moſt tremendous curſes of the law.

V. 12. *To bleſs*, &c.] By this ſolemnity the whole people of Iſrael deliberately approved of, and conſented to their national covenant, declared that they expected the bleſſings ſtipulated to them only in a way of obedience, and confeſſed that individually, and nationally, they ſhould merit, and might expect to be accurſed of God, if they were diſobedient to his commandments. We have no particular mention made of the bleſſings pronounced; they do not belong to thoſe, who obey ſome and neglect others of God's commandments; "for he that keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all:" Nor can man ever claim the recompenſe of his obedience as a debt, but muſt receive it as an unmerited favour: and the ſilence of the Scriptures is to be conſidered in ſuch caſes as conveying inſtruction. It is obſervable, that the tribes, from whom the bleſſings were pronounced, were all deſcended from Leah, and Rachel the free women.

V. 14. *And the Levites*, &c.] That is, ſome of them, who were appointed to ſpeak in the name of God on this occaſion; for the bulk of the tribes ſtood upon the oppoſite mountain.

15 Curſed

15 Curſed *be* the man that maketh *any* graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftſman, and putteth *it* in *a* ſecret *place:* and all the people ſhall anſwer and ſay, Amen.

16 Curſed *be* he that ſetteth light by his father or his mother: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

17 Curſed *be* he that removeth his neighbour's land mark: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

18 Curſed be *be* that maketh the blind to wander out of the way: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

19 Curſed *be* he that perverteth the judgment of the ſtranger, fatherleſs, and widow: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

20 Curſed *be* he that lieth with his father's wife; becauſe he uncovereth his father's ſkirt: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

21 Curſed *be* he that lieth with any manner of beaſt: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

22 Curſed *be* he that lieth with his ſiſter, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

23 Curſed *be* he that lieth with his mother-in-law: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

24 Curſed *be* he that ſmiteth his neighbour ſecretly: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

25 Curſed *be* he that taketh reward to ſlay an innocent perſon: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

26 Curſed *be* he that confirmeth not *all* the words of this law to do them: and all the people ſhall ſay, Amen.

V. 15. *In a ſecret place*, &c.] Open idolatry was to be capitally puniſhed by the magiſtrate: but if concealed from man's eye, God would puniſh it himſelf.

All the people, &c.] By this ſolemn aſſent to the words of theſe curſes, they did not wiſh or conſent that either themſelves or their neighbours ſhould be accurſed; but merely declared their belief that ſuch guilty perſons would be ſo, and their acknowledgment that they were deſerving of the curſe; and that they expected no other themſelves but to be accurſed, if they committed the crimes which were ſpecified. *Were there no other objection* to the ſolemnity preſcribed by the church of England on Aſh-Wedneſday, it would be very trifling to ſay, that people go to church to curſe their neighbours: for the Amen, now ſpoken by profeſſing Chriſtians, means neither more nor leſs, than that which God commanded the Iſraelites to annex to the ſame curſes: and under every diſpenſation, they who live in the practice of groſs wickedneſs are accurſed, and ought to be reminded of it.

V. 18. *Maketh the blind*, &c.] By parity of reaſon it is equally criminal wittingly to give bad counſel to the ignorant, or to injure thoſe who cannot take care of themſelves.

V. 26. *That confirmeth*, &c.] This is rendered by St. Paul, "curſed is every one that continueth not in all "things, which are written in the book of the law to do "them, (*Gal.* c. iii. v. 10.) Whence we learn, that continued obedience is the confirmation here ſpoken of: but we are more eſpecially taught, that theſe curſes were not only intended to deter the Iſraelites from ſin, but to ſhew them their need of mercy, and to eſtabliſh the diſtinction betwixt the righteouſneſs of faith, and the righteouſneſs of works. This eſpecially muſt be the meaning of this laſt verſe, whereby they were evidently called to condemn themſelves, as deſerving of the curſe denounced: which truth being properly perceived, forms the grand preparation of heart, for underſtanding and valuing the ſalvation of the goſpel, according to the new covenant of mercy in Chriſt Jeſus.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As there is ſuch an unaptneſs in our fallen nature, to retain ſuitable impreſſions of the things pertaining to God, we have occaſion to uſe every proper means of aſſiſting our memories, awakening our conſciences, or affecting our hearts with them: but, bleſſed be God, the numerous printed copies of the ſcriptures amongſt us, if properly ſtudied, and thus familiarized to our minds, ſuperſede the neceſſity of ſuch methods as were preſcribed to Iſrael: and the *end of the goſpel miniſtry is, and the aim of all preachers ought to be, to make the word of God as plain as poſſible to the meaneſt capacities:* yet except the Spirit of God efficaciouſly ſucceed their labours, we ſhall not even by theſe means be made wiſe unto ſalvation; for this bleſſing we ſhould therefore daily and earneſtly pray. In like manner, without the interpoſition of the atoning blood of Chriſt, we ſinners can neither have communion with a holy God, nor perform any acceptable obedience to him: for his righteous law peremptorily requires an uninterrupted, ſpiritual, and perſevering obedience to every precept, and condemns every one, who at any time, or in any inſtance, tranſgreſſes it. Under its awful curſe therefore we tranſgreſſors all remain, until the redemption of Chriſt be applied to our hearts: under that curſe every unbeliever will periſh for ever, and be conſtrained to acknowledge the juſtice of his condemnation. Happy they, who here ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of God, and, as ſelf-condemned ſinners, ſeek ſalvation from his mercy, through Jeſus Chriſt, and according to that new covenant of which *he* is ſurety: for them there is no condemnation, their ſalvation is for ever, and their righteouſneſs ſhall not be aboliſhed; and every bleſſing is enſured to them by promiſe, by covenant, and by oath. But none, who live in the habitual practice of any known ſin, are partakers of theſe privileges, however covertly they may conceal their wickedneſs from the cognizance of the magiſtrates, or the cenſure of the miniſters, and the church, the awful curſe of God will light upon them, with weight proportioned to their abuſed privileges, and their hypocritical profeſſion. Wherever the grace of God bringeth ſal-

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Manifold bleſſings covenanted to Iſrael, whilſt they continued obedient, v. 1—14. *2d. Multiplied curſes denounced againſt them, if they were diſobedient,* 15—68.

AND it ſhall come to paſs, if thou ſhalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God to obſerve *and* to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the LORD thy God will ſet thee on high above all nations of the earth:

2 And all theſe bleſſings ſhall come on thee and overtake thee, if thou ſhalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

3 Bleſſed *ſhalt* thou *be* in the city, and bleſſed *ſhalt* thou *be* in the field.

4 Bleſſed *ſhall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increaſe of thy kine, and the flocks of thy ſheep.

5 Bleſſed *ſhall be* thy baſket and thy ſtore.

6 Bleſſed *ſhalt* thou *be* when thou comeſt in, and bleſſed *ſhalt* thou *be* when thou goeſt out.

7 The LORD ſhall cauſe thine enemies that riſe up againſt thee to be ſmitten before thy face: they ſhall come out againſt thee one way, and flee before thee ſeven ways.

8 The LORD ſhall command the bleſſing upon thee in thy ſtore houſes, and in all that thou ſetteſt thine hand unto; and he ſhall bleſs thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

9 The LORD ſhall eſtabliſh thee an holy people unto himſelf, as he hath ſworn unto thee, if thou ſhalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways.

10 And all people of the earth ſhall ſee that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they ſhall be afraid of thee.

11 And the LORD ſhall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD ſware unto thy fathers to give thee.

12 The LORD ſhall open unto thee his good treaſure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his ſeaſon, and to bleſs all the work of thine hand: and thou ſhalt lend unto many nations, and thou ſhalt not borrow.

13 And the LORD ſhall make thee the head, and not the tail: and thou ſhalt be above only, and thou ſhalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day to obſerve and to do *them:*

14 And thou ſhalt not go aſide from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand or to the left, to go after other Gods to ſerve them.

15 But it ſhall come to paſs, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy

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vation, it teacheth the believer to deny ſuch ungodlineſs, and ſuch worldly luſts, as are here mentioned, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, conſenting to, confirming, and delighting in all the words of God's law after the inward man, though he cannot render it a perfect and unfailing obedience. In this evangelical dependance and conſcientious walk, true peace and ſolid joy are to be found: Thus God may be glorified, and mankind benefited; and in promoting this religion, magiſtrates, and miniſters, and perſons of every rank, ſhould concur; and improve their authority, influence, and example, for that purpoſe.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 2. *All theſe bleſſings*, &c.] This chapter has a near reſemblance to the twenty-ſixth chapter of Leviticus, which was addreſſed, near forty years before, to their forefathers at mount Sinai; and the reader is referred to the notes, &c. thereon. We have here a very copious, and affecting expoſition of the bleſſing, and the curſe, that were mentioned in the foregoing chapter, in which there is evidently much prophetical of what hath been befalling the Jewiſh nation to this day.

V. 2—14.] In a variety of expreſſions every kind of proſperity, perſonal, relative, and public; in their property, and enjoyments; in their temporal advancement, and their ſpiritual privileges, are engaged to the Iſraelites, whilſt they continued obedient: and their ſucceeding hiſtory furniſhes full demonſtration, that thus it was uniformly with them as a nation, whilſt they adhered to the worſhip and ſervice of God; and in great meaſure it was thus with them individually. Their remarkable proſperity in every thing convinced the ſurrounding nations, that they were immediately protected, and aſſiſted by the Lord, whoſe name they worſhipped, and whoſe people they profeſſed to be: inſomuch that they were often afraid to meddle with them. (v. 10.)

V. 15. *All theſe curſes ſhall*, &c.] Theſe terrible curſes, which were denounced againſt them, when diſobedient, have uniformly "overtaken them," that is, have followed, and preſſed upon them in every ſituation, and in every country, from that day to this, as muſt be evident to every perſon, who is in the leaſt acquainted with their hiſtory. This will be very briefly noted as we proceed.

God, to obſerve to do all his commandments and his ſtatutes which I command thee this day; that all theſe curſes ſhall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

16 Curſed *ſhalt* thou *be* in the city, and curſed *ſhalt* thou *be* in the field.

17 Curſed *ſhall be* thy baſket and thy ſtore.

18 Curſed *ſhall be* the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increaſe of thy kine, and the flocks of thy ſheep.

19 Curſed *ſhalt* thou *be* when thou comeſt in, and curſed *ſhalt* thou *be* when thou goeſt out.

20 The LORD ſhall ſend upon thee curſing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou ſetteſt thine hand unto for to do, until thou be deſtroyed, and until thou periſh quickly; becauſe of the wickedneſs of thy doings whereby thou haſt forſaken me.

21 The LORD ſhall make the peſtilence cleave unto thee, until he have conſumed thee from off the land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it.

22 The LORD ſhall ſmite thee with a conſumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the ſword, and with blaſting, and with mildew: and they ſhall purſue thee until thou periſh.

23 And the heaven that *is* over thy head ſhall be braſs, and the earth that *is* under thee *ſhall be* iron.

24 The LORD ſhall make the rain of thy land powder and duſt: from heaven ſhall it come down upon thee, until thou be deſtroyed.

25 The LORD ſhall cauſe thee to be ſmitten before thine enemies: thou ſhalt go out one way againſt them, and flee ſeven ways before them; and ſhalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.

26 And thy carcaſe ſhall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beaſts of the earth, and no man ſhall fray *them* away.

27 The LORD will ſmite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the ſcab, and with the itch, whereof thou canſt not be healed.

28 The LORD ſhall ſmite thee with madneſs, and blindneſs, and aſtoniſhment of heart:

29 And thou ſhalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in darkneſs, and thou ſhalt not proſper in thy ways; and thou ſhalt be only oppreſſed and ſpoiled ever more: and no man ſhall ſave *thee*.

30 Thou ſhalt betroth a wife, and another man ſhall lie with her: thou ſhalt build an houſe, and thou ſhalt not dwell therein: thou ſhalt plant a vineyard, and ſhalt not gather the grapes thereof.

31 Thine ox *ſhall be* ſlain before thine eyes, and thou ſhalt not eat thereof: thine aſs *ſhall be* violently taken away from before thy face, and ſhall not be reſtored to thee: thy ſheep *ſhall be* given unto thine enemies, and thou ſhalt have none to reſcue *them*.

32 Thy ſons and thy daughters *ſhall be* given unto another people, and thine eyes ſhall look and fail *with longing* for them all the day long: and *there ſhall be* no might in thine hand.

33 The fruit of thy land, and all thy labours, ſhall a nation which thou knoweſt not

V. 24. *The rain of thy land*, &c.] Inſtead of the rain in it's appointed ſeaſons, the Lord declared that he would viſit them with ſuch drought, as ſhould render their land dry duſt, and barren ſand. Such was the famine in the days of Ahab. (1 *Kings*, c. xvii, xviii.) Jeremiah alſo laments one very terrible; (*Jer.* c. xiv:) and it is remarkable that this formerly fertile land, is at preſent noted for it's ſterility.

V. 25. *And ſhalt be removed*, &c.] This was fulfilled in the Aſſyrian, and Babyloniſh captivity; but ſtill more ſignally hath it been fulfilling for above ſeventeen hundred years, in their preſent ſtate of diſperſion all over the earth.

V. 28. *The Lord ſhall ſmite thee*, &c.] In the ſiege of Jeruſalem by the Chaldeans this was in ſome meaſure the caſe; but in that by Titus and the Romans, and in the ſubſequent conduct of the miſerable reliques of the Jews, their infatuation was ſo evident, that every one, who reads of their conduct, muſt agree, that they were given up to judicial blindneſs and madneſs, or they never could have been ſo bent upon their own deſtruction: whilſt, by their obſtinate reſiſtance to the Roman power, without the leaſt proſpect of eſcaping, they enſured their own miſeries; by their inteſtine rage, they became the executioners of the wrath of God upon themſelves, and almoſt ſaved their enemies the trouble of deſtroying them, and abſolutely put it out of their power to preſerve them. (v. 34.)

V. 32. *No might in thine hand*, &c.] Neither power to reſiſt the violence done them, nor money to redeem their enſlaved offſpring.

eat

eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed alway:

34 So that thou shalt be mad for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see.

35 The LORD shall smite thee in the knees and in the legs with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head.

36 The LORD shall bring thee and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone.

37 And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.

38 Thou shalt carry much seed out into the field, and shall gather *but* little in: for the locust shall consume it.

39 Thou shalt plant vineyards and dress *them*; but shalt neither drink *of* the wine, nor gather *the grapes*: for the worms shall eat them.

40 Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint *thyself* with the oil: for thine olive shall cast *his fruit*.

41 Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them: for they shall go into captivity.

42 All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.

43 The stranger that *is* within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.

44 He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail.

45 Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee.

46 And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever.

47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all *things*;

48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all *things*: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

49 The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, *as swift* as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;

50 A nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young:

51 And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle,

V. 36. *There shalt thou serve other gods*, &c.] Without doubt multitudes of the Israelites, who were carried captive by the Assyrians, and of the Jews, who were carried to Babylon, were finally incorporated with the nations, amongst whom they lived, and were drawn in, and given up to their idolatry: and some think, that the violence frequently done the Jews in Popish countries; in that they are compelled to worship the images of saints, and angels, &c, by severe persecutions, was here predicted.

V. 37. *A proverb, and a by-word*, &c.] The name of a Jew hath long been a proverbial mark of detestation, and contempt, amongst all the nations, whither they have been driven. I do not say, that this hath been, or is equitable, but it is fact: for we had better look to ourselves, than reproach others, who are under the divine rebuke, and who are living, though reluctant witnesses of the truth of our holy religion, and of God's indignation against those, who reject, or oppose it.

V. 43, 44.] These verses had an early accomplishment in the time of the judges. The remains of the conquered nations were permitted to rise up against them, to gain the ascendancy over them, and cruelly to oppress them, whenever their sins had provoked the Lord.

V. 46. *For a sign, and for a wonder*, &c.] The miseries, which the Jews have endured, and which in some measure they still endure, without *apparent* prospect of redress, are unparalleled in the history of mankind, both for their weight, their number, and their duration: yet after all the oppressions, and massacres, with which they have been wasted, and the long-continued dispersion, by which they have been scattered, they still remain a distinct, and very numerous people. These events, compared with the favour in ancient times shewn them, and with the predictions concerning them, may not only excite our astonishment, but turn unto us for a testimony, and, instead of successive miracles, may assure us of the truth of the Scriptures. And when the other predictions of their conversion to Christ shall be accomplished, the whole taken together will indeed be a sign, and a wonder to all the nations of the earth, and become the forerunner of a general spread of true Christianity.

V. 48—58.] These verses seem especially to describe the Romans, the last, and most terrible enemies of the Jews, who came from a far distant country, whose standard was an eagle; who spake a language, to which the Jews were then utter strangers; whose victories were rapid,

and

and the fruit of thy land, until thou be deſtroyed: which *alſo* ſhall not leave thee *either* corn, wine, or oil, *or* the increaſe of thy kine or flocks of thy ſheep, until he have deſtroyed thee.

52 And he ſhall beſiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou truſtedſt, throughout all thy land: and he ſhall beſiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

53 And thou ſhalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the fleſh of thy ſons and of thy daughters, which the LORD thy God hath given thee, in the ſiege and in the ſtraitneſs wherewith thine enemies ſhall diſtreſs thee:

54 *So that* the man *that is* tender among you, and very delicate, his eye ſhall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his boſom, and towards the remnant of his children which he ſhall leave:

55 So that he will not give to any of them of the fleſh of his children, whom he ſhall eat; becauſe he hath nothing left him in the ſiege and in the ſtraitneſs, wherewith thine enemies ſhall diſtreſs thee in all thy gates.

56 The tender and delicate woman among you, which would not adventure to ſet the ſole of her foot upon the ground for delicateneſs and tenderneſs, her eye ſhall be evil towards the huſband of her boſom, and towards her ſon, and towards her daughter,

57 And towards her young one that cometh out from between her feet, and towards her children which ſhe ſhall bear: for ſhe ſhall eat them for want of all *things*, ſecretly in the ſiege and ſtraitneſs wherewith thine enemy ſhall diſtreſs thee in thy gates.

58 If thou wilt not obſerve to do all the words of this law, *that are* written in this book, that thou mayeſt fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD:

59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy ſeed, *even* great plagues and of long continuance, and ſore ſickneſſes, and of long continuance.

60 Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diſeaſes of Egypt, which thou waſt afraid of; and they ſhall cleave unto thee:

61 Alſo every ſickneſs, and every plague, which *is* not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be deſtroyed.

62 And ye ſhall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the ſtars of heaven, for multitude: becauſe thou wouldeſt not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.

63 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; ſo the LORD will rejoice over you to deſtroy you, and to bring you to nought: and ye ſhall be plucked from off the land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it.

64 And the LORD ſhall ſcatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other; and there thou ſhalt ſerve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, *even* wood and ſtone.

65 And among theſe nations ſhalt thou find no eaſe, neither ſhall the ſole of thy foot

whoſe appearance was terrible, whoſe yoke was an iron yoke, (v. 48.) and the havock, which they made amongſt them, was moſt tremendous. By their armies was Jeruſalem beſieged, ſacked, and utterly deſolated, during which the famine was ſo extreme, that women eat their own children, and concealed the horrible repaſt, leſt others ſhould tear it from them: and after that event, the ſame nation, continually provoked by their inſurrections, and daring crimes, perſecuted them even almoſt to extirpation: ſo that when the numbers, who were deſtroyed in the ſiege, (1,100,000) and the tens of thouſands which were afterwards ſlaughtered year after year, in every country, are conſidered, it appears wonderful that there are any remains of them left. Their plagues were indeed made wonderful; and the Babyloniſh captivity, which was the puniſhment of their idolatry, was ſo inconſiderable, either for the miſery or continuance of it, in compariſon with their ſufferings, ſince they rejected and crucified their Meſſiah; that the ſuperior malignity of that crime above all, which went before it, is legibly written in the puniſhment of it.

V. 61. *Which is not written*, &c.] After this tremendous catalogue of curſes, leſt there ſhould be any poſſible temporal miſery, which had not been mentioned, the whole is compriſed in one general denunciation; that every ſpecies, and every degree of miſery ſhould come upon them, if they continued diſobedient.

V. 63. *The Lord will rejoice*, &c.] Not that the miſeries of his creatures are any ways pleaſing in themſelves unto the Lord: but that he is pleaſed with the exerciſe, and diſplay of his juſtice, truth, wiſdom, and power therein, which become him as the Judge of all the earth.

V. 65. *No eaſe*, &c.] No alleviation, or reſpite from

have reſt: but the LORD ſhall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind.

66 And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee; and thou ſhalt fear day and night; and ſhalt have none aſſurance of thy life;

67 In the morning thou ſhalt ſay, Would God it were even, and at even thou ſhalt ſay, Would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou ſhalt fear, and for the ſight of thine eyes which thou ſhalt ſee.

68 And the LORD ſhall bring thee into Egypt again with ſhips, by the way whereof I ſpake unto thee, Thou ſhalt ſee it no more again: and there ye ſhall be ſold unto your enemies for bond-men and bond-women, and no man ſhall buy *you*.

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miſery. They have hitherto found no country in which they are treated as denizens; all ſuſpect them as enemies, and behave to them as aliens, if they do not harraſs, oppreſs, and perſecute them.—Nothing ſeems more ſuited to confirm a ſenſible, but heſitating inquirer concerning the truth of revelation, than a careful compariſon of this chapter, and of the prophecies of the New Teſtament reſpecting that nation, with their actual hiſtory to the preſent day: this appears to be capable of effecting every thing that any external evidence imaginable can effect; and the demonſtration thence deduced, and which may be continually re-examined at leiſure, and with deliberation, ſeems more convincing than any miracles; which *are tranſient acts*, and can only be reviewed in the teſtimony, with which they are authenticated.

V. 68.] Many of the Jews rebelliouſly went into Egypt after the Babyloniſh captivity, and there miſerably periſhed (*Jer.* c. xli, xlii, xliii, xliv.) Multitudes went thither, and ſettled under the ſucceſſors of Alexander. But this verſe ſeems eſpecially to point out an event, which took place after the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by Titus: numbers of the captives were ſent by ſea into Egypt, (as well as into other countries) and ſold for ſlaves, at a vile price, and for the meaneſt offices. For their multitude was ſo great, that purchaſers could not be found for them all, at any price. God had brought them out of Egypt, and had forbidden them to return thither; and had not their ſin incurred his ſevereſt vengeance, he would never have permitted them to have been forced thither: but by their iniquities they provoked him to reduce them to as abject a condition, as that, from which he had redeemed them. Mr. Henry cloſes his comment upon this moſt awful chapter, with mentioning a wicked man, who was ſo enraged at the threatenings contained therein, that he tore the leaf out of his Bible: "But," ſays this pious author, "to what purpoſe is it to deface a copy, whilſt the original ſtands upon "record, in the divine counſels, by which it is unalterably "determined, that the wages of ſin is death, whether men "will hear, or whether they will forbear?"

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In vain doth human language exhauſt it's powers in attempting to expreſs the whole meaning of theſe important terms; THE BLESSING, and THE CURSE OF ALMIGHTY GOD: the import of each is infinite, inexplicable, and incomprehenſible. All events are abſolutely at his diſpoſal, and all creatures are his ſervants, and he can make every one of us, as happy, or as miſerable, as he pleaſes. If he determines to bleſs, and ſees it good, he commands a confluence of health, riches, and reputation: he gives fruitful fields, flouriſhing families, and peaceful habitations: he advances men above their neighbours, and cauſes them to triumph over their enemies: he communicates every temporal good, and accompanies them with the ordinances of his houſe, and the graces of his Spirit: he can even connect great honour with deep humility; and give ſucceſs in every undertaking, comfort in every connexion, and abundance of all things, accompanied with a thankful, liberal, and ſpiritual mind: yea all this is very little, compared with that future, everlaſting, and moſt complete felicity, in the contemplation of which, our thoughts, and our language are abſolutely ſwallowed up. But if he purpoſe to inflict vengeance, what miſeries can his curſe bring upon mankind even in this preſent world! an Aſſemblage of direful diſeaſes, and racking pains, and pinching poverty, and dreary famine, and armies of victorious enemies, exerciſing every cruelty, connected with galling inſult, and contempt, are all ready to obey his mandate. With theſe dire calamities, at his word, remorſe ſhall ſeize the conſcience, and anguiſh, diſmay, and deſpair ſhall poſſeſs the heart; yea maddening rage, envy, and impotent revenge ſhall join, with diſappointed ambition, avarice, and luſt, to render the whole ſoul one wild tumult of conflicting paſſions, to obliterate every tender feeling, and to infatuate the devoted wretch, by depriving him of all power to extricate himſelf, and plunging him ſtill deeper into utter ruin. His own perſonal miſery ſhall be alſo augmented by witneſſing the anguiſh, and diſtreſs of friends, relatives, and children, rendered miſerable through his crimes: and all this, and much more, may with incumbent, and accumulating weight preſs upon him, for weariſome weeks, and months, and years, without proſpect of relief, but from death, the thought of which appals the ſoul with ſtill deeper horrors. Yet this is but the beginning of ſorrows to thoſe, who are under the curſe of God: what will then be the unabating, and everlaſting miſery of that world, where "their worm never dieth, and the fire is not "quenched?" yet to all this wretchedneſs is every one expoſed, who lives in diſobedience to God's commandments: and all this wrath of God is revealed from heaven for our warning, "that we may fear this glorious and fear-"ful name, THE LORD OUR GOD." None ſhall ever ſuffer any miſery, who hath not deſerved it, nor any above his deſerts: but indeed we are all expoſed to this awful curſe for breaking the law of God. Yet, bleſſed be his name, we are under ſo gracious a diſpenſation, that nothing but obſtinate impenitency in ſin can expoſe us to the more tremendous part of this miſery: Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for us, and bearing in his own perſon the ſubſtance of all

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, 1st. A rehearsal of the Lord's dealings with Israel, introducing a proposal of the covenant to them, v. 1—9. *2d. An address to the several orders of persons, who were required to consent to it, v.* 10—17. *3d. A denunciation of wrath against presumptuous offenders, v.* 18—28. *4th. A distinction betwixt things secret, and things revealed, v.* 29.

THESE *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb.

2 And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land;

3 The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles:

4 Yet the LORD hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day.

that agony, and anguish, which our sins had merited, and we must otherwise have endured for ever. To them, who believe in him, there is no condemnation; and every temporal calamity is converted into a salutary chastisement; and whatever be their proportion of temporal blessing, every thing is given, or withheld, as is most conducive to their final, and eternal felicity; and even in this present world their comfort, and happiness are superior to those, of the most prosperous sinner. To this refuge and salvation let sinners flee, therein let believers rejoice, and serve their reconciled God with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all spiritual blessings, with which he hath blessed them; whilst gratitude to the Saviour, meditation on his sufferings, and a consciousness of their own deserts, should reconcile them to every cross, and self-denial. But let none call these blessings their's, who do not endeavour to observe, and do all the commandments of God with uprightness of heart: for even the true believer can enjoy the present comfort of them no further, than he exercises himself to keep a conscience void of offence towards God, and man. But as all things work together for good, to them, who love God; so all things concur in ruining his enemies; and in enslaving those to the vilest of masters, that refuse to obey him, whose service is perfect freedom. Even their prosperity increases their pride and insolence, their table becomes their snare, or the curse of God embitters their blessings; and it will pursue, until it overtake them, and sink them into final destruction. As these predictions concerning the Israelites compared with their accomplishment do irrefragably demonstrate the divine inspiration of the Scriptures: how should their example warn all, that see and hear these things, not to provoke the Lord to anger by disobeying his commands, and despising his gospel! the weight and tediousness of temporal sufferings, should remind every one to seek deliverance from eternal misery without delay! and should teach the redeemed of the Lord to value their Saviour, and to recommend him to all around them. Let all, who love the truth, and word of God, remember to pity, and pray for the conversion of the dispersed Jews: and to beseech the Lord, in behalf of our much favoured, much offending land, that reformation, and the revival of true religion may preserve us from being bereaved of our much abused mercies, and from feeling those miseries, from which we have hitherto, though deserving of them, been graciously exempted.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 1. *Beside the covenant*, &c.] The covenant ratified with this new generation, (like the law which was given them,) was substantially the same with that before ratified with their fathers at mount Sinai. In this chapter the covenant is proposed, and the consequences of violating it are declared: but the more explicit ratification of it was from mount Gerizzim and Ebal, (*see* c. xxvii. *Joshua* c. viii. v. 30—35.)

V. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not*, &c.] Sinful man never maketh a proper use of his senses and faculties, or of the opportunities of instruction given him, without the special grace of God. This utter destitution of a disposition to that which is *spiritually* good, and its concomitant propensity to evil, the effects of our fall in Adam, are the sources of all our actual wickedness, and render us the objects of God's holy abhorrence and righteous displeasure. The almighty power of God *could* overcome this indisposition to his service in every man, if he pleased: but his power is under the direction of his infinite wisdom, and regulated as most conducive to his glory. This powerful energy of Divine Grace never can become due in justice to any man; nay, every man might *righteously* have been left under the dominion of his sinful propensities, which are never allowed to be pleaded as an excuse for his sinful actions. And so far from meriting such a gracious communication from their offended Creator, men in general perceive no occasion for it, have no desire after it, and will use no means to obtain it. But though men can do nothing either *meritoriously* or *efficaciously* towards the participating of such a blessing, their voluntary and daring wickedness, whereby they do violence even to their natural conscience, and the common sense of mankind, may, and frequently doth, provoke God *judicially* to withhold this gift, (*Isaiah*, c. vi. v. 9, 10. *Matt.* c. xiii. v. 13—15. *John*, c. xii. v. 38—40. c. xv. v. 22. *Acts*, c. xiii. ver. 40, 41. 45, 46.) On the other hand, he hath appointed his ministers to use certain means, by which men are from time to time made sensible, that such a change is needful, and they then begin to desire it, and inquire after it. He hath also appointed means in which such as feel their need of this blessing, and desire it, are commanded, and encouraged to seek it. By this appointment the duty of both ministers and people becomes plain; and they who attend

5 And

5 And I have led you forty years in the wilderness: your clothes are not waxen old upon you, and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot.

6 Ye have not eaten bread, neither have ye drunk wine or strong drink; that ye might know that I *am* the LORD your God.

7 And when ye came unto this place, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle, and we smote them.

8 And we took their land, and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh.

9 Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do.

10 Ye stand this day all of you before the LORD your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, *with* all the men of Israel,

11 Your little ones, your wives, and thy stranger that *is* in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water:

12 That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day:

13 That he may establish thee to-day for a people unto himself, and *that* he may be

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to these things, will receive this blessing from the God of salvation; and others must be left to the righteous judgment of God, who claims the honour of every good and perfect gift; but will at last convince all his enemies, that they alone were to blame for their sins. The minister must seek from God the blessing upon his labours; and must be thankful to him when any receive eyes to see, and hearts to perceive: but whilst so many remain blinded to their true state, interest, and duty, the zealous servant of God will wait with earnest expectation for a more extensive blessing, and will seem to think nothing done, as so much remains undone. This appears to have been the feeling of the heart of Moses at this time; though there were doubtless many exceptions, yet the bulk of the people still remained insensible, or not duly sensible, of the import and tendency of all that the Lord had spoken to them, or done for them; and multitudes had provoked him to give them up to their own hearts lusts. On this account he grieved, (*see Rom.* c. ix. v. 1—3,) and spake this language both by way of reproach of their hardness of heart, and inattention to the means of grace afforded them: and in order to warn, quicken, and direct them, to expect and seek that blessing, which they had not sought for, and God had not given: for if God had not given them it, the inference was undeniable, that they had wilfully hardened their hearts, and stupified their consciences against every thing, that they had seen and heard.

V. 5, 6.] (*See note*, c. viii. v. 4.) By the especial blessing of God upon the manna, which they despised as light bread, that vast multitude had been preserved as healthy, and fit for various exercises, as any other people upon the productions of the corn field and vineyard.

V. 11. *Your little ones*, &c.] The national covenant, made with Israel, not only typified the covenant of grace made with true believers; but also represented the outward dispensation of the gospel. The covenant is made with true Christians for the good of "them and of their children after "them," (*Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 39. *Acts*, c. ii. v. 39.) In their families, and in collective bodies composed of them, the outward dispensation of the gospel is especially continued, unless those families cast off their profession, or evince a total disregard to it: in this case it is frequently removed from them, and given to others, and this passes from nation to nation, and descends from generation to generation. The infant offspring, therefore, of such persons, who are favoured with, and value this outward dispensation of the gospel, are greatly interested therein, though not conscious of it, even as these little ones of the Israelites were in their covenant: and they who value the blessings of the new covenant as their own portion, and desire them as the portion of their beloved children, and intend to bring them up as the children of the covenant, seem equally authorized and required to act in their behalf, and to bring them under the external obligations thereof, and to seek the external pledges of it for them, as these Israelitish parents were: for we argue very inconclusively, if we infer, that because means do not *uniformly* communicate grace, they are therefore of no use. This transaction might many ways, at the time, and afterwards, benefit both the parents and their offspring, though we can scarce suppose, that it was a converting ordinance to these infants: but it might stir up the parents to pray for them, and to instruct them as they grew up; and when they came to years of understanding, and were reminded how solemnly they, as well as their parents, had entered into covenant with God, it might operate as a restraint upon their lusts, a check upon their consciences, and an incentive to them personally to seek the blessings thus covenanted to them, and which could only be forfeited by their own wilful sin. The same may be pleaded by those, who deem infant baptism a divine ordinance, as one reason of their practice. Whilst those conscientious persons, who judge otherwise, have a right to be treated with the utmost candour; and reciprocal moderation upon a subject, respecting which so many sensible, pious, and learned men, entertain contrary sentiments, and practice accordingly, can never be unseasonably inculcated.

V. 13. *As he hath sworn*, &c.] The oath which the Lord sware unto Abraham, &c. is here adduced as the security of the covenant made with the nation of Israel; and St. Paul quotes it as a security to all who flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before them in the gospel, (*Heb.* c. vi. v. 13. 19;) for thereby both temporal blessings, and the means of grace were secured to the posterity of the patriarchs according

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unto thee a God, as he hath ſaid unto thee, and as he hath ſworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob.

14 Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath;

15 But with *him* that ſtandeth here with us this day before the LORD our God, and alſo with *him* that *is* not here with us *this* day:

16 (For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt, and how we came through the nations which ye paſſed by;

17 And ye have ſeen their abominations, and their idols, wood and ſtone, ſilver and gold, which *were* among them:)

18 Leſt there ſhould be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whoſe heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go *and* ſerve the gods of theſe nations; leſt there ſhould be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood:

19 And it come to paſs, when he heareth the words of this curſe, that he bleſs himſelf in his heart, ſaying, I ſhall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart to add drunkenneſs to thirſt.

20 The LORD will not ſpare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealouſy ſhall ſmoke againſt that man, and all the curſes *that are* written in this book ſhall lie upon him, and the LORD ſhall blot out his name from under heaven.

21 And the LORD ſhall ſeparate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Iſrael, according to all the curſes of the covenant *that are* written in this book of the law:

22 So that the generation to come of your children, that ſhall riſe up after you, and the ſtranger that ſhall come from a far land, ſhall ſay, when they ſee the plagues of that land, and the ſickneſſes, which the LORD hath laid upon it;

23 *And that* the whole land thereof *is* brimſtone, and ſalt, *and* burning, *that* it is not ſown, nor beareth, nor any graſs groweth therein, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, which the LORD overthrew in his anger, and in his wrath:

24 Even all nations ſhall ſay, Wherefore hath the LORD done thus unto this land? what *meaneth* the heat of this great anger?

25 Then men ſhall ſay, Becauſe they have forſaken the covenant of the LORD God of

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the fleſh; and the eſpecial bleſſings, which Abraham perſonally was intereſted in by the righteouſneſs of faith, to all his ſpiritual ſeed of true believers, who are ſealed with the true circumciſion of the heart. (*Notes*, *Gen.* c. xvii.) The ſtrangers, and ſlaves (v. 11.) were alſo allowed to enter into this covenant, and were not excluded, except they excluded themſelves. Theſe, who were abſent, and their children yet unborn to the lateſt poſterity were in ſome ſenſe included: as nothing but apoſtacy, idolatry, or rejection of their promiſed Saviour could cut off the entail of theſe *national* bleſſings: and nothing but perſonal unbelief, and diſobedience could prevent their perſonally ſharing in the ſpecial bleſſings, which were beſtowed on their believing progenitors.

V. 18.] This, and the following verſes looked back to the curſes of the foregoing chapter, and taught them to dread the infliction of them upon individuals, as well as upon the nation at large, if they infringed this covenant, which was now propoſed to them: for as that covenant engaged to them bleſſings above other nations, if they availed themſelves of their advantages; ſo would their guilt be more aggravated, and their miſeries more accumulated, than thoſe of other nations, if they were rebellious. Idolatry in an Iſraelite, muſt be preceded by wilful apoſtacy from, and contemptuous defiance of God: it was an explicit renunciation of the covenant, and an act of direct rebellion. The ſame things hold true in the caſe of thoſe, who have been baptized, and brought up under the diſpenſation of the goſpel; they more explicitly renounce God, and refuſe the bleſſings of his covenant, if they turn aſide to wickedneſs, than any other perſons can do.

A root that beareth, &c.] The word tranſlated gall, may mean hemlock, or ſome other poiſonous plant. The enmity of man's heart againſt God is that root, which bears poiſonous, and bitter fruit, ſuch as apoſtacy, idolatry, infidelity, profaneneſs, hypocriſy, and wickedneſs. Every ſuch perſon in a religious ſociety is alſo a root, which produces more, and more of ſuch peſtiferous plants, by his perſuaſions, influence, and example, (*Heb.* c. xii. v. 15, 16.)

V. 19. *He bleſs himſelf*, &c.] Unbelief produces preſumptuous expectations of impunity in ſin, in direct oppoſition to, and contempt of God's word; and this is frequently the effect of a falſe, and unſcriptural religion, whereby a vain confidence is generated, and the ſinner's heart is the more emboldened in wickedneſs: (*Jer.* c. vii. v. 3—11. c. xliv. v. 15—27.)

To add drunkenneſs, &c.] This may be a metaphorical expreſſion, denoting the eager gratification of depraved inclinations: whilſt ſinners walk in the imagination of their own hearts, they greedily drink down iniquity, as the drunkard doth his liquor, without regard to conſequences. It may alſo refer to the ſenſual exceſſes, which were employed as incentives to the worſhip of idols, and which tended greatly to promote idolatry. More terrible words can ſcarce be conceived, than thoſe which follow: and as

their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them forth out of the land of Egypt.

26 For they went and ſerved other gods, and worſhipped them, gods whom they knew not, and *whom* he had not given unto them:

27 And the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt this land, to bring upon it all the curſes *that are* written in this book:

28 And the LORD rooted them out of their land in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation, and caſt them into another land, as *it is* this day.

29 The ſecret *things belong* unto the

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they reſpected the people of Iſrael, their accompliſhment hath been as remarkable. (*Notes*, ch. xxviii.) But they concern ſinners of every nation, eſpecially thoſe, who are favoured with the light of the goſpel: they however require the reader's attentive conſideration, and application to himſelf, as matter of ſerious inquiry, whether he be expoſed to, or delivered from the danger of ſinking under ſuch awful denunciations; rather than the commentator's ſkill, or labour to expound them.

V. 26. *Whom he had not given*, &c.] Had not given them any commandment to worſhip. The very heathen are here repreſented, both as noting the ſurpriſing miſeries of the Jewiſh nation, and diſcerning the true cauſe of them, (*Jer.* c. xl. v. 2, 3:) doubtleſs this hath been verified in thouſands of inſtances.

V. 29.] It is here intimated, that many things in the divine counſels, and conduct would appear very dark, and difficult to them. They would be ready to ſtart inquiries about the future events, which were hinted to them in ſo general a manner; and to raiſe objections concerning the diſpenſations of God towards them: the awful curſes might appear to ſome of them needleſsly ſevere, and they would want to know the reaſons of them, farther, than it pleaſed God to reveal them. Of this diſpoſition ſatan would avail himſelf, and pour in his temptations to unbelief; to hard thoughts of God, of his law and ſervice; to exculpate themſelves by throwing the blame elſewhere; (v. 4.) or to amuſe themſelves with barren ſpeculations, inſtead of attending to their duty. This is here obviated by a rule of eaſy, and univerſal application. That, which God hath not revealed, man is not to inquire about; for who can penetrate into the ſecrets of divine wiſdom? his decrees and counſels, and the reaſons of his conduct, and the myſteries of his nature, we cannot diſcover, except, or any further, than he informs us of them: and it is the height of inſolence, and preſumption to attempt it, (*Rom.* c. xi. v. 33—36.) Such inquiries were therefore prohibited; ſecret things belong to God. But he hath revealed every thing, that can be truly beneficial; to his revealed truth and will man's inquiries in divine things ſhould be confined; they ſhould reach to the whole, and terminate with them. They belong to us; but not to increaſe our ſtock of barren notions, but to direct, encourage, and regulate our obedience, "that we may do all the words of this law." They belong alſo to our children, and to them we ſhould communicate the inſtruction, which God hath afforded us. Almoſt all the hereſies, and controverſies, which have corrupted the purity, or diſturbed the peace of the church in every age: which have taken Chriſtians off from their duty, and expoſed them to the triumphant ſcorn of their enemies, for their animoſities, and abſurdities, have originated from diſregard to the diſtinction eſtabliſhed in this verſe; from vain attempts, by human reaſonings, and authority, to fill up ſome ſuppoſed chaſms in revelation, and to make it more apparently conſiſtent, and ſyſtematical, than it hath pleaſed God to make it: and from reducing diſputable conſequences from revelation, or tracing back it's ſacred myſteries to ſome unrevealed antecedent cauſes. But the ſilence is as inſtructive, as the language of Scripture: it's truths muſt be apprehended by humble faith; and diſdain to be comprehended, or modelled by our proud reaſon. They are intended to ſubſerve practice; not to gratify curioſity, furniſh materials of ſpeculation, or foment angry controverſies. Theſe are ſatan's comments on them, which God abhors as much as avowed infidelity. To know the perfections of God, and our obligations to love, and ſerve him; to know our relations to him, and to the eternal world; to know our ſtate, and character as ſinners, and our duty as under a diſpenſation of mercy; to know the way of acceptance, and the ſource of grace and comfort in Jeſus Chriſt; to know our duty as redeemed ſinners, with reſpect to our ſeveral ſtations, endowments, and relations in life, with the motives, encouragements, and aſſiſtances, to perform it, which revelation propoſes; together with the enemies, and dangers to which we are expoſed, and the means of eſcape, and the conſequences of our conduct: this forms the ſubſtance of divine knowledge, and when reduced to practice it conſtitutes heavenly wiſdom. This the Bible plainly reveals, further than this man cannot profitably go: by this light he may live and die comfortably, and be happy eternally; after having on earth glorified God, ſerved his generation, and left his dying exhortations and bleſſings as a bequeſt to his poſterity: all elſe is but an *ignis fatuus*, which bewilders the benighted traveller; and whilſt it amuſes him with it's glimmering, miſleads him into, and leaves him to ſink in the pit of deſtruction.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who have been enabled to conſent to the Lord's new covenant of mercy, and grace in Jeſus Chriſt, and to give up themſelves to be his people, ſhould embrace every opportunity of making, and renewing their open profeſſion of theſe their relations, and obligations to the God of ſalvation, and of giving bond, as it were, to the world, to the church, and to their own conſciences, for walking conſiſtent therewith. And it is pleaſant to behold numbers of the riſing generation, ſtepping forward to conſent to the ſame covenant, to ſeek the ſame bleſſings, and acknowledge the ſame obligations, and purpoſes by divine grace, of walking by the ſame rule, and minding the ſame things. In order to this deſirable effect being produced, the nature, ſecurity, and bleſſings of the covenant are to be laid before, and propoſed to the people at large; they are to be exhorted, and

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LORD our God; but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto us, and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

invited with all earnestness to accede thereto: the encouragements of the word of God are to be pointed out; and the awful consequences of neglecting so great salvation declared to them, with the greatest solemnity, the most pressing expostulations, and the most awful, yet affectionate warnings. In these things all persons are alike concerned, kings and princes, captains and senators, rich and poor, even down to the meanest slave; nay, blessed be God, not only we strangers of the Gentiles, but the most abandoned sinners are to be invited, and even compelled to come in, and to participate the gospel feast, as far as energetic arguments, and earnest persuasions can compel them. And even infants, though yet unconscious both of their wants, duties, and privileges, are concerned in these matters as much as others, and are to be brought to, and brought up for the Lord, as the children of the covenant, and the seed of the church. But though we are all under the outward dispensation, and means are to be used, by every man with his neighbour, (*Micah*, c. iv. v. 2. *Zech.* c. iii. v. 10;) yet God alone can give men an heart to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear, to good, and saving purposes. From him therefore must we seek the blessing, and to him give the praise, when this desirable effect is produced: and when men become sensible of their state, danger, and wants, these intimations inform them, whither to go for relief, and to whom they are to make application. Whilst the true Christian, or the zealous minister mourns that so few have received these blessings, in comparison of the multitudes, who are blinded by the god of this world, the consideration should add fervency to his prayers for others, and to his grateful praises on his own account. Every mercy, which we receive should bind more strictly to chearful obedience; and every truth of God's word, if properly received, will have a practical effect upon us: nor can we expect to prosper, in the best sense, "unless we keep, "and do the words of God's covenant." But the covenant made with Christians is established upon better promises, than that with the nation of Israel; and not only confirms it's blessings conditionally to the obedient, with the interposition of the oath, as well as promise of God; but also assures the *true believer* of that communication of grace, which shall infallibly preserve him from finally forfeiting it's blessings by apostacy, or unrepented sin, (*Jer.* c. xxxi. v. 31—34. c. xxxii. v. 38—41:) yet many profess, and suppose, that they are interested in the blessings, and security of this covenant, in whose hearts the law of God hath not been written, and to whom it proves an encouragement to sin. These are they, who draw back unto perdition; and their apostacy, or shameful wickedness brings disgrace upon the gospel, and ruin upon themselves. The lusts of their hearts were never mortified by the power of converting grace, and therefore when occasion offers, they spring up into practices, as poisonous, and as bitter, as the hemlock, and the wormwood; and by them many are defiled, or hardened in prejudice, unbelief, and ungodliness; or bolstered up in vain confidence and presumption: and thus the direful evil eats, as doth a canker, pervades great multitudes, and corrodes whole churches. Therefore the minister, and Christian should watch against, and crush it's first feeble beginnings. But however the curse of God may be disbelieved, and despised, it's tremendous effects will assuredly convince the most daring sinners, without distinction of rank, or sex, or without regard to their multitudes, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And though the heart of man will at present rise in rage, and enmity against the terrible threatenings of God's word, the period is approaching, when not only spectators, but the criminals themselves, whilst enduring their direful accomplishment, shall be constrained to admit the justice of their sentence of condemnation. But satan especially endeavours to persuade men to expect impunity in sin; and they are prone to flatter themselves, and love to be flattered by others, and find enough to flatter them, that they shall have peace, though they walk after the imagination of their hearts, and gratify their favourite lusts. They will persuade themselves, and find others concur with them in determining, that *they* need not be so strict, and that God will not be so severe, as vulgar readers of the Bible imagine: and so, by some ingenious sophistication, they evaporate the force of the Scripture declarations, till they fall asleep in the jaws of destruction. And should some faithful minister, out of love to their souls, address them in scriptural language, concerning the curse of God, and the wrath to come, he would be repaid with liberal reproaches, and branded as a bigot, an uncharitable wretch, a man of a vulgar and narrow mind, if not as an enthusiast, and a madman. The Lord will not spare such presumer, who treat his truth as a lye, blaspheme his justice, as if it were cruelty, and set his awful vengeance at defiance: against such persons his anger, and jealousy will smoke, and all the curses, that are written in this book will rest upon them, and their names shall be blotted out from under heaven, and they shall be separated unto evil, afar off from the tribes of the redeemed: where too late conviction shall be accompanied with weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, in anguish and despair. But these things are not written in the book of God; nor are these observations made upon them, God is witness, in order that this misery should be endured by those, who are addressed thereby; but that all, that hear, and read, may take warning, and flee from the wrath to come; that they may profit by the judgments of God upon others; that they may flee for refuge to the hope of the gospel; that they may fear coming short of the grace of God; that they may refuse their sinful inclinations every indulgence, and watch against the beginnings of evil, and the inroads of negligence; and above all that they may shudder at the thought of venturing upon sin by any abuse of the grace of the gospel. Many, who themselves are ungodly, can readily enough perceive the steps, by which others descend to destruction, and will acknowledge the justice of *their* punishment; though they are blind to, or cavil at the sentence of condemnation, which hangs over themselves. But let every one of us look to our own case: let us avoid sloth, and dissipation; let us not shun reflection, or stifle convictions; let us not amuse ourselves with empty speculations, or encourage ourselves by bold conjectures, or impious objections to the truths, and ways of God; let us

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains, 1ſt. Prophetical promiſes to Iſrael in the latter days, v. 1—10. *2d. A declaration of the nearneſs and plainneſs of thoſe things which were enjoined them, v.* 11—14. *3d. Life and death ſolemnly ſet before them, v.* 15—20.

AND it ſhall come to paſs when all theſe things are come upon thee, the bleſſing and the curſe, which I have ſet before thee, and thou ſhalt call *them* to mind among all the nations whether the LORD thy God hath driven thee.

2 And ſhalt return unto the LORD thy God, and ſhalt obey his voice, according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul;

3 That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compaſſion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the LORD thy God hath ſcattered thee.

4 If *any* of thine be driven out unto the utmoſt *parts* of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

5 And the LORD thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers poſſeſſed, and thou ſhalt poſſeſs it; and he will do thee good, and multiply thee above thy fathers.

6 And the LORD thy God will circumciſe thine heart, and the heart of thy ſeed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul, that thou mayeſt live.

7 And the LORD thy God will put all theſe curſes upon thine enemies and on them that hate thee, which perſecuted thee.

8 And thou ſhalt return and obey the voice of the LORD, and do all his commandments, which I command thee this day.

9 And the LORD thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy land, for good: for the LORD will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers:

10 If thou ſhalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God to keep his commandments and his ſtatutes *which are* written in this book of the law, *and* if thou turn unto the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy ſoul.

11 For this commandment which I com-

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not curiouſly pry into unrevealed things; but thankfully uſe revelation, "as the lanthorn of our paths," by which to ſee the ſafe, and happy road through this dark, and dangerous world, that we may walk in it ourſelves, and point it out to our children alſo.—In that world *above*, whither this light will guide the humble, and obedient believer, even things, which are now ſecret, will be diſcovered, all darkneſs and difficulties will vaniſh; perfect light will ſhine upon all the counſels, and judgments of God; and the whole will iſſue in univerſal, and everlaſting approbation, admiration, gratitude, praiſe, and felicity.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1—10.] *All theſe things are come upon thee*, &c.] As this evidently refers to the prophetical denunciations of the two preceding chapters, which have had their main accompliſhments in the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans, and in their conſequent diſperſion to the preſent day; there can be no doubt but the prophetical promiſes contained in theſe verſes, are yet unaccompliſhed. The reliques of the Jewiſh nation ſhall in ſome future, and not very diſtant period, be converted to the faith of Chriſt; and probably be gathered from their preſent diſperſed ſtate, and reinſtated in the land of Canaan. The language of theſe promiſes is in great meaſure abſolute, not containing a *mere* conditional encouragement, but predicting an event which would aſſuredly take place: for the Lord himſelf engaged "to circumciſe their hearts;" and when regenerating grace hath removed the obſtacles of corrupt nature, and divine love hath ſupplanted the love of ſin, they certainly will reflect, and repent, and return to God, and obey him: and he certainly will rejoice in doing them good. Yet in this prophecy the ſucceſſive ſteps of its accompliſhments are deſcribed, that at the appointed ſeaſon the people may be directed, in what method to ſeek for the promiſed bleſſings; and that ſinners of all ages and nations might thence alſo receive inſtruction concerning the nature of true repentance, and of real religion.

V. 11—14.] In theſe verſes Moſes ſpake concerning the commandment, and Paul long after applied his words to the method of a ſinner's juſtification by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, (*Rom.* c. x. v. 6—9.) This has occaſioned ſome perplexity to expoſitors; but there doth not appear to be much cauſe for it. The covenant propoſed to Iſrael in the form of commandments, did not conſiſt of the moral law alone, obedience to which eſpecially conſtitutes the righteouſneſs of works; but of the ceremonial law alſo, wherein Chriſt was typified, "as the end of the law unto righteouſneſs to "every one that believed:" and however many of the Iſraelites miſtook the nature of thoſe inſtructions, as many profeſſed Chriſtians utterly miſunderſtand their ſacraments; yet therein was mainly contained their diſpenſation of the goſpel. As that covenant was ratified with the nation of Iſrael, it was a type of the covenant of grace made with

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mand thee this day, it *is* not hidden from thee, neither *is* it far off:

12 It *is* not in heaven, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go up for us to heaven and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

13 Neither *is* it beyond the ſea, that thou ſhouldeſt ſay, Who ſhall go over the ſea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

14 But the word *is* very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayeſt do it.

15 See, I have ſet before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;

16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his ſtatutes, and his judgments, that thou mayeſt live and multiply: and the LORD thy God ſhall bleſs thee in the land whither thou goeſt to poſſeſs it.

17 But if thine heart turn away, ſo that thou wilt not hear, but ſhalt be drawn away, and worſhip other gods, and ſerve them;

18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye ſhall ſurely periſh, *and that* ye ſhall not prolong *your* days upon the land whither thou paſſeſt over Jordan, to go to poſſeſs it.

19 I call heaven and earth to record this day againſt you, *that* I have ſet before you life and death, bleſſing and curſing: therefore chooſe life, that both thou and thy ſeed may live;

20 That thou mayeſt love the LORD thy God, *and* that thou mayeſt obey his voice, and that thou mayeſt cleave unto him; (for he *is* thy life, and the length of thy days:) that thou mayeſt dwell in the land which the LORD ſware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Iſaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

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true believers: the individuals amongſt them, who were truly religious, were juſtified by the ſame righteouſneſs, and in the ſame way that true Chriſtians are: and juſtifying faith, under that diſpenſation, as well as ours, working by love, produced obedience to the commandments of God. There never was, ſince the fall of man, more than one way to heaven, which is equally marked out in both Teſtaments, though not with equal clearneſs and preciſion. When God circumciſes the heart, repentance of ſin, faith in, and dependance on the appointed Saviour, love and obedience to God, &c, are produced. The ſinner paſſes from death to life, receives forgiveneſs, and the gift of righteouſneſs by faith, becomes a new creature, and, by the grace of God, walks through this world to glory, in the high way of holineſs. Moſes aſſuredly meant that ſame way of acceptance which Paul more explicitly deſcribed; and Paul's words implied the ſame conſcientious obedience, of which Moſes more fully treated. And both mean, that the word of God brings near unto us, and plainly reveals the good and right way: that we need not travel for inſtruction, as ancient philoſophers did, nor ſeek information from men, at immenſe labour and expence: nor need we anxiouſly or curiouſly deſire to be wiſe above what is written: but that the word of God, and the preached goſpel, will ſuffice for every uſeful purpoſe, if we make ourſelves acquainted with them, if we believe, profeſs, and love them, and if we treaſure them up in our hearts in order to reduce them to practice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the word of God, all thoſe things which belong to our eternal peace are brought nigh unto us; and we need nothing further to make us wiſe unto ſalvation. The information therein contained forces itſelf upon our attention, our judgments, our conſciences, and our affections, by every argument, motive, warning, encouragement, or exhortation, which can conduce to render it impreſſive and efficacious. But in vain doth a kind Providence bring theſe things near unto men; in vain do miniſters endeavour to convey them home to the heart and conſcience, in the moſt convincing and efficacious manner; if they will thruſt them away from themſelves through unbelief, and the love of ſin: nor will hearing, remembering, underſtanding, profeſſing, or diſputing about the truths and precepts of God's word avail us, if they do not ſink into our hearts, and influence our conduct. But when the bleſſings of eternal ſalvation are thus fully propoſed unto us, and the acceptance or refuſal of them are ſo fairly referred to our choice, nothing can prevent our felicity, but the wickedneſs of our own proud and carnal hearts. And they who refuſe the freely offered grace, eventually chooſe, and love death and perdition, being cruel to their own ſouls, (*Prov.* c. viii. v. 36.) Unto ſuch perſons the miniſters of Chriſt ought plainly to declare, that, except they repent, they will ſurely periſh; as well as to ſet before them, in the moſt ſolemn and affecting manner, "life and death, the "bleſſing and the curſe;" that if they cannot prevent their deſtruction, they may deliver their own ſouls, (*Ezek.* c. xxxiii. v. 7—9.) And in this caſe not only will the faithful miniſter at laſt become a witneſs againſt them, but heaven and earth will bear record, that they deſerve their doom, and have none to blame but themſelves. But are *we* ſenſible of the reality and importance of the things thus propoſed unto us? Would we "chooſe that good "part which ſhall never be taken from us?" Let us beg of God to circumciſe our hearts, to ſubdue our luſts, and to implant his love: then ſhall we be prepared for ſerious reflection, for godly ſorrow, and true repentance; then ſhall we value his before neglected ſalvation, and hoping in his mercy, ſhall return unto him, as our portion and felicity, ſhall worſhip and obey him as the Lord our God, and cleave unto him as our father and our friend: then

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1ſt. Moſes encouraging Iſrael, and Joſhua concerning the conqueſt of Canaan; and commanding the public reading of the law every ſeventh year, at the feaſt of tabernacles, v. 1—13. 2d. The Lord predicting the future apoſtacy of Iſrael, and giving orders for the compoſing of a ſacred ſong relative thereto, v. 14—21. 3d. Moſes writing the ſong, giving a charge to Joſhua, delivering the book of the law to the prieſts, and commanding them to call together the people, to hear the words of the ſong; and intermixing the whole with cutting reproofs, and ſolemn warnings, v. 22—30.

AND Moſes went and ſpake theſe words unto all Iſrael.

2 And he ſaid unto them, I *am* an hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in: alſo the LORD hath ſaid unto me, Thou ſhalt not go over this Jordan.

3 The LORD thy God, he will go over before thee, *and* he will deſtroy theſe nations from before thee, and thou ſhalt poſſeſs them: *and* Joſhua, he ſhall go over before thee, as the LORD hath ſaid.

4 And the LORD ſhall do unto them as he did to Sihon and to Og, kings of the Amorites, and to the land of them whom he deſtroyed.

5 And the LORD ſhall give them up before your face, that ye may do unto them according unto all the commandments which I have commanded you.

6 Be ſtrong, and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he *it is* that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forſake thee.

7 And Moſes called unto Joſhua, and ſaid unto him in the ſight of all Iſrael, Be ſtrong, and of a good courage: for thou muſt go with this people unto the land which the LORD hath ſworn unto their fathers to give them; and thou ſhalt cauſe them to inherit it.

8 And the LORD, he *it is* that doth go before thee: he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forſake thee: fear not, neither be diſmayed.

9 And Moſes wrote this law, and delivered it unto the prieſts the ſons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Iſrael.

10 And Moſes commanded them, ſaying, At the end of *every* ſeven years in the ſolemnity of the year of releaſe, in the feaſt of tabernacles,

11 When all Iſrael is come to appear be-

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will every ordinance, and every act of obedience be pleaſant; love and gratitude will enlarge our hearts, and juſtice, temperance, truth, and kindneſs, will mark our paths; every good gift will be communicated from a reconciled God; every enemy will by degrees be brought under, and at length deſtroyed; and a bleſſing will be reſerved for our poſterity, when we are gone to glory. And ſhould the only wiſe God ſee good to withhold temporal benefits, and command affliction as our lot, he will ſupport and comfort us, and all will have a ſalutary and an happy event. In the mean time, tender compaſſion, and expanded benevolence, will dictate fervent prayers for, and excite aſſiduous endeavours to communicate the ſame bleſſings to others all around us: and the twofold hope of the triumphs of true religion upon earth over all oppoſition; and of the complete and ſpeedy deliverance of our own ſouls from ſin and all its conſequences, will gild our moſt gloomy proſpects, and chear our darkeſt hours.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *I can no more*, &c.] Moſes' time of life reminded him, that he muſt ſhortly depart; as well as the declaration of the Lord: otherwiſe he had not experienced any decay of nature; (c. xxxiv. v. 7;) In the former chapters he ſeems to have preached his concluding diſcourſe to the people: but he had a variety of other methods to uſe, to impreſs their minds more forcibly, and durably.

V. 9. *Wrote this law*, &c.] Some underſtand this of the book of Deuteronomy alone: but it ſeems more reaſonable to ſuppoſe that the whole law was thus delivered unto the prieſts, and elders; a copy perhaps to each of them, beſides one to be depoſited by the ark in the holy of holies; (v. 26.) Doubtleſs there were ſeveral other copies of the books of Moſes; but in that infancy both of writing, and reading, it cannot be ſuppoſed that they were very much multiplied.

V. 10—13.] The duty of individuals, and of heads of families had before been ſpecified: every one was commanded by every means in their power to become acquainted themſelves, and to make their children acquainted with the truths, and precepts which had been delivered to them; (*Deut.* c. vi. v. 7—9. c. xi. v. 18—20.) And whoever has read in the hiſtory of the reformation in England, the pains, and devices employed by many perſons to get ſcraps of the Engliſh tranſlations of the Scriptures, when a whole copy could neither be obtained, nor ſafely poſſeſſed, will ſee the cauſe, which we have to be thankful for the multitudes of copies of the Bible, that we have amongſt us; and will underſtand the very different ſituation, in which the Iſraelites were placed for many ages, and in ſome degree even to the coming of

fore

fore the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

12 Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that *is* within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law;

13 And *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

14 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thy days approach that thou must die: call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation.

15 And the LORD appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of a cloud: and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle.

16 And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land whither they go *to be* amongst them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them.

17 Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them, and I will hide my face from them, and they shall be devoured, and many evils and troubles shall befal them; so that they will say in that day, Are not these evils come upon us, because our God *is* not amongst us?

18 And I will surely hide my face in that day, for all the evils which they shall have wrought, in that they are turned unto other gods.

Christ. Nor were copies of the Bible ever so common and cheap before the art of printing was brought to some degree of perfection, as to enable poor people in general to possess them: which is an invaluable advantage towards the propagation of religious knowledge, though it's improvement, and efficacy bear not a due proportion. To supply this deficiency, the means, which are prescribed in the texts referred to, would be very useful. But in large bodies of people, the majority have always hitherto neglected even those means, which they had in their power, and the appointment mentioned in these verses would, when observed, have a considerable effect, in preserving in the minds of the people at large some general knowledge of their law, and in exciting them to the study of it; and especially in bringing the successive generations acquainted therewith: and as God is not limited, but can bless feeble means to great usefulness, when they are of his own appointment, and further advantages are not attainable; it is probable, that many were brought to fear the Lord and serve him, by this ordinance. At the period before alluded to, as soon as a copy of the English Bible was placed in every church, the avidity with which the people flocked to read the Scriptures, or hear them read, and the extensive usefulness of this measure can scarce be conceived in these days of apathy and negligence. But the word of God was then precious, because scarce; (1 *Sam.* c. iii. v. 4;) It is grievous, that the plenty, with which we are favoured, should create indifference! Every sabbatical year at the feast of tabernacles this public reading of the Scriptures was appointed, and all persons were required to attend. Doubtless it was not merely confined to one person, or place; but numbers were engaged in different situations, so that every one might have an opportunity of hearing, who was disposed to attend: and the Jewish tradition is, that the king, judge, or High Priest was the chief reader, in the court of the tabernacle or temple. In after ages the Scriptures were read every sabbath-day *at least* in the synagogues all over the land; which had a vast effect in preventing idolatry, after the Babylonish captivity. And the public reading of the Scriptures in worshipping assemblies is an honour, which should in all places be shewn them: it is likewise equivalent to the minister's producing his commission, and instructions; it is the touchstone, and warrant of his doctrine; and an important means of bringing the generality of the people acquainted with *other parts* of the word of God, besides those short texts or mottos which it is become customary to select, as the subject of our public discourses: and there is every reason to believe, that the reading of the Scriptures in all the parish churches in this kingdom, proves the means of salvation to many souls, who are left miserably destitute of other means of instruction. It were however to be wished, that the several clergymen employed in this service were more mindful to read the appointed portions of God's word, audibly, distinctly, and deliberately: this would give probable ground to expect much more extensively beneficial effects to result from this laudable institution.

V. 18. *I will surely hide*, &c.] When God withholds his gracious influences, man's evil inclinations naturally lead him into sin; and when he withholds his providential protection and blessing, (which is implied by the figurative expression of hiding his face,) man necessarily sinks into misery. Our dependance on him is in every respect absolute, and it is proper we should know it, that we may fear to provoke him, and seek to please him, that we may put our trust in him, and give all the praise to him: from him we must expect preservation from sin, and exemption from misery, with the communication of know-

19 Now

19 Now therefore write ye this ſong for you, and teach it the children of Iſrael: put it in their mouths, that this ſong may be a witneſs for me againſt the children of Iſrael.

20 For when I ſhall have brought them into the land which I ſware unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey, and they ſhall have eaten and filled themſelves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and ſerve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant.

21 And it ſhall come to paſs, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this ſong ſhall teſtify againſt them as a witneſs; for it ſhall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their ſeed: for I know their imagination which they go about even now, before I have brought them into the land which I ſware.

22 Moſes therefore wrote this ſong th ſame day, and taught it the children of Iſrael.

23 And he gave Joſhua the ſon of Nun a charge, and ſaid, Be ſtrong, and of a good courage: for thou ſhalt bring the children of Iſrael into the land which I ſware unto them; and I will be with thee.

24 And it came to paſs, when Moſes had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finiſhed,

25 That Moſes commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, ſaying,

26 Take this book of the law, and put it in the ſide of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witneſs againſt thee.

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ledge, purity, and felicity: but muſt ſhudder at the blaſphemy of charging our evil to his account, from whoſe unchangeable perfection good, and only good can flow.

V. 19. *Write ye this ſong*, &c.] There is ſomewhat in poetry, when it is well compoſed, and upon an intereſting ſubject, that it is exceedingly attractive to the mind, as well as eaſily fixed, and retained in the memory: and it is noted of almoſt every nation in the earlier ſtages of civilization, or literature, that ſcarce any elſe than poetic compoſitions attracted general notice; but that theſe are ſought after, learned, recited, or ſung with a ſort of enthuſiaſtic eagerneſs and ecſtaſy.—To this propenſity of the human mind the Lord was pleaſed to adapt his inſtructions: a ſacred ſong, fraught with hiſtory, prophecy, promiſe, and warning, and containing the ſubſtance of the preceding addreſſes, was appointed to be compoſed by Moſes, doubtleſs by divine inſpiration; (with whom it ſeems Joſhua, as his co-adjutor and ſucceſſor, was conjoined:) which the people would learn themſelves, and teach their children, from generation to generation; and would have frequently in their memories, and mouths, when the other parts of the law were generally neglected: and indeed God himſelf engaged that it ſhould not be forgotten. This ſong in after ages, when the predictions therein contained had received their accompliſhment, would vouch the divine inſpiration of it's penman; would ſhew them the author, and cauſe of their miſeries, and teſtify for the juſtice of God, and againſt their wickedneſs; and form a powerful call to them, to repent and return to God, as the only method, in which they could be extricated from them.

V. 21. *I know their imagination*, &c.] God knows what is in man, and whither his own inclinations will lead him, if left to himſelf: and his reſtraining influences, as well as his ſanctifying grace, are communicated, or withheld, according to the unfathomable counſels of his infinite wiſdom; but always conſiſtent with his juſtice, faithfulneſs, and goodneſs; and with the propoſals of them in the goſpel to all, who ſeek for them. Nor doth the foreknowledge of God, or thoſe deep decrees, which are connected therewith, either occaſion, or excuſe man's wickedneſs, or abate the Lord's anger, or diminiſh the puniſhment, which ſinners will *juſtly* ſuffer.

V. 23.] (*See note, Numb.* c. xxvii. v. 19.)

V. 26. *In the ſide of the ark*, &c.] This appears to have been a correct, and authentic copy of the whole books of Moſes, perhaps written with his own hand; which would be reſerved, that in caſe of errors, or diſputes, or defect of other copies, it might be referred to, and would be a witneſs againſt their ſins, whenever it was found, or examined. (2 *Kings*, c. xxii. v. 8—11.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is very profitable for us to conſider how our life paſſes, and how much of our day is ſpent, in proportion to the progreſs, which hath been made in the work allotted us: that we may be the more earneſt in making ready for our cloſing ſcene, and our final account, and in rendering our remaining ſervices to the church, and to the world. Even when old age is healthy, and vigorous, it ſhould be remembered that the limits of human life are fixed, by him, who hath denounced the ſentence of death againſt us. Nor need thoſe, who are made partakers of the grace of God, deſire to live in this world; for the longer they continue here, the more miſery they muſt feel, and the more wickedneſs they muſt witneſs, even where the ſight of it gives peculiar pain: and when our weariſome journey is ended, and our glorious victory completed, God will raiſe up other inſtruments, by which to carry on his great deſigns; and will himſelf be the ever-living guardian of thoſe, about whom we are moſt affectionately anxious. We have only to do our day's work, and if able, to be doubly active, when the ſhadows of the evening approach; and with all our influence, and zeal to endeavour to make an awakening, or encouraging impreſſion, upon our ſurvivors, confirming our living profeſſion with our dying teſtimony. Satan ever aims to embolden men in ſin, and intimidate them from their duty: we ſhould therefore animate ourſelves, and each other to obedience, and awe our minds from wicked-

27 For I know thy rebellion, and thy ſtiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day ye have been rebellious againſt the LORD; and how much more after my death?

28 Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may ſpeak theſe words in their ears, and call heaven and earth to record againſt them.

29 For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt *yourſelves*, and turn aſide from the way which I have commanded you: and evil will befall you in the latter days, becauſe ye will do evil in the ſight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands.

30 And Moſes ſpake in the ears of all the congregation of Iſrael the words of this ſong, until they were ended.

CHAP. XXXII.

Contains, 1ſt. The aforementioned ſong, contraſting the character of God with that of Iſrael; and his conduct towards them with their's towards him; together with predictions of their future crimes, miſeries, and final deliverance, v. 1—43. 2d. The delivery of the ſong to the elders of Iſrael, v. 44—47. 3d. Moſes commanded to prepare for his approaching death, v. 44—52.

GIVE ear, O ye heavens, and I will ſpeak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.

2 My doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, my

neſs, by applying to our hopes and fears, the promiſes, and denunciations of God's word. But the heart of man is ſo careleſs, and inſenſible, that every method ſhould be tried, and all will be found too little, to keep up any proper acquaintance with, or attention to the truths, precepts, and worſhip of God amongſt them: every opportunity muſt be embraced, and every avenue to the heart ſeized, to intrude ſome uſeful conviction, and to ſtir up the remembrance of ſome forgotten doctrine, or neglected duty. Nay the beſt of men need repeated encouragements and charges to engage them ſteadily in the work of God, eſpecially in arduous, and perilous ſervices, in this evil world. But the Lord will never fail, nor forſake ſuch, as truſt in, and are employed by him: they may therefore be ſtrong, and of a good courage, however numerous, malicious, or potent their enemies are; for in ſuch a cauſe, and with ſuch a helper, they ſhall certainly triumph over all oppoſition; until every promiſe in the book of God has had it's accompliſhment unto them: and every former mercy to the church, or to themſelves, warrants the aſſurance of future ſucceſſes, and they are encompaſſed with a cloud of witneſſes, who unitedly teſtify the atchievements of faith. To the prieſts, the Lord's miniſters is the written word of God eſpecially committed, to be by them preſerved, and delivered uncorrupted unto the people; and men, women, children, and ſtrangers are to be diligently inſtructed from it, that they may learn to fear, and ſerve God in the obedience of faith. Every ordinance of God, every copy of the Scriptures, every faithful ſermon, every pious book, every pſalm or hymn, which is printed, read, repeated, or ſung, nay the very words of man's own mouths will riſe up in judgment, and bear witneſs for God againſt ſinners, who notwithſtanding all forſake him, and commit iniquity. To God's holy abhorrence of ſin we muſt aſcribe all the miſeries, which are endured on earth, as well as the torments, which are reſerved for the wicked in hell: and we are in a way to reap benefit from, and obtain deliverance out of our troubles, when we conſider them in this light, and ſubmit to his righteouſneſs therein. Alas, that the liberality of the Lord ſhould occaſion increaſing ungodlineſs amongſt men; and that proſperity ſhould generate ingratitude! hence it becomes neceſſary for the Lord to correct thoſe moſt, whom he loves beſt: and hence we have all need to fear proſperity more than the ſevereſt affliction, and to be doubly watchful, and inſtant in prayer under the ſmiles of Providence. The more accurately, wiſe and holy men have ſtudied, and the longer they have obſerved human nature, comparing ſuch obſervations with the word of God, the more they have perceived and lamented it's proneneſs to rebellion: and when the moſt powerful reſtraints fail to deter men from ſin, with what impetuoſity will they ruſh into it, when they are left to follow their own inclinations! But if we grieve to ſee the preſent prevalence of wickedneſs, and entertain gloomy apprehenſions of yet increaſing ungodlineſs; let us remember that thus it was with Moſes, with the apoſtles, and with moſt of thoſe, who have ſerved God, and their generation: and having uſed our influence, and poured out our prayers to prevent it, as much as we can, let us leave the matter with him, who will maintain his own cauſe, and who is able to keep us from falling, and to preſent us faultleſs before the preſence of his glory with exceeding joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXII.] V. 1. *O ye heavens*, &c.] The prophet in this abrupt, and highly poetical exordium, addreſſes the heavens and the earth, and demands their attention to his ſublime, and important ſubject. Some ſuppoſe that the heavens are addreſſed as producing by the influences of the ſun and rain, and the revolutions of the ſeaſons, that fertility, which Iſrael would ungratefully abuſe: and the earth as yielding them it's increaſe; and that they are called upon by an animated figure, as if living perſons to bear teſtimony for God, and againſt Iſrael. But perhaps all the inhabitants of heaven and earth are intended, who are called upon to liſten to the Lord's appeal, and to teſtify in after ages, that the rebellions of the Iſraelites were cauſeleſs, and inexcuſable, and their miſeries juſtly merited.

V. 2. *As the rain*, &c.] As the rain, and the dew, gently diſtilling ſoften the earth, and produce a beautiful verdure, and fertility: ſo the tendency of this ſong, and the aim of it's inſpired penman were to ſoften the Iſraelites into repent-

ſpeech ſhall diſtil as the dew; as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs:

3 Becauſe I will publiſh the name of the LORD; aſcribe ye greatneſs unto our God.

4 *He is* the Rock, his work *is* perfect; for all his ways *are* judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right *is* he.

5 They have corrupted themſelves; their ſpot *is* not *the ſpot* of his children: *they are* a perverſe and crooked generation.

6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O fooliſh

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ance, and to render them fruitful in faith and good works, and proſperous in the LORD's favour: ſuch alſo would be the effect, as to numbers of them. But ſome commentators interpret the former clauſe of the judgments of God, which like torrents of impetuous rain, ſweep all down before them: and conſider it as the effect of this ſong, to haſten, and aggravate the miſeries of obſtinate ſinners amongſt them, by rendering their conduct the more inexcuſable.

V. 3—4.] The penman opens this ſacred poem, "by "publiſhing the name of the LORD;" that is by delineating that character, and thoſe perfections, which Jehovah poſſeſſes, (*ſee notes, &c. Exod.* c. xxxiv. v. 5—7;) in order that all, who read this ſong, may know the glorious excellencies of that God, whom the Iſraelites forſook for their worthleſs idols. "Aſcribe ye greatneſs unto our God," that is, acknowledge his ſelf-exiſtence, eternity, omnipreſence, omniſcience, almighty power, and univerſal abſolute authority. "He is a rock:" this is the firſt time God is called a rock in Scripture: and the expreſſion ſeems to denote, that his unchangeable power, faithfulneſs, and love, (as revealed in Chriſt, and the goſpel) form an immoveable foundation, on which we may build our hopes of felicity; ſeeing nothing can alter or defeat his purpoſes, or annul his promiſes; and that under his protection we may find refuge from all our enemies, and in all our troubles: as the rocks in thoſe countries frequently ſheltered the inhabitants from the heat of the ſun, from impetuous tempeſts, and from hoſtile invaſions. Nor ſhould it be forgotten, that the water flowed from the rock for the uſe of Iſrael in the wilderneſs: and all ſpiritual conſolations in this wretched world come from God our rock, as in Chriſt the God of ſalvation. (*See Pſalm* xviii. v. 1. *Iſaiah*, c. xxxii. v. 2. *Matt.* c. vii. v. 24. c. xvi. v. 18. 1 *Cor.* c. iii. v. 11. c. x. v. 4.) "His "work is perfect." Abſolute perfection belongs only to God himſelf: relative perfection is all that belongs to creatures, and it belongs to them all, *as he at firſt made them*; to a worm as much as to an archangel. Every work of God is the reſult of perfect goodneſs, the contrivance of perfect wiſdom, and the effect of perfect power; and is complete in it's kind, and for it's uſe, and to fill it's appointed ſtation in the grand ſcale of exiſtence. Every providential diſpenſation is perfectly expreſſive of his divine juſtice, truth, goodneſs, and wiſdom. His law is perfectly holy, juſt, and good: and is perfectly ſuited to anſwer the ends, which he propoſed in giving it: his goſpel is perfect alſo, and ſuited to anſwer ſtill nobler, and more important ends. The Moſaic diſpenſation was perfectly ſuited to it's purpoſe for the appointed period. The New Teſtament diſpenſation hath a higher and more enlarged kind of perfection. Every part of the univerſal plan is perfectly fitted to the ſtation, which it occupies, and the whole is a perfect plan, and will at length be perfectly executed; as will every work, which God hath begun: nor could any alteration be made in any of his works, without proportionably deducting from their excellency. All real defect ariſes from another quarter, from apoſtacy and rebellion, and their conſequences. Much imagined defect is real excellency; and the objections made to it are the offſpring of ignorance, and pride. If that, which ſuits it's place, and anſwers the intention of it's Maker, were advanced to an higher rank of beauty, and dignity, it's relative excellence would be ſpoiled: and ſo long as the diſtinction betwixt the infinite and abſolute perfection of the Creator, and the finite capacities of the creature remained, there could be no end of ſuch vain attempts of increaſing created perfection by advancing it to ſuperior dignity: and the idea leads us to reflect on the perfection of a kingdom, where all were rulers, and no ſubjects. Theſe things ſhould not be overlooked by thoſe, on the one hand, who are continually diſcovering ſuppoſed defects in the works of God, without knowing the intention of the great contriver: and on the other hand by thoſe, who ſpeak of reaſon, and of the law of God, when diſtinguiſhing them from revelation, and from the goſpel, in ſuch degrading language, as would induce one to think, that either God were not the giver of them, or that things oppoſite to each other might proceed from the ſame immutable fountain of light, truth, and holineſs. Theſe things were intended, and are calculated for diſtinct purpoſes: and man's abuſe of them is alone to be found fault with. "All "his ways are judgment." That is, all his dealings, with his rational creatures are regulated by infallible wiſdom, and perfect juſtice. "A God of truth," of entire veracity, ſincerity, and fidelity; "and without iniquity:" never uſing his power, or authority to oppreſs, or injure any, never requiring more than his due, never puniſhing any of his innumerable ſubjects, who hath not deſerved it, or above their deſerts. "But juſt, and right is he;" and therefore none can have any cauſe to revolt againſt him, as the world in general, and as Iſrael in particular had done.

V. 5. *They have corrupted themſelves*, &c.] "God's work "is perfect," therefore ſin is not from him; and they muſt bear the blame of the perverſeneſs of their diſpoſition, and the wickedneſs of their behaviour, and of all the miſeries, which they endured in conſequence thereof.

Their ſpot, &c.] Though the profeſſing people of God are ſometimes in general called "his children:" yet Iſrael's preceding, and ſubſequent wickedneſs, notwithſtanding all the judgments, and mercies, the warnings, and perſuaſions, which united to deter them from ſin, and call them to repentance, manifeſted that they were none of God's children, and ſhewed by the deformed, and hateful likeneſs, whoſe children they indeed were: (*John*, c. viii. v. 44. 1 *John*, c. iii. v. 8—10.) God's children, in this world have indeed their ſpots, and blemiſhes: but habitual, notorious, unrepented ſin is not one of them. This is the infallible mark of the children of another father.

V. 6. *Is not he thy father*, &c.] God had acted as a

people and unwise? *is* not he thy father *that* hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?

7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee;

8 When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel.

9 For the LORD's portion *is* his people; Jacob *is* the lot of his inheritance.

10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings;

12 *So* the LORD alone did lead him, and *there was* no strange god with him.

13 He made him ride on the high places of

father to them, though they had renounced the relationship of children to him, by their apostacy, and idolatry, (*Isaiah*, c. i. v. 2,) and were "not worthy to be called his sons." As he had at first formed them men, so at the expence of multiplied miracles, and vast desolations he had ransomed them from Egypt, and established them into a church, and nation, incorporated by charter with special privileges: and the madness and folly of their rebellions, and iniquities were equal to the black ingratitude of them; for they could not injure the Lord, but would inevitably ruin themselves by them.

V. 7. *Remember*, &c.] This song would be in the mouth of great numbers, who were unacquainted with, and perhaps had not access to the books of Moses: they were therefore called upon in it, to make inquiries of their fathers, and elders, concerning their original, many ages before; who would inform them of the distinguishing kindness, which God had shewn to their progenitors, and to their children for their sakes: such inquiries might both stir them up to the study of their Scriptures, as far as they had opportunity, and discover to them in a general manner, the obligations both of gratitude and interest, under which they lay, to keep close to the worship, and service of Jehovah.

V. 8. *When the Most High*, &c.] When according to the purpose of "the Most High," who with uncontrolable authority disposeth of every thing, as he pleaseth, the earth was divided in the days of Peleg, (*Gen.* c. x,) amongst the descendants of Adam, and Noah; he so overruled it, according to his secret designs of love to Israel, that the posterity of accursed Canaan, should have that land, which he had selected, as their suitable, and sufficient proportion: foreseeing that by the time that the seed of Abraham would be multiplied into a nation, the Canaanites would have filled up the measure of their iniquities, and merit utter extirpation. By these means the Israelites received their assigned portion in a high state of cultivation, and replenished with cities, towns, and villages ready prepared for their reception.

V. 9. *For the Lord's*, &c.] That part of the human race, which he peculiarly values, and cultivates, as a man doth his own estate, and from which he receives his whole revenue of worship, and obedience, was typified by Israel, and was under that dispensation chiefly found amongst them.

V. 10. *He found him*, &c.] Israel first assumed the form of a nation, and made their appearance as such, in the barren wilderness, where nothing was heard before but the howling of the beasts of prey. Here the Lord became their king, and under his government, guidance, and protection they were preserved, and provided for: and though he led them about forty years in this waste wilderness, the time was not lost: there he instructed, and trained them up for the conquest and possession of the promised land, (*notes*, c. viii.) There he found Israel as a nation, but he did not leave them there: and when the Amalekites, when Arad, Balak, &c, attempted to injure them; his power enclosed them about, and kept them safe; even as the apple, or sight of the eye is preserved, both by the wise contrivance of the Creator, and by the jealous care of the possessor, from external violence.

V. 11. *As an eagle*, &c.] The eagle is remarkable for the pains that she uses, and the methods that she employs, to teach her young to fly: stirring them up out of the nest, fluttering in the air over them, to shew them how to use their wings, and, when occasion requires, carrying them upon her own wings, so that in order to destroy the young eagles, the body of the old one must first be pierced. Thus the Lord, by the message of Moses, and Aaron, excited and encouraged the enslaved Israelites to leave Egypt, and effectually assisted, and protected them in so doing: thus also by the preached gospel, and the influences of the Holy Ghost, he excites, and prevails upon sinners to leave satan's bondage, and instructs, defends, and effectually assists them therein: whilst the last circumstance of the eagle's tender care of her young is beautifully emblematical of his love, who interposed betwixt divine justice, and our guilty souls, and "bare our sins in his own body on "the tree." In both Testaments young birds taken care of by the old one's are emblems of the church's safety under the Redeemer's protection: but in the Old Testament the eagle is selected as descriptive of his power; in the New, an hen is substituted, as most expressive of his condescension, and grace.

V. 12. *No strange god*, &c.] None of the heathen gods had the least pretence to share in the honour of those wonderful works of love, which Jehovah wrought in behalf of Israel: how absurd, and base then was it for them to join these strange Gods with, or prefer them to him, as the objects of their worship!

V. 13. *He made him ride*, &c.] The Lord caused Israel, as a triumphant conqueror riding in grand procession, to possess the fortified cities, and inaccessible mountains,

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the earth, that he might eat the increaſe of the fields, and he made him to ſuck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;

14 Butter of kine, and milk of ſheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Baſhan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didſt drink the pure blood of the grape.

15 But Jeſhurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxèn fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatneſs:* then he forſook God *which* made him, and lightly eſteemed the Rock of his ſalvation.

16 They provoked him to jealouſy with ſtrange *gods*, with abominations provoked they him to anger.

17 They ſacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new *gods that* came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

18 Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art

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which the Canaanites thought ſecure from their aſſaults. The former part of this ſacred ſong referred to events ſubſequent to the days of Moſes, but here evident prediction begins: which is expreſſed in the paſt tenſe, as denoting it's moſt certain accompliſhment.

Honey out of the rock, &c.] As this is connected with the conqueſt, and the abundance of Canaan, we cannot with the leaſt propriety look back to the wilderneſs for it's accompliſhment: but muſt interpret it to mean, that the rocky parts of the promiſed land, which were the leaſt valued, and which in other lands were generally unproductive, ſhould by the peculiar bleſſing of God afford them great quantities of honey, and oil olive.

V. 14. *Kidneys of wheat*, &c.] The language of this ſong, according to the genius of poetry, eſpecially of the Eaſtern poetry, abounds with bold metaphors, which ſometimes obſcure the meaning to the generality of readers: but this verſe ſerves as a ſpecimen, according to which others leſs perſpicuous muſt be interpreted. A wheat corn being ſhaped ſomewhat like the kidney, which is ſurrounded in cattle with the choiceſt fat: and their wheat being remarkable fine, the ſacred penman calls it "the fat of the kidneys of wheat." And the production of the red, or purple grape, reſembling the colour of blood, is called "the pure blood of the grape." Thus were they favoured with the beſt of every production; and all their temporal bleſſings ſhadowed forth the ſpiritual proviſions of true believers, who by faith "eat the fleſh, and drink the "blood of the ſon of man."

V. 15. *Jeſhurun waxed fat*, &c.] The word Jeſhurun probably means "the upright one," and Iſrael was by profeſſion, and *comparatively* ſo in reality for ſome time: but in the midſt of all their mercies, they degenerated, and grew untractable, and rebellious; like the cattle that "kick "againſt," inſtead of ſubmitting to the goad. They uſed their abundance intemperately, and grew fond of luxury, and the pride of life: this rendered them forgetful of, and ungrateful to the God of their ſalvation, and indiſpoſed them for his ſpiritual worſhip, and holy ſervice: and in proportion proved an incentive to the *ſenſual* worſhip of filthy idols; to which in conſequence they apoſtatized, forſaking, and lightly eſteeming their great Benefactor: and when they were reproved for it by the prophets, or corrected for it by the Lord, they were fired with indignation, and revolted more, and more, (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 5.)

V. 17. *They ſacrificed unto devils*, &c.] The whole ſyſtem of idolatry, and every ſpecies of irreligion, falſe religion, and wickedneſs, ultimately centre in the worſhip and ſervice of ſatan: who as a ſubtle enemy unto man, and a proud rival of God, ambitiouſly aſpires to be the God, and king of this world. Not only were the evil genii of the heathens, in reality devils, fallen apoſtate ſpirits; but their good genii alſo, and all their demons and gods, as far as they had any *diſtinct* exiſtence. Whether a mere phantom, or ſome peculiar demon under the name of Baal, or Jupiter, or ſome deceaſed hero, or the virtues, or vices, &c, were worſhipped in and through their images, the things which were ſacrificed unto them, "were ſacrificed "unto devils," and thoſe proud ſpirits were gratified thereby. In this ſyſtem of ſatan, old gods, "or new gods, "newly come up," (what a monſtrous abſurdity!) the deification of living, as well as of deceaſed men; the change from one ſyſtem to another, in ceaſeleſs variety, according to man's natural love of novelty, equally ſuited *his* purpoſe, and met with his approbation. This lets us into the true ſecret of that intercommunity of gods and religions, which the *liberal* and *candid* Heathens univerſally allowed of: but which *the bigotted, and narrow minded* Jews would not conform to; and were therefore hated, and deſpiſed for their *uncharitable* ſingularity, and *affected ſtarchneſs*, whereby they condemned all their neighbours. Though the Jews were faulty in their contempt, and hatred of the Gentiles, and were really chargeable with bigotry in ſome reſpects: yet the worſhippers of Jehovah could not poſſibly have any intercommunity, with the worſhippers of the devil: Satan himſelf would have tempted them to no more, and the whole law of God forbad it. (1 *Cor.* c. x. v. 19—21.) For the ſame reaſon different modes of irreligion, or of falſe religion may admit of this *candid* intercommunity; but true Chriſtianity cannot thus be warped: and therefore many, who pride themſelves upon their candour, and liberality of ſentiment, can ſcarce find methods ſufficiently to expreſs their contempt, or deteſtation of thoſe *wretched bigots*, who explicitly declare that there is but one way of a ſinner's acceptance, and ſanctification: and that no man, who is not intereſted in the merits, and atoning ſacrifice of the truly divine Saviour, and is not a partaker of his regenerating Spirit, can poſſibly obtain heaven, or eſcape everlaſting condemnation, whatever be his moral character amongſt men. Yet to this all true Chriſtians ſhould adhere: and then by ſhewing others, who are not favoured with this knowledge of Chriſt, all civil reſpect, and all tender kindneſs; by being always diſpoſed to ſympathiſe with, and ready to relieve them, they ſhould convince them, that not proud bigotry, and uncharitable ſeverity dictates ſuch a profeſſion; but regard to the truth of God's word, and a reluctancy to do any thing to bolſter up the groundleſs hopes of thoſe, who neglect ſuch great ſalvation. And

unmindful,

unmindful, and haſt forgotten God that formed thee.

19 And when the LORD ſaw *it*, he abhorred *them*, becauſe of the provoking of his ſons and of his daughters.

20 And he ſaid, I will hide my face from them, I will ſee what their end *ſhall be:* for they *are* a very froward generation, children in whom *is* no faith.

21 They have moved me to jealouſy with *that which is* not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealouſy with *thoſe which are* not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a fooliſh nation.

22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and ſhall burn unto the loweſt hell, and ſhall conſume the earth with her increaſe, and ſet on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 I will heap miſchief upon them; I will ſpend mine arrows upon them.

24 *They ſhall be* burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter deſtruction: I will alſo ſend the teeth of beaſts upon them, with the poiſon of ſerpents of the duſt.

25 The ſword without, and terror within, ſhall deſtroy both the young man and the virgin, the ſuckling *alſo*, with the man of gray hairs.

26 I ſaid, I would ſcatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to ceaſe from among men:

27 Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, leſt their adverſaries ſhould behave themſelves ſtrangely, *and* leſt they ſhould ſay, Our hand *is* high, and the LORD hath not done all this.

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whilſt they render unto God all the honour " of making " them to differ;" and pour out their fervent prayers for the converſion of their enemies and ſlanderers: and whilſt they cultivate meekneſs, and modeſty, and an unoſtentatious courteouſneſs, and gentleneſs of manners, and blameleſſneſs of life; they may ſoften, though they cannot utterly avoid the injurious charge of bigotry.

V. 19. *Becauſe of the provoking*, &c.] They are called his ſons, and his daughters, in reſpect of their privileges, with whom, in reſpect of their character that relation is renounced, (v. 5;) having received their natural and national exiſtence, and all their peculiar bleſſings from the Lord, they ſo provoked him by their idolatries, that he even abhorred them, and as it were turned them out of his houſe. But they, who being born of the Spirit, are made partakers of a divine nature, have his fear put into their hearts, that they ſhould not *thus* depart from, and provoke their heavenly Father.

V. 20. *I will hide*, &c.] The Lord here declares that he will withdraw his protection, and withhold his wonted interpoſition in their favour; and whilſt they groaned under the effects of their own folly, he would look on as an unconcerned ſpectator of their ſufferings, until they were brought to the utmoſt extremities: becauſe they were a froward, and perverſe generation, deſtitute both of their fathers faith in, and faithfulneſs to him.

V 21. *I will move*, &c.] Though many of the judgments, which were inflicted on the offending Iſraelites by the Canaanites, Philiſtines, Midianites, &c, might form a partial accompliſhment of this prediction: yet St. Paul applies it to it's proper event, when he adduces it in proof of the calling of the Gentiles into the church; (*Rom.* c. x. v. 19.) The Jews had proudly treated the heathen as fooliſh, and worthleſs, and even as dogs compared with themſelves, to whom as children they ſuppoſed all ſpiritual privileges, excluſively, and indefeaſibly belonged: and it provoked their jealouſy to a degree of indignant rage, to ſee them enter into the church, and by the apoſtles of Chriſt admitted to equal privileges with themſelves: this eventually tended to their own entire excluſion, and hath even to this very day exceedingly exaſperated them againſt Chriſtianity and Chriſtians.

V. 22. *A fire is kindled*, &c.] (*See note*, v. 14.) The tremendous effects of the wrath of God are repreſented under the metaphor of a fire, which, being kindled upon the ſurface, ſhould burn, as we ſhould ſpeak, even the centre of the earth; and according to a very general notion of the ancients, quite through to the place of miſerable departed ſpirits: but in the expreſſion there is an evident intimation of the indignation of the Lord purſuing the wicked, after death, to that place, where " their worm " never dieth, and the fire is not quenched."

V. 24. *Serpents of the duſt*, &c.] Which crawl upon, and lick the duſt, (*ſee note*, *Gen.* c. iii. v. 14.) The miſery, which ſhould come upon the Jewiſh nation, is in theſe verſes deſcribed in a variety of highly poetical expreſſions, the particular elucidation of which, belongs rather to philology, than theology; and therefore falls not within the deſign of notes, intended merely for edification.

V. 26, 27.] The idolatry, and rebellions of Iſrael deſerved, and the juſtice of God ſeemed to demand, that they ſhould be baniſhed to the remoteſt corners of the earth, where they ſhould never more be heard of; or even that they ſhould be extirpated: but he knew that his enemies would attribute ſuch a cataſtrophe to a wrong cauſe, and that their hearts would in conſequence be elated with inſufferable inſolence, and emboldened to utter the moſt horrible blaſphemies, and hardened in infidelity, and the denial of all, that the Scripture hiſtory records of his wonderful works of old: therefore he determined to ſpare them, and he ſtill continues them to be living witneſſes of the truth of the Scriptures, and confutations of all infidelity. And by their exiſtence as a people at this day, they confront ſuch daring blaſphemers: and he, who knows the ſpirit of

28 For they *are* a nation void of counſel, neither *is there any* underſtanding in them.

29 O that they were wiſe, *that* they underſtood this, *that* they would conſider their latter end!

30 How ſhould one chaſe a thouſand, and two put ten thouſand to flight, except their Rock had ſold them, and the LORD had ſhut them up?

31 For their rock *is* not as our Rock, even our enemies themſelves *being* judges.

32 For their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes *are* grapes of gall, their cluſters *are* bitter:

33 Their wine *is* the poiſon of dragons, and the cruel venom of aſps.

34 *Is* not this laid up in ſtore with me, *and* ſealed up among my treaſures?

35 To me *belongeth* vengeance and recompence: their foot ſhall ſlide in *due* time: for the day of their calamity *is* at hand, and the things that ſhall come upon them make haſte.

36 For the LORD ſhall judge his people, and repent himſelf for his ſervants; when he ſeeth that *their* power is gone, and *there is* none ſhut up or left.

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modern infidels, and deiſts, (ſo called,) will perceive that their triumphs would have been more inſolent, and their blaſphemies more abundant, had there been no traces of ſuch a people as the Jews any where upon the earth to be diſcovered. And what uſe may hereafter be made of them, may more eaſily be imagined, than exactly aſcertained: but we are ſure that they are preſerved for wiſe, and holy purpoſes, and the Scripture prophecies give us ſome general idea, what thoſe purpoſes are. By an adventurous figure, the ſacred poet aſcribes to the Almighty language taken from the conduct of men, who are deterred from ſuch things, as they have a ſtrong inclination to, through fear of diſagreeable conſequences: as God abhors infidelity, and blaſphemy, and is determined not to afford ſinners this occaſion for them, he is ſaid, "to fear the wrath of the "enemy;" becauſe he acted, as men do, when they are thus afraid.

V. 29. *O that they were wiſe*, &c.] The wiſdom of Iſrael would have appeared in conſidering theſe things, in adverting to the conſequences of their conduct, and in avoiding all ſuch things, as led to national ruin, and in following all ſuch things, as conduced to national proſperity; keeping the promiſes, denunciations, and predictions, with which they were favoured, continually before their eyes. This would have been to conſider their latter end. The ſame applies to individuals, with reſpect to their future, and eternal ſtate of happineſs or miſery. The ſecrets of futurity belong not to us, but to the Lord: notwithſtanding all the predictions which were delivered concerning the people of Iſrael, it ſtill remained certain, that they would have proſpered, had they been obedient: and notwithſtanding the divine decrees, it is equally certain, that none will come ſhort of eternal life, but thoſe, who remain wilfully impenitent, and unbelievers. And it is ſo agreeable to the divine holineſs, and love, that his rational creatures ſhould be obedient and happy, and that ſinners ſhould repent, believe the goſpel, live holy lives, and be ſaved, that he is repreſented as deſiring, and even wiſhing for it; (*Pſalm*, lxxxi. v. 13. *Luke*, c. xix. v. 41, 42;) which muſt be underſtood in the ſame manner, as his "fearing the wrath of the ene-"my:" With reference to the conduct, which he approves in his creatures: not with reſpect to his own conduct in the government of the world, which is always perfectly wiſe, righteous, faithful, and good; but often unfathomably deep, and awfully myſterious; and calls for our ſilent acquieſcence, and reverential adoration.

V. 30. *Except their Rock*, &c.] If they had not provoked God by their crimes, to ſell them as ſlaves, and deliver them as malefactors ſhut up in priſon, into the hands of their enemies, who unconſciouſly performed the office of executioners upon them; none could poſſibly have prevailed againſt them, but all muſt have fallen under them.

V. 31. *Their rock*, &c.] The idols of the enemies of Iſrael, on which they profeſſed to place their dependance, had never equalled the wondrous works of Jehovah for Iſrael, even by their own confeſſion: (1 *Sam.* c. iv. v. 7, 8;) they therefore could never have prevailed againſt them, had not their Rock, who formerly protected them, been turned away from, yea turned againſt them.

V. 32, 33.] The nation of Iſrael, though planted a generous vine of an excellent ſtock, in a rich ſoil, and with every advantage in the culture of it; (*Iſaiah*, c. v. ver. 1—9.) brought not forth the good fruits of righteouſneſs; nay even exceeded Sodom, and Gomorrah in wickedneſs: and as this conduct, *in them*, was more diſhonourable to God, and more poiſonous, (ſo to ſpeak,) to the minds of others, by prejudicing them againſt their God, and religion, it would therefore be eventually more bitter to themſelves.

V. 34, 35.] (*Rom* c. ii. v. 5.) All their wickedneſs was recorded, and remembered of God, until the appointed time of vengeance: and it would then appear, that it had been reſerved in ſtore, to be produced againſt them, in manifeſtation of the divine juſtice in their puniſhment; even as a man depoſits, and ſeals up his treaſures in a ſecure place, until he wants to make uſe of them.—For it belongeth to him to execute vengeance upon the wicked: but he waits the moſt proper ſeaſon; and though his judgments ſeem to linger, they in reality make haſte, and are at hand: (2 *Pet.* c. ii. v. 3. c. iii. v. 8, 9:) and when ſinners deem themſelves moſt ſecure, and ſuppoſe that their foot ſtands firm, he cauſes it to ſlide in due time, and down they ſuddenly fall into deſtruction. (*Pſ.* lxxiii. v. 17—19.)

V. 36. *For the Lord*, &c.] Theſe words not only mean, that the Lord would plead the cauſe of, and ſave the remnant that in every age were exceptions to the general rule: nor are they to be reſtricted to the reſcue of the Jews from the Babyloniſh captivity; or to the coming of the Meſſias, or to any of their paſt deliverances: but as

37 And he shall say, Where *are* their gods, *their* rock in whom they trusted;

38 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, *and* drank the wine of their drink-offerings? let them rise up and help you, *and* be your protection.

39 See now that I, *even* I, *am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand.

40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever.

41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me.

42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain, and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy.

43 Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people.

44 And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hosea the son of Nun.

45 And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel.

46 And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law.

47 For it *is* not a vain thing for you; because it *is* your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong *your* days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.

48 And the LORD spake unto Moses that self same day, saying,

49 Get thee up into this mountain Abarim, *unto* mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, that *is* over against Jericho, and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession;

50 And die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron

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this sacred poem relates to the same events, which have already been repeatedly considered; (*Lev.* c. xxvi. *Deut.* c. xxvii, xxviii, xxix, xxx;) this closing part must refer to the same future mercies, with which those prophecies concluded; even their future conversion, and restoration. When the appointed period arrives the Lord will plead their cause, and avenge them upon all their oppressors: he will change his conduct towards them, as a man doth, when he repents: but not till he hath brought them into utter distress, so that none of them shall be any where exempted from hostile depredations; or left, who shall not be carried captives, and at the mercy of their conquerors; and till they are brought to renounce all dependance on human help. This evidently refers to the final conquest and destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, and the consequent entire desolation of their whole land, and their long-continued dispersion, which ensued.

V. 37, 38.] The rejection of the Messiah by the Jewish nation was evidently considered as the continuation of their ancient idolatry, apostacy, and rebellion: for which the Lord hath reproved them, and he will convince them of the guilt, and folly of it, before he delivers them. Thus he will make them sensible that he alone, who for their sins hath reduced them to so abject a state of misery, can recover them from it; and they shall be brought to humble themselves before him, to repent of their sins, and to trust in, and call upon the Lord, through their long-rejected Mediator, for salvation; and then he will appear for their deliverance, and make their prosperity as eminent, as ever their miseries have been extraordinary.

V. 40. *For I lift*, &c.] This is spoken after the manner of men, and according to their method of taking a solemn oath.

And say I live for ever.] That is, if Jehovah swear by his own self-existence, and eternity, the sentence whether of mercy, or of judgment, becomes irrevocable, and irreversible.

V. 41.] If the Lord prepare for vengeance, as a man for battle, and put his hand to the dreadful work of destruction, he will do it effectually; nor shall any of those, who have provoked his indignation, be able either to resist, or escape. And especially he will revenge himself upon all those, who at any time have injured his people, out of enmity to them, and him. For this conclusion seems to relate to the final deliverance of Israel, and the destruction of all who oppose that deliverance, and of every enemy of God, and his people. Future events may hereafter illustrate this part of the prophecy, as history hath done the foregoing parts of it.

V. 43. *Rejoice ye*, &c.] (*Rom.* c. xv. v. 10.) When the Gentiles were called into the church, upon the Jews rejection of the gospel, this prophecy began to be accomplished: but when upon their future conversion, the fulness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, and all opposers be destroyed, it will be completely fulfilled. (*Romans*, c. xi. v. 23—32.

V. 49—52.] Moses having received this summons, gave the tribes of Israel his parting blessing, and then rendered a prompt obedience unto it.

thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people:

51 Becauſe ye treſpaſſed againſt me among the children of Iſrael, at the waters of Meribah-Kadeſh, in the wilderneſs of Zin; becauſe ye ſanctified me not in the midſt of the children of Iſrael.

52 Yet thou ſhalt ſee the land before *thee*; but thou ſhalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Iſrael.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Divine truth, when propoſed with ſerioufneſs, ſolemnity, and affection, and accompanied with fervent prayers for a bleſſing upon it, is like the diſtilling ſhowers, which water, and fructify the earth: and though numbers neither ſeek, nor ſhare this bleſſing; yet ſome will at all times wait upon God for that preparation of heart, which ſecures it's ſucceſs. (*Iſaiah*, c. lv. ver. 10. 2 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 15—17.)—When the glorious character, and gracious dealings of the Lord with men; and the whole character, and conduct of every one towards him ſhall be completely publiſhed before all the inhabitants of heaven and earth; either his juſtice in their deſtruction, or his free mercy in their ſalvation will be univerſally acknowledged, and glorified: and it will then appear that none had any thing, of which to boaſt, and that all had cauſe to confeſs, "that it "was of the Lord's mercy, they had not been long before "conſumed." In every controverſy of the Lord with his creatures, the whole creation will be as his witneſſes for the conviction, and confuſion of thoſe who ſin againſt him: for his creating, and providential goodneſs hath laid every rational agent under ſuch obligations entirely to love, and ſerve him, that their ingratitude, and neglect of him, will admit of no excuſe. (*Rom.* c. i. v. 18—20.) And every diſtinguiſhing bleſſing, which we enjoy, enhances our obligation, and aggravates the criminality of ungodlineſs. The land of our nativity, the place of our abode, and all that profuſion of temporal advantages, which many of us ſo richly poſſeſs, are as much his eſpecial appointment, as Canaan was intended for, and given to Iſrael: nor can we complain of a country leſs favoured of heaven than even the land of promiſe itſelf. But alas! like Jeſhurun, we have too generally grown luxurious, and ſenſual, untractable, and ungodly: the irreligion, infidelity, and profligacy, which have ſprung from our national wealth, and proſperity, and have almoſt inundated our land, are no leſs aggravated than Iſrael's idolatry, and equally provoke the Lord's jealouſy, and anger. And whatever may be the conſequence to us, as a nation; the fire of divine vengeance burns even to the loweſt hell againſt unnumbered multitudes, who live, and die, and periſh in their ſins. We alſo, like Iſrael of old, are ſingularly favoured with the light of revelation, and the ordinances of true religion, and are profeſſedly the Lord's people: but our ſpots are not the ſpots of his children; our dark and ſteep ſtains of every atrocious iniquity too evidently prove, that in general we are Chriſtians no more than in name. We hear indeed of a redemption far more precious, than that of Iſrael out of Egypt, but unleſs "we are redeemed "from all iniquity, and purified unto the Redeemer, as "his peculiar people zealous of good works," our privileges will but enhance our condemnation. And whilſt multitudes ſeem to deem themſelves branches of the true vine, "their grapes are the grapes of Sodom, and the "wine thereof the poiſon of dragons, and the cruel venom "of aſps." Suitable to ſuch a conduct will be their doom, for they are day by day "treaſuring up wrath againſt the "day of wrath;" and the whole maſs of iniquity, which they have committed will ere long be produced againſt them, and proportionable vengeance executed upon them. "O that men were wiſe, that they underſtood "theſe things!" For our wiſdom conſiſts not in ſagaciouſly laying, and executing plans of worldly advancement, but "in conſidering our latter end:" and with the revelation of a future ſtate, and judgment before our eyes, in preparing for that awful period, when we muſt finally leave all earthly things, and enter into the eternal world, and have our portion allotted us either in heavenly joys, or in the torments of hell, and that for ever. But ſo merciful is our holy God, and ſo doth he delight in the converſion, and ſalvation of ſinners: ſo well ordered are all things in the covenant of grace, and ſo freely are all the bleſſings of that covenant propoſed, through our loving, able, faithful Saviour, to the chief of ſinners, than none need be diſcouraged: nay except we "lightly eſteem the Rock of "our ſalvation," and wilfully prefer other dependances, or the ſervice of the devil, in the gratification of our ſinful luſts, to him, and his ſervice, and all his bleſſings, we cannot be excluded from them. And neither the ſenſual, the ambitious, or the covetous, nor yet the phariſaical, and ſuperſtitious, nor thoſe who invoke ſaints, and angels, can think, or pretend to ſay, "that their rock is as our Rock." O that they would therefore be perſuaded to build their hopes on this Rock of ages, to ſhelter their ſouls in him, and to ſeek thoſe waters of life, which flow from him! But his own preventing grace muſt accompany the invitations of his word; or the pride, and wickedneſs of the human heart will render them all abortive. All the appointments of his Providence ſubſerve the purpoſes of his love to his church, and to every true member of it: and "known unto him are all his works from before the "foundation of the world." He finds his people dead in ſin, and ſlaves of ſatan, yea baſely in love with their chains. And even when his meſſage, "warning them to flee from "wrath to come," has alarmed their fears, they are ſtill diſpoſed to cleave to earthly objects, and averſe to the ſuppoſed difficulties, and perils of a godly life. But his Spirit quickens their ſouls, ſtirs them from the duſt, and creates the willing mind: then doth he convincingly, and ſweetly teach them their danger, and the way of eſcape, and ſalvation; and yields them effectual aſſiſtance in treading thoſe hitherto unknown paths. (*Iſaiah*, c. xlii. v. 16.) Thus are they numbered amongſt the redeemed of the Lord, become his worſhippers, are repleniſhed with the richeſt ſpiritual bleſſings from the rock of ſalvation, rank amongſt the ſons of God, and heirs of glory, begin their victories, and triumphs, and taſte the earneſt of heavenly joys. But alas! how frequently do even true Chriſtians merit the reproach of folly and ingratitude, in requiting the Lord, who

CHAP. XXXIII.

Contains, 1st. An introduction to the blessings which Moses pronounced upon the tribes of Israel before his death, v. 1—5. 2d. The blessing itself addressed to the different tribes, v. 6—25. 3d. The last parting words of Moses, describing the felicity of God's people, v. 26—29.

AND this *is* the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

2 And he said, The LORD came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand *went* a fiery law for them.

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hath bought them with his blood, and formed and established them by his grace to be his people, with such unsuitable returns! Oft do they grieve his Spirit, sometimes they even dishonour his name, through inordinate attachment to some earthly object, or by some disobedience, negligence, or perverseness. Then is he moved to jealousy, hides his face from them, and makes use of his chastening rod; and with repeated, and still heavier strokes, proceeds to correct them, until they are convinced of, and humbled for their sin, and renouncing all other help, seek deliverance from him alone, and learn to kiss the very rod, which occasioned the smart. For this humiliation he waits, nor will he shew his reconciled face, until it take place: but when this effect hath been produced, he, who wounded will heal, and he who afflicted, will relieve and comfort them; nor can any but he do it.—For his own glory, and to silence the blasphemies of his enemies, he will not proceed to those extremities, which he might righteously inflict; but he will bring all his true people to repentance; and tho' they oft offend, and are often chastised, the whole shall issue in their final salvation; and in the execution of condign punishment upon all their persecutors and oppressors; who could have had no power over them; except as the Lord had been pleased to use them as instruments of correction: howbeit they meant not so, but expressed their enmity against him by their injuries of his people.—A long conflict there hath also been on earth betwixt the cause of truth, and holiness, and that of error, and ungodliness; but the whole shall issue in the final and universal triumph of true religion, and the ruin of all it's opponents: which will be the prelude to the eternal separation, and difference betwixt the friends and enemies of God, in the unseen world. Ere long that separation, and difference will take place with every one of us; we "shall soon be bid to put off this our "tabernacle." Then they, who wallowing in sin, rioting in luxury, or glorying in their wealth, have lightly esteemed the Rock of salvation, will though too late perceive their folly. Happy they who are called to meet death from being faithfully employed in the work of the Lord! and who die with the promised inheritance full in view, and with a clear assurance of eternal life. Yet let the redeemed of the Lord walk circumspectly, lest some false step, which they have taken, should be remembered against them upon a death bed, and render that closing scene less comfortable. Let us all be contented in obscurity, and poverty, if allotted us, being more favourable to godliness: let the rich and prosperous rejoice with trembling, lest they should have their portion in this world; and watch and pray, lest they should be lifted up to their hurt. Let us all recommend religion to our children, and those around us, as no vain thing, but our eternal life: and let us pray that the blessings of it may be extended to the remotest nation of the earth.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIII.] V. 1. *This is the blessing*, &c.] To all his precepts, exhortations, warnings, and prophecies, in prose and in poetry, Moses added, before his final parting, a solemn benediction; which may be considered as the expression of his cordial good will to, and his fervent prayers for them, notwithstanding the severe rebukes, and awful curses, which he uttered; or as a prophecy which he was inspired to deliver unto them, that related to the situation and circumstances of their several tribes. In this respect it exceedingly resembled the blessings, which Jacob pronounced upon his sons, (*Gen.* xxix;) and intimated, that notwithstanding their rebellions, and the preceding alarming predictions, the Lord had blessings in reserve for them. Probably the heads of the several tribes were gathered around Moses, after he received the summons recorded in the close of the former chapter, and just before he ascended the mount, where he ended his life. This chapter therefore contains the last dying words of this eminent servant of God; and calls to our remembrance "the "prophet like unto him," who both discoursed with his disciples the evening before his crucifixion for their consolation, and blessed them just when he was parted from them, and went up into heaven. And doubtless this parting interview was very pathetic, and would leave a durable impression upon the minds of the people. Moses introduced these blessings also with a brief retrospect to former mercies, which they had received from God, through his instrumentality; for on these subjects we cannot reflect too frequently.

V. 2. *The Lord came from*, &c.] These expressions are poetical, and likewise refer to scenes, which would be much better conceived by the Israelites, than they can be by us. When Jehovah came down to manifest his glory, and promulgate his law from mount Sinai, either the splendour of his majesty illumined the distant mountains of Seir and Paran; or his approach was preceded by some glorious appearances from those mountains, as the rising sun is ushered in by the light of the dawning day. (*Hab.* c. iii. v. 3.)

Ten thousands of saints] "Of holy ones," that is, of holy angels, who were ministering spirits, in that grand display of the divine Majesty.

From his right hand, &c.] The Lord thence gave them his law, not only by speaking it with a loud voice from the midst of the fire, but by writing it upon tables of stone, which he delivered to Israel to keep, as a sacred deposit, and the obedience unto which he enforced with his whole power and authority. It is called a fiery law, not only as delivered from the fire, but because of the fiery indignation, to which transgressors thereof are doomed, by reason of

3 Yea, he loved the people: all his ſaints *are* in thy hand: and they ſat down at thy feet; *every one* ſhall receive of thy words.

4 Moſes commanded us a law, *even* the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.

5 And he was king in Jeſhurun, when the heads of the people *and* the tribes of Iſrael were gathered together.

6 Let Reuben live, and not die; and let *not* his men be few.

7 And this *is the bleſſing* of Judah: and he ſaid, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be ſufficient for him; and be thou an help *to him* from his enemies.

8 And of Levi he ſaid, *Let* thy Thummim and thy Urim *be* with thy holy one, whom thou didſt prove at Maſſah, *and with* whom thou didſt ſtrive at the waters of Meribah;

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which no fleſh can be juſtified by it. Its ſanctifying effect alſo, when written in the hearts of believers by the finger of the Spirit, where, as fire, it conſumes the luſts, purifies the affections, and aſſimilates the ſoul to its own holy nature, may alſo be referred to.

V. 3. *Yea, he loved*, &c.] This fiery law was not promulgated *againſt*, but *for them*, as a proof of his love, and becauſe he had choſen them for his peculiar people, a holy nation: for in ſubſerviency to the goſpel, it much conduced to render them holy, as well as to evidence them to be ſo. And as all who were thus ſanctified, were under his ſpecial protection: ſo they all would ſit at his feet, and receive theſe his words, that they might believe and obey them, (*Luke*, c. x. v. 39.)

V. 4. *Moſes commanded*, &c.] The law was given *from* God, and *by* Moſes, who was alſo the mediator of that covenant, by which the congregation of Jacob's poſterity was incorporated, and which guaranteed unto them their inheritance, whilſt they retained their national fidelity.

V. 5. *And he was a king*, &c.] Moſes not only acted as a prophet, to deliver the law in God's name unto the people, but as a king, in ſeeing it put in force during his life: he poſſeſſed all the authority, and performed all the functions of a king, though he neither took upon him the the name nor the ſtate of royalty; and though he joined with him the heads of the people, and of the tribes, both as his council, and as ſubordinate magiſtrates over thouſands and hundreds, in their ſeveral tribes. Some ſuppoſe, that Jehovah himſelf is here meant; and doubtleſs he was king over Iſrael in all ages, and in an eſpecial manner, whoſoever was his deputy.

V. 6. *Let Reuben*, &c.] The order in which the tribes are here bleſſed, is not the ſame in which Jacob had bleſſed them; nor does it accord to any other order that is elſewhere obſerved. However Reuben, the firſt born, though degraded by Jacob, (*ſee notes*, &c. *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 4;) and ſuperſeded by Judah, as to the precedency in their encampments, is here firſt mentioned. Notwithſtanding that diſgrace, and the rebellion in the wilderneſs, of this tribe, under Dathan, Abiram, and On, about the government, in which many of them periſhed, Moſes here predicted, that it ſhould not be deſtroyed, but ſhould be multiplied to a great number; by which he alſo expreſſed his cordial forgiveneſs of, and good will to them, notwithſtanding their perſonal inſults of him. As the Reubenites, having received their inheritance eaſt of Jordan, were preparing to croſs that river, and fight for their brethren, we may alſo ſuppoſe, that ſome reference is had to that circumſtance, and that the bleſſing implies a prayer for their protection.

V. 7.] Judah was appointed to be the governing and the conquering tribe: Moſes therefore prayed for, and predicted to them, deliverance and victory, when they went forth to battle, and a ſafe and triumphant return to their people: the aſſiſtance of a ſufficient number from the other tribes, and eſpecially the help of the Lord of Hoſts himſelf. All this was evidently fulfilled to this tribe until the days of Chriſt. And ſome commentators interpret the clauſe, "bring him to his people," as predicting the coming of the Meſſias, who ſprang from Judah. (*See notes*, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 8—12.)

V. 8. *And of Levi*, &c.] Levi, as well as Simeon, had been left under a ſevere rebuke by Jacob, (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 7.) Simeon, having nowiſe diſtinguiſhed himſelf, was entirely omitted by Moſes. This tribe had probably been notoriouſly guilty in the tranſgreſſion of Baal Peor, and had been greatly reduced in the wilderneſs, (*Num.* c. i. v. 23. c. xxvi. v. 14.) It had it's portion aſſigned within the lot of Judah, (*Joſhua*, c. xix. v. 1;) and was much incorporated with them, or diſperſed through the other tribes: and perhaps for theſe reaſons, was not ſeparately mentioned in this prophecy. But in the caſe of Levi, the curſe had been turned into a bleſſing, with reference to the tranſactions here mentioned. This tribe was the dying prophet's own tribe, but he more regarded it as the Lord's tribe; and as the welfare of Iſrael was ſo immediately connected with that of Levi, he expatiated the more in his benediction of, and prediction concerning it. The Urim and Thummim, or illuminations, and perfections, (*note*, *Exod.* c. xxviii. v. 30;) whereby the High Prieſt inquired of the Lord, formed one diſtinguiſhing token of his favour to the Levitical prieſthood, which Moſes prayed for, and predicted the continuance of, to Aaron's ſucceſſors to future ages: and in ſo doing, implied alſo the continuance of all needful gifts and graces, to every order of that tribe, that they might fill up their ſeveral places, to the glory of God, and the maintenance of true religion in Iſrael. Yet it is confeſſed by the Jews, that the Urim and Thummim were loſt in the Babyloniſh captivity, and nothing ſubſtituted in their room. But in our "Holy One," our Great High Prieſt, whom Aaron and his ſons feebly ſhadowed forth, the things ſignified thereby remain, and from him are communicated to all his true miniſters and people, according to their meaſures.

Whom thou didſt prove, &c.] There were two Meribahs, one of which is alſo called Maſſah, (*Exod.* c. xvii.

9 Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.

10 They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt-sacrifice upon thine altar.

11 Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

12 *And* of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; *and the LORD* shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders.

13 And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the LORD *be* his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath,

14 And for the precious fruits *brought forth* by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon,

15 And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills,

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v. 7.) where probably Aaron and the Levites remarkably distinguished themselves in opposing the murmurs of the people. At the other Meribah, (*Num.* c. xx. v. 13.) Aaron was found faulty; yet it is a tradition, that the tribe of Levi approved themselves faithful. However it refers to some remarkable instance, in which they were proved, and honourably distinguished themselves in the Lord's behalf.

V. 9. *Who said*, &c.] In the provocation of the golden calf, the Levites, at God's command, inflicted punishment upon the ringleaders, without respect to rank or relation, and in a very zealous and impartial manner, (*Exod* c. xxxii. v. 26—29;) in which guilt perhaps some of their own tribe and near relations were deeply involved, whom they no more spared than other criminals, (*Luke*, c. xiv. v. 26. 2 *Cor.* c. v. v. 16;) and though men might censure such severity, God highly approved of it, and honoured those who so honoured him. This may be alluded to; but probably it particularly means that disinterestedness and deadness to all carnal affections, that indifference about the preferment or affluence of themselves or families, and that impartiality and superiority to personal respects, and the fear of man, when the command, the covenant, and the glory of God are concerned, which were required of, and found in these first priests of the Lord; and which are requisite to fit all ministers for, and incline them to choose that work, in preference to more lucrative employments, (*Mal.* c. ii. v. 7.)

V. 10. *They shall teach*, &c.] Besides the offering of sacrifices, and officiating at the sanctuary, the priests and Levites were the authorised public teachers, through the cities and villages in the several tribes of Israel. Too many of them were in after ages more attentive to their perquisites than to their duty, (as is generally the case in similar collective bodies;) and the ignorance and wickedness of the people were frequently chargeable upon their neglect and scandalous lives; and the prophets were extraordinary messengers sent from God, especially to reprove and stir them up to do their duty. However their office continued, and many pious and excellent men were found amongst them, and much good redounded to Israel from them, until the coming of Christ, and the abolition of the Mosaic institution.

V. 11. *Bless, Lord, his substance*, &c.] The Levites had no landed inheritance, but they had their maintenance out of the Lord's *dues*, so to speak, by which means their interests were connected with the support of the worship of the Lord. On this their portion Moses prays for, and predicts a special blessing from God: though some interpret this clause of their abilities for their sacred ministry, that the Lord would both enable them to, and prosper them in their work. Their faithful discharge of their office would excite many enemies against them; many would grudge and strive to defraud them of their dues; and many would be ready to vote their abolition as useless, that they might seize upon their revenues: but vengeance was here prophetically denounced against all who should hate, or rise up against them, in any manner, or any account, or for any purpose.

V. 12. *Of Benjamin*, &c.] The tribe of Benjamin had their inheritance close to mount Zion: a great part of Jerusalem, and some suppose that the temple itself, was situated within it. This was a distinguishing token of the Lord's love to them. This sanctuary was their security, whilst they kept close to it: they were covered by the protection of the Lord continually, and had his power engaged in their behalf. Accordingly this tribe adhered to Judah, and to the family of David, and the worship of God, when the ten tribes revolted and apostatized, and they became inseparably united to, and incorporated with the tribe of Judah.

V. 13, 14. *And of Joseph*, &c.] It is here predicted, that the inheritance of those tribes which descended from Joseph, should be peculiarly productive, through the blessing of God upon it. By means of the seasonable rains, and refreshing dews, those "precious things," which come down from above, and make the earth fruitful; and by means of the springs which issued from beneath, and the benign influences of the sun, all kinds of valuable productions, peculiar to each revolving moon in succession, would be abundantly afforded them.

V. 15.] The mountains and hills also would grow for their use, vines, and olives, and timber trees; and from beneath would be dug metals, and minerals, and stone for building, &c.

16 And for the precious things of the earth and fulneſs thereof; and *for* the good will of him that dwelt in the buſh; let *the bleſſing* come upon the head of Joſeph, and upon the top of the head of him that was ſeparated from his brethren.

17 His glory *is like* the firſtling of his bullock, and his horns *are like* the horns of unicorns; with them he ſhall puſh the people together to the ends of the earth: and they *are* the ten thouſands of Ephraim, and they *are* the thouſands of Manaſſeh.

18 And of Zebulun he ſaid, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and Iſſachar, in thy tents.

19 They ſhall call the people unto the mountain; there they ſhall offer ſacrifices of righteouſneſs: for they ſhall ſuck of the abundance of the ſeas, and *of* treaſures hid in the ſand.

20 And of Gad he ſaid, Bleſſed *be* he that enlargeth Gad: he dwelleth as a lion, and teareth the arm with the crown of the head.

21 And he provided the firſt part for himſelf, becauſe there, *in* a portion of the lawgiver, *was he* ſeated; and he came with the heads of the people, he executed the juſtice of the LORD, and his judgments with Iſrael.

V. 16.] In brief, their land ſhould abound in every precious production, which the earth, and it's fulneſs can afford: all which, with a variety of ſpiritual privileges, would deſcend upon theſe tribes from the good will, and peculiar kindneſs of Jehovah. The firſt appearance of the Lord to Moſes, in the burning buſh, and the promiſes, which he had thence given, and ſince ſo faithfully, and powerfully performed, were recollected with grateful pleaſure by the dying prophet; and he characterized him, who was thus to bleſs the ſons of Joſeph, from this circumſtance, that he condeſcended once, as the God of Abraham, and his ſeed, to take up his reſidence for a ſeaſon in the mean unſightly buſh; and had now taken up his more abiding reſidence in the midſt of Iſrael, who was equally unmeet for, and unworthy of ſuch an honour; but would in like manner be preſerved, and not conſumed by his gracious preſence: (*ſee notes, Exod.* c. iii. v. 2—4.)

Upon the head, &c.] Jacob's peculiar love to Joſeph, and his eminent wiſdom, piety, and uſefulneſs, inſpired the dying patriarch with copiouſneſs in bleſſing him, and his children: his memory was alſo dear to Iſrael, and to Moſes, who enlarged in his prophetical prayer for his deſcendants, with evident reference to Jacob's bleſſing, and under the ſame title of him, who "was ſeparated from his brethren:" (*notes, Gen.* c. xlviii. v. 15—22. c. xlix. v. 22—26.)

V. 17. *As the firſtling*, &c.] This implies that the deſcendants of Joſeph ſhould have the glory of being powerful in Iſrael, and victorious over their enemies. Joſeph, as if he had been the firſt-born, had the birth-right, and the double portion, inſtead of Reuben; Joſhua, under whom Canaan was conquered, in thoſe firſt wars of Iſrael, was of the tribe of Ephraim. Many proofs were given by theſe tribes of their courage, and they were ſignalized with much ſucceſs, (which is the meaning of his horns being like the horns of unicorns, with which they puſhed the people together, to the ends of the earth, or to extremities of the land.) They were alſo remarkable for their numbers, but in both reſpects Ephraim exceeded, as Jacob had foretold.

V. 18, 19, Zebulun, and Iſſachar, both ſons of Leah, were united in this bleſſing, and their inheritances lay together in the land. It was predicted that Zebulun would proſper, and conſequently "rejoice in his going out:" that is, ſay ſome, as a merchant, "for he was a haven of ſhips." (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 13.) And thus he ſucked the abundance "of the ſeas, and of the treaſures hid in the land;" that is, reaped as it were it's harveſt, or worked it's mines: and it might be ſo: and upon that ſuppoſition we may underſtand his "calling the people to the mountain," of the endeavours, which thoſe of this tribe would uſe in bringing thoſe foreigners, with whom they traded, acquainted with their religion: which forms an example worthy the imitation of merchants. But as the Zebulunites were ſituated, as is ſuppoſed, at ſome diſtance from the Mediterranean ſea, and upon the ſea of Tiberias, perhaps their fiſhery is more intended, than their foreign trade: and in this way the ſea yields a revenue more valuable, than the productions of mines of gold, and almoſt equal to the harveſt of the plain. Of Iſſachar it is foretold, that he ſhould proſper, and rejoice in his tents, as a ſhepherd tending his flock: (and we ought to rejoice, and be thankful to God, when we can live, and maintain our families by any honeſt employment however mean.) And probably of both Zebulun, and Iſſachar, that they would be remarkably zealous or the ordinances of God, in offering the ſacrifices of righteouſneſs, out of their juſt gains, at the temple of Jeruſalem, though they lived ſo far diſtant; and that they would uſe their influence, in inviting, perſuading, and prevailing upon others to accompany them to the mountain, on which Moſes foreſaw that the temple would be built. The firſt preaching of the goſpel by Chriſt and his apoſtles began in the lot of theſe tribes.

V. 20, 21. *And of Gad*, &c.] The increaſe of Gad is here predicted, as the immediate work of God, which was to be acknowledged with gratitude. When this tribe, in conjunction with Reuben, petitioned for a poſſeſſion eaſtward of Jordan, of the firſt fruits of Iſrael's conqueſts, and obtained it, "he provided the firſt part for himſelf, and "was ſeated in a portion of the lawgiver," that is, which Moſes, the lawgiver had allotted him. In this he afterwards dwelt as a lion; and when any of the ſurrounding nations attacked him, he not only tare their arm, enfeebling their power, but their head too, in bringing them under ſubjection, (*Gen.* c. xlix. v. 19. 1 *Chron.* c. v. ver. 18—22. c. xii. v. 8.) After the Gadites were eſtabliſhed in their own ſettlements, they marched boldly with the other tribes

22 And

22 And of Dan he said, Dan *is* a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan.

23 And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD; possess thou the west and the south.

24 And of Asher he said, *Let* Asher *be* blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil.

25 Thy shoes *shall be* iron and brass; and as thy days, *so shall* thy strength *be*.

26 *There is* none like unto the God of Jeshurun, *who* rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky.

27 The eternal God *is thy* refuge, and underneath *are* the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy *them*.

28 Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob *shall be* upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew.

29 Happy *art* thou, O Israel: who *is* like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the

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cross Jordan, along with the rest of Israel, to execute the justice of God upon the Canaanites.

V. 22.] Jacob had compared Dan to a serpent, (*note*, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 16, 17.) Moses makes the lion his emblem, when leaping from Bashan he irresistibly seized, and devoured his prey. In Sampson, who was of this tribe, both these emblems were realized.

V. 23.] To Naphtali was here predicted much peace, and prosperity from the special favour of the Lord: and we are told, that though the lot of this tribe lay in the north part of the land, it was so remarkably fruitful, that they generally brought their first fruits, before the other tribes. The words "possess thou the west, and the south," may be translated, "possess thou the sea on the south," that is the sea of Tiberias, which lay to the south of the lot of this tribe, and would contribute much to their prosperity.

V. 24.] Asher signifies blessed; and to him was predicted a numerous increase; with much love, and friendship from his brethren, and with most fruitful olive yards.

V. 25.] Some suppose that the former part of this verse means only, that there should be under his feet, or in his portion, productive mines of iron, and brass. But it hath long been interpreted as a proverbial expression: if a man were about to travel in rough roads, or to climb craggy precipices, or to be stationed upon a slippery eminence, it would be useful to him to have plates of iron, or brass fixed to his shoes: in like manner the Lord would prepare Asher for every difficulty, which he would meet with; and in this sense, the latter clause is an explanation of the former, and signifies, that as the day of trial requires, strength should be communicated. A most precious blessing, or promise! (2 *Cor.* c. xii. v. 9, 10.)

V. 26. *Upon the heaven*, &c.] Moses added to his prophetical prayer for each tribe in particular, a declaration of the glory of God, and the happiness of Israel in general; these were the last words, which are recorded that he spake. The God of Jeshurun rides upon the heavens; that is he comes in glorious majesty, and with irresistible force, to defend his people, and destroy their enemies; and in so doing manifests all his excellencies, his wisdom, justice, truth, and love in the most conspicuous manner.

V. 27.] The eternity, immutability, and almighty power of God form the secure refuge, and the firm support of his people, in all their dangers, and difficulties. These would secure to Israel the conquest of Canaan, and enable them to execute the divine command in the destruction of it's inhabitants: and they would secure their peaceable, and prosperous possession, so long as they continued obedient, and did not forfeit their national covenant.

V. 29. *Thine enemies*, &c.] Their enemies should be constrained to dissemble their enmity, and yield a feigned reluctant submission, being terrified by Israel's power, and success. Thus were they a most happy nation, and had most extraordinary privileges: but by their sin they forfeited all, and became most wretched. The true Israel of God possess all these blessings in their noblest sense, and have them secured to them by still better promises, and a better covenant.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The real ministers of the Lord dare not flatter men in their sins, or shun to declare the whole counsel of God, as far as they are able, even when that renders it necessary to denounce the most tremendous curses against apostates, hypocrites, and other impenitent sinners: but at the same time their hearts are full of the most compassionate, and tender love of them: and could they, whom their faithfulness exasperates, witness their melting desires, and fervent prayers in secret for them, it must abate somewhat of their resentment: (*Jer.* c. xiii. v. 13—17:) nay their most awful warnings, which are pointed with painful, and irritating conviction to the consciences of their hearers, are the effect of their tender concern for their eternal welfare: and they live, and die, praying earnestly that all the blessings of the new covenant may be communicated even to those, who have despitefully used, and persecuted them. (*Acts*, c. vii. v. 51, 52. 54. 57—60.) The holy law of God, when fully opened in it's extent, spirituality, excellency, and awful sanction; and when applied by the Holy Spirit to the sinner's awakened conscience, is still a "fiery law;" and sometimes occasions alarms, no less dismaying, and equally well grounded with those which appalled Israel, when they heard it from the midst of the fire upon mount Sinai: and how intolerable to every humbled soul would be the thought of being compelled to meet the Judge, at the consummation of all things, to receive the eternal sentence, according thereunto!—Yet in subserviency to the gospel, it is most useful to us, to shew us our need of a Saviour, and the nature, glory, and preciousness of that salvation: and when delivered unto us by our reconciled Father in Jesus Christ, as our rule, and written in our hearts by his Spirit, as our principle of evangelical obedience, it is a peculiar

shield of thy help, and who *is* the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

effect, and evidence of the Lord's love to us, and directs us in evidencing, and expressing our love to him. These are the saints of the Lord, who, being justified by faith, have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and being secure under his fatherly protection, sit down at his feet daily to receive further instruction from his words, and with the whole congregation of Jacob, acknowledge him their king, and yield him prompt, and willing obedience; grieved only "that they cannot do the things which they "would," and are not able to serve him perfectly.—The blessings, with which the Lord blessed these tribes of the redeemed, are suited to each person's case, and are sufficient for them in every situation: and whilst every one properly feels, and is blessed of God in his appointed place in the church, every one becomes a blessing to, and receives benefit from all the rest: whether appointed to the magistracy, or ministry, or in a more private situation; or whether entrusted with wealth, or called upon to labour for his bread. They, who are employed in the sacred ministry, should be tried persons, approved of God, possessed of enlightened understandings, sound judgments, and upright hearts: who, filled with zeal for the glory of God, and love to the souls of men, in the execution of their office, respect not the persons of men, nor fear their frowns: who are superior to the allurements of covetousness, and ambition, and to every undue bias of natural affection; who desire not the advancement, or affluence of their brethren, or children; but "observing the word and keeping the "covenant of God," teach the people his truths, precepts, and ordinances with all faithfulness, and diligence, pour out their fervent prayers to the Lord, to increase their ability for the ministry, and to prosper the work of their hands; (*Psal.* xc. v. 17;) and leave it to him to provide for them, and their families after them, as well as to defend them from, and plead their cause with all that rise up against them. Such ministers should always be assisted with the daily prayers of all the Lord's people; for they greatly need, and highly value them: nor should we ever forget to unite our supplications to God, that he would by his grace render all, who are ordained to this important service, like-minded to those, whom Moses here described; and that he would send forth increasing numbers of such "labourers into his harvest; for the harvest is great, but "the *labourers* are very few;" and that he would continue such a ministry through successive generations, long after we are dead and gone, even to the latest period of time. To be situated near the lively ordinances, is a precious gift from the Lord upon his beloved; and they, who value, and improve such a privilege, will find their situation so secure, and comfortable, that they will not consent to exchange it from any inducements of temporal convenience, emolument, or indulgence. We should thankfully receive, as from the blessing of the Lord, those valuable productions, which the fruitful earth yields, through the successive seasons of the year, by the genial influences of the heavens above: but those good gifts, which come down from the Father of lights, through the rising of the sun of righteousness, and the pouring out of his Spirit like fructifying rain, as the tokens of his special love, who as the covenant God of Israel, deigned to dwell in the burning bush, are infinitely more precious; and they all belong to those, who are separated and distinguished from others, by their faith, and holiness: nor shall their memory fail of being honoured, or their posterity remain unnoticed, who have been remarkably pious, and useful in their generation. Happy are they, who through the blessing of God on any honest occupation, are not only enabled to maintain themselves, but have a heart to consecrate their gain unto the Lord; who shrink not from labour, and freely incur expence, in offering the spiritual sacrifices of righteousness, which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ: and who zealously improve every opportunity, and advantage to bring others to join with them in such a reasonable service. Having chosen, and secured, through the grace of God, "the first part "for themselves," even "that good part, which shall "never be taken from them," what can they do so becoming, and profitable, as to assist others in seeking, and obtaining the same inheritance? But in thus decidedly taking the Lord's part against his enemies, they must expect, that opposition will be made against them, and they will need to unite the boldness of the lion, the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove in their character, and conduct. However being "satisfied "with the favour, and filled with the blessing of the Lord," and "being acceptable to their brethren," and made useful to their fellow-sinners; they may well bear this reproach, and it's effects: for all shall be sanctified unto the true believer, and if their way be rough, their feet shall be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and their strength in every case proportioned to the emergency. But indeed no words can express the glorious excellencies of the God of Jeshurun, or the privileges, and felicity of his believing people. The righteousness, whereby they are justified, is an everlasting righteousness, and their salvation shall be for ever: being united unto Jesus Christ by a living faith, and the communication of his Holy Spirit, they are already "saved in the Lord:" they are his own children, and the eternal God is their present refuge; his everlasting arms form their unfailing support; all his perfections are engaged in their behalf; he will hasten to their assistance with invincible force, whenever their enemies assault them, and silence all the accusations of their malicious slanderers; he will guard their peace, and character, as well as the life of their souls; he will choose their inheritance for them, and put them in possession of it: there shall they dwell alone, when their inward foes shall all be slain; and the devil, and his angels, and servants driven away into everlasting punishment. There shall they be filled with the love of their God and Saviour towards them, and be perfected in their love to him, and to each other, and all their employment shall be praise, and grateful adoration: there will the felicity of every happy inhabitant reciprocally enhance that of all the rest; nor shall any emulation remain, but which shall most love, and glorify the supreme object of their united affections, and adoration, and the source of all their joys. God help us to seek, and set our affections on these things, which are above, and to detach our souls from earthly, polluted, perishing objects. That we may not

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Contains, 1st. Moses ascending the mountain, and surveying the promised land, v. 1—4. *2d. His death, burial, and age, and Israel's mourning for him, v.* 5—8. *3d. Joshua's wisdom, and succession, with an acknowledgment, that no prophet like unto Moses had arisen in Israel, v.* 9—12.

AND Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that *is* over against Jericho: and the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan,

2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea,

3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar.

4 And the LORD said unto him, This *is* the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see *it* with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD.

6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.

7 And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.

8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses were ended.

9 And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the LORD commanded Moses.

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have our lot with Israel's foes in the regions of darkness, and despair; but with the Israel of God in the realms of love, and bliss ineffable.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXIV.] V. 1. *And Moses*, &c.] The last chapter closed the words, and writings of Moses, and this chapter must have been added by some other hand; but whether by Joshua, or by Samuel, or some later prophet, is not agreed: perhaps the last verses were added as late as the days of Ezra, after the captivity: but it is not material, the author is the same, though he was pleased to change his amanuensis. Moses appeared reluctant to leave his work, but that being finished, he manifested no unwillingness to die. He was now brought to acquiesce in the Lord's refusal to him of an entrance into Canaan, and appears to have been animated with the immediate prospect of glory, loosening all earthly attachments, and adding to his strength, and spirits in ascending the mountain, where he was to put off the tabernacle of his body: and it seems probable that he ascended, and died without a witness of, or companion to close his eyes in death. His mounting upward to die might intimate that the believer's dropping the body is the soul's enlargement, and ascension to glory. Abarim (ch. xxxii. v. 49,) is supposed to be a ridge of mountains, Nebo the highest mountain in that ridge, and Pisgah the summit of that mountain.

And the Lord shewed him, &c.] His sight was miraculously assisted in taking a distinct, and deliberate view of the promised land, as it was afterwards divided amongst the tribes of Israel: this view would not only gratify Moses, in his endeared affection for the people; but was a type of those views of glory, which reconcile the believer to dissolution.

V. 5. *According to*, &c.] As a true servant of the Lord he was obedient unto death, and as willingly obeyed this as any foregoing command of God, though it seemed harder. In this he resembled Jesus Christ: but he died in honour, in peace, and in the most easy manner; the Saviour upon the ignominious, and torturing cross!

V. 6. *He buried him*, &c.] Perhaps by the ministration of angels, but not by any human help, the Lord buried the body of Moses, and concealed it from the Israelites, that it might not be an occasion to them of superstition, and idolatry: and as they were not able to venerate the reliques of their law giver, they never were guilty, that we find, of that species of superstition, which hath so long disgraced the profession of Christianity: (*Jude*, v. 9.) When Moses died the Lord buried him; but when Christ died, he was raised from the dead; for the Mosaic dispensation was to be superseded by the Christian, which is to endure to the end of time.

V. 7. *And Moses*, &c.] The life of Moses was remarkably divided into three forty years, the first in the rank of a courtier, the second as a shepherd in the wilderness, and the third as a law giver, and king in Jeshurun. But though he lived so much longer than the most of his cotemporaries, (*Psalm*, xc. v. 10,) he had experienced no failure in his faculties, or senses; but died, not by the course of nature, but according to the will of God, when his work was finished. Thus also Christ died in the vigour of life. Some suppose that the shining of Moses' face also continued to his death.

V. 8. *Wept for Moses*, &c.] They not only paid him the customary honour: but after his death became sensible of their loss; and perhaps even those sincerely lamented him, who had spoken of stoning him, when he had opposed their lusts.

10 And there aroſe not a prophet ſince in Iſrael like unto Moſes, whom the LORD knew face to face;

11 In all the ſigns and the wonders which the LORD ſent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his ſervants, and to all his land,

12 And in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moſes ſhewed in the ſight of all Iſrael.

V. 10. *There aroſe not*, &c.] To the time of the perſon who inſerted theſe verſes, no prophet had ariſen in all reſpects qualified and honoured of God, as Moſes had been; nor did any one ariſe until the coming of Chriſt; who exceeded him, as the Son doth the ſervant; and not only was known of the Father face to face, but came forth from the boſom of the Father, to reveal him, and his truth, and ſalvation to ſinful men.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We muſt ere long be called into the eternal world; our wiſdom and happineſs therefore conſiſt in habitual readineſs for, and expectation of that ſolemn event: and if our hearts have experienced the ſalvation of God, we are prepared, and ſhould be willing to depart in peace, whenever it pleaſes him. To ſtand with our loins girded, diligently doing our proper work, and waiting the ſummons of the Lord, will beſt enſure thoſe views of heavenly reſt, and thoſe foretaſtes of joy which gild the proſpect, and chear the heart of believers in paſſing that laſt gloomy vale. Nor need we be anxious about the preſence of beloved relatives, or the ſolace of the Lord's people, or miniſters, in our dying moments; even ſhould our departure be ſudden, alone, or amongſt ſtrangers, the love and preſence of the Lord will ſupply all that we need deſire. Nor ought we to be anxious where our bones ſhall be diſpoſed of in God's providence: the burial of Chriſt hath conſecrated every ſpot where a believer is interred, and his omnipotent voice will at length raiſe us incorruptible. But we ſhould fear leaving any occaſion of ſin to the ſurvivors, after our deceaſe; for the enmity and envy that follow the Lord's ſervants whilſt they live, are frequently changed into ſuperſtitious regard for them after their death; and even their miſtakes will then be eſpouſed, and their failings imitated: and many eminent ſaints, now in glory, could they again reviſit this lower world, would embrace that opportunity of burying, or burning, or expunging ſome paſſages out of writings which they have left behind, perhaps without intention of being made public, which ſatan hath afterwards made uſe of as an handle againſt ſome part of divine truth, far beſide the intention of the writer, yet under the venerable ſanction of his eſtabliſhed reputation. It behoves them therefore to be as cautious in this reſpect, as the Lord was in concealing the body of Moſes. Whilſt reſpect is paid to the memory of the deceaſed, the living ſervants of God ſhould not be undervalued: for though in ſome reſpects inferior to their predeceſſors, God will qualify them for their work; and his authority ſhould be honoured in them; and the meaſure of wiſdom and holineſs which he has given them, ſhould be eſteemed and regarded. And as Jeſus ever liveth to take care of his own cauſe, we need not mourn for the moſt eminent men, as thoſe who have no hope, that the loſs ſhould be made up to the church of God.

Thus have we been carried through this diviſion of the ſacred Scripture: may the Lord pardon all that hath been faulty, and prevent every ill effect, if any thing erroneous hath been advanced! and if uſefulneſs hath been conferred on any part thereof, may he have all the praiſe. With truth and gratitude the writer can ſay, that his labour hath been pleaſant, and profitable to his own ſoul; and he would continue to beg the reader's inceſſant prayers, for further aſſiſtance in the remaining part of the arduous and important undertaking: that freſh light may ſhine into his mind, and upon the ſubject, as the work proceeds; and that ere it come to a cloſe, ſomewhat leſs unworthy of the public notice, and more fitted for real uſefulneſs, may through him be communicated to the church of God.

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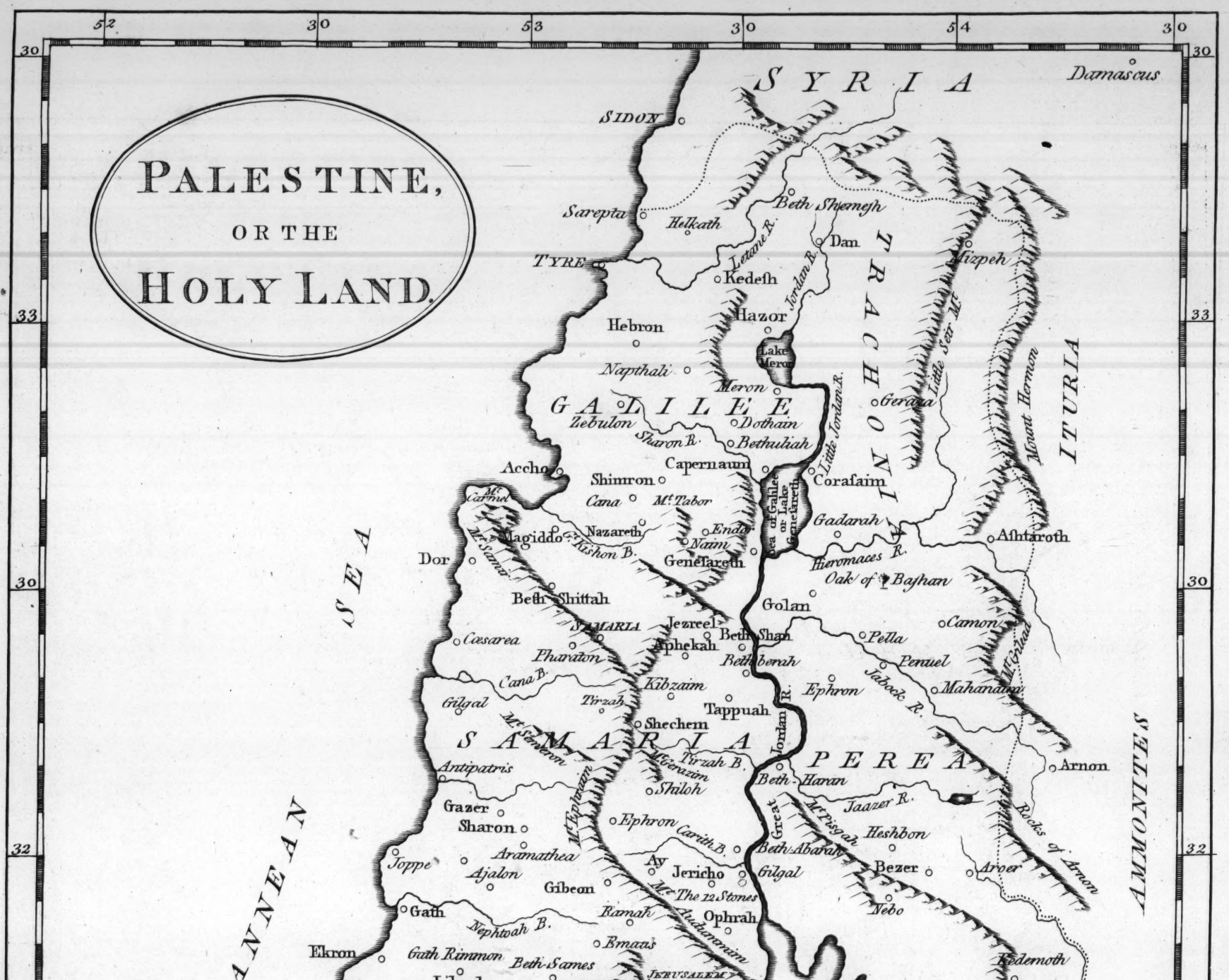
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OR THE
HOLY LAND.
SYRIA
Damascus
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Sarepta
Helkath
Beth Shemesh
Dan
Mizpeh
TYRE
Kedesh
Hazor
Jordan R.
Hebron
Lake Meron
Naphtali
Meron
GALILEE
Zebulon
Sharon R.
Dothain
Bethuliah
Capernaum
Little Jordan R.
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Little Sea of
Mount Hermon
ITURIA
Accho
Shimron
Corafaim
Mt Carmel
Cana
Mt Tabor
Sea of Galilee or Lake Genesareth
Gadarah
Nazareth
Endor
Naim
Magiddo
Gr Kishon B.
Mt Samaria
Dor
Genesareth
Hieromaces R.
Ashtaroth
Oak of Bashan
Beth Shittah
Golan
SEA
SAMARIA
Jezreel
Beth Shan
Pella
Camon
Cæsarea
Aphekah
Pharaton
Beth Aberah
Penuel
Mt Gilead
Cana B.
Kibzaim
Ephron
Jabock R.
Mahanaim
Gilgal
Tirzah
Tappuah
Shechem
Jordan R.
Mt Ebal
Mt Gerizim
Tirzah B.
PEREA
Antipatris
Beth-Haran
Arnon
Shiloh
Gazer
Jaazer R.
Mt Ephraim
Great
Mt Pisgah
Rocks of Arnon
Sharon
Ephron
Carith B.
Heshbon
Aramathea
Beth Abarah
Joppe
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Jericho
Bezer
Aroer
Ajalon
Gilgal
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Mt The 12 Stones
Nebo
Gath
Ramah
Ophrah
Nephtoah B.
Emaus
Ekron
Gath Rimmon
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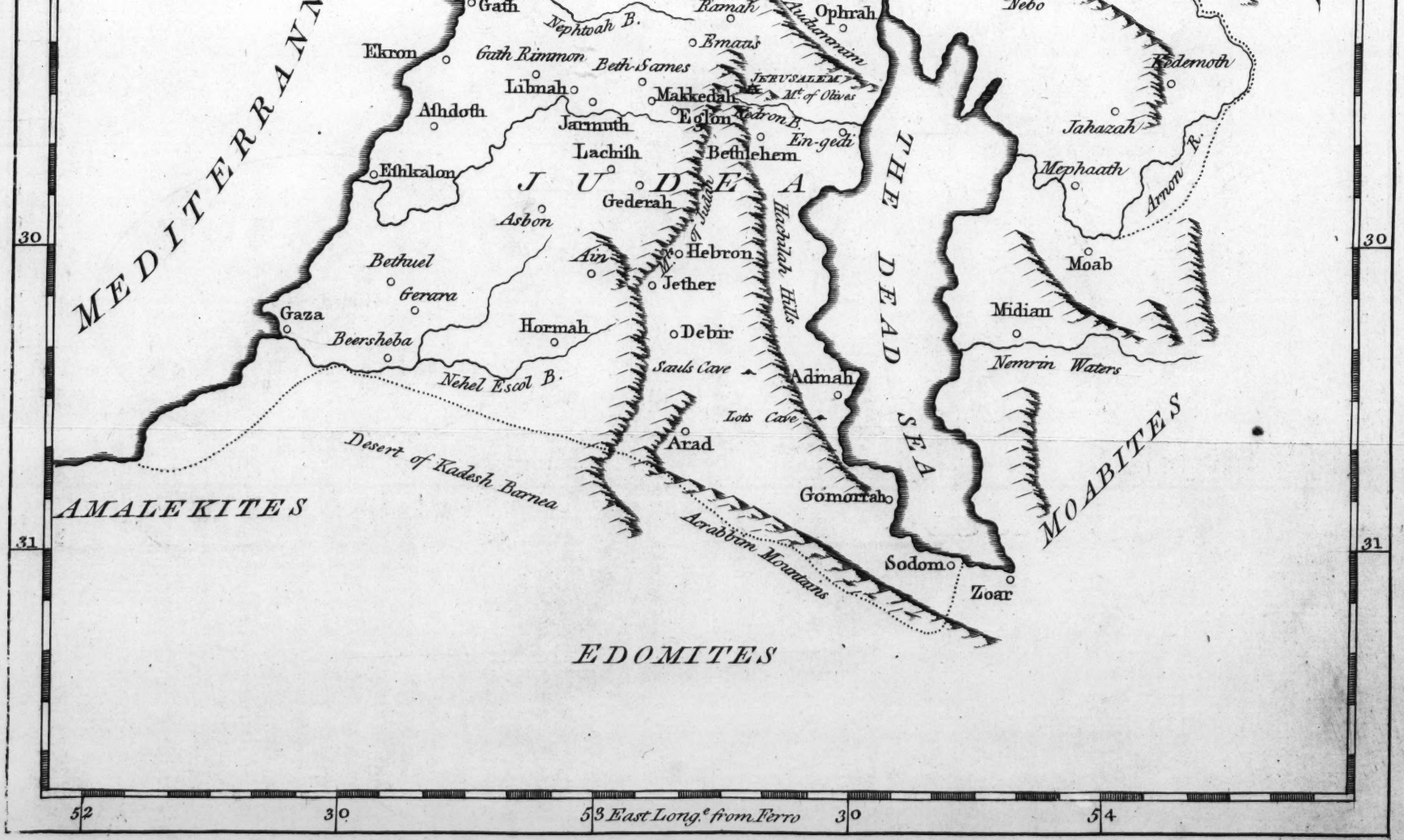

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THE BOOK OF
JOSHUA.

It is not certain who was the penman of this Book; but it is moſt probable, that the ſubſtance of it was written by him, whoſe name it bears, though ſeveral paſſages appear to have been added after Joſhua's deceaſe; perhaps by Phinehas, or ſome other perſon, who was employed in connecting the memorials, which he left behind him. Therein is contained the hiſtory of Iſrael's paſſing over into the land of Canaan, and conquering, and dividing it, under the command of Joſhua; and their conſequent hiſtory until his death: but how long that event was poſterior to the death of Moſes is not eaſily aſcertained; perhaps not more than ſixteen or ſeventeen years. The power, and truth of God in fulfilling his promiſes to Iſrael, and in executing his threatened vengeance upon the Canaanites, are therein wonderfully diſplayed: which ſhould teach every reader to expect the accompliſhment of the moſt tremendous curſes in the word of God upon impenitent ſinners, and to ſeek refuge in Chriſt Jeſus; and every believer to wait patiently in the path of duty, for the performance of his largeſt and kindeſt promiſes; and confidently to expect it, notwithſtanding difficulties, and delays. We ſhall alſo meet in this hiſtory with many things worthy of our imitation; and ſome things, which we muſt cenſure and ſhun. Inſtructive proofs of the power, and triumphs of faith will throughout attract our attention; and many typical references to Chriſt, and the goſpel, eſpecially in the character, and public ſervices of Joſhua, will excite a grateful recollection in the believer's mind: whilſt the cloſing admonitions, and exhortations are as applicable to us, as ever they were to Iſrael.

Before Chriſt 1451.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua confirmed, and encouraged of the Lord, in his ſucceſſion to Moſes, v. 1—9. *2d. Entering upon his charge, and giving orders relative to the paſſage of Iſrael over Jordan, v.* 10—15. *3d. Recognized as their commander by the people, with promiſes of ſubjection, and obedience, v.* 16—18.

NOW after the death of Moſes the ſervant of the LORD, it came to paſs, that the LORD ſpake unto Joſhua the ſon of Nun, Moſes' miniſter, ſaying,

Before Chriſt 1451.

2 Moſes my ſervant is dead; now therefore ariſe, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, *even* to the children of Iſrael.

3 Every place that the ſole of your foot ſhall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I ſaid unto Moſes.

4 From the wilderneſs and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great ſea toward the going down of the ſun, ſhall be your coaſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 2. *Ariſe, go over,* &c.] It is not likely that the Iſraelites paſſed over Jordan, before the thirty days of mourning were expired: but this encouraging viſit of the Lord to Joſhua might be previous thereto, as alſo the ſending out of the ſpies. (c. ii. v. 1.) The Moſaic diſpenſation was introductory to that of the goſpel, and muſt expire, before that could appear in it's full glory: the moral law is exceedingly uſeful to the church of God, and to every believer; but only the goſpel can conduct him to the heavenly inheritance; and until we are dead to the law, as to any dependance on it, or expectation from it, in the concern of juſtification, we cannot be eſtabliſhed in our privileges as believers in Chriſt. Theſe things are ſhadowed forth in this typical tranſaction of Moſes' death, ere Joſhua (that is Jeſus) could lead the tribes of Iſrael to Canaan's reſt.

V. 4. *The river Euphrates,* &c.] In the times of David, and Solomon, the nation of Iſrael poſſeſſed, or ruled

5 There ſhall not any man be able to ſtand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moſes, *ſo* I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forſake thee.

6 Be ſtrong and of a good courage; for unto this people ſhalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I ſware unto their fathers to give them.

7 Only be thou ſtrong, and very courageous, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do according to all the law which Moſes my ſervant commanded thee: turn not from it *to* the right hand or *to* the left, that thou mayeſt proſper whitherſoever thou goeſt.

8 This book of the law ſhall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou ſhalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayeſt obſerve to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou ſhalt make thy way proſperous, and then thou ſhalt have good ſucceſs.

9 Have not I commanded thee? Be ſtrong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou diſmayed: for the LORD thy God *is* with thee whitherſoever thou goeſt.

10 Then Joſhua commanded the officers of the people, ſaying,

11 Paſs through the hoſt, and command the people, ſaying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye ſhall paſs over this Jordan, to go in to poſſeſs the land which the LORD your God giveth you to poſſeſs it.

12 And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manaſſeh, ſpake Joſhua, ſaying,

13 Remember the word which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD commanded you, ſaying, The LORD your God hath given you reſt, and hath given you this land.

14 Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, ſhall remain in the land which Moſes gave you on this ſide Jordan; but ye ſhall paſs before your brethren armed, all the mighty men of valour, and help them,

15 Until the LORD hath given your brethren reſt, as *he hath given* you, and they alſo have poſſeſſed the land which the LORD your God giveth them; then ye ſhall return unto the land of your poſſeſſion, and enjoy it, which Moſes the LORD's ſervant gave you on this ſide Jordan, toward the ſun-riſing.

16 And they anſwered Joſhua, ſaying, All that thou commandeſt us we will do, and whitherſoever thou ſendeſt us we will go.

17 According as we hearkened unto Moſes in all things, ſo will we hearken unto thee: only the LORD thy God be with thee, as he was with Moſes.

18 Whoſoever *he be* that doth rebel againſt

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over all thoſe countries, which are mentioned in this grant, or nearly. But in general, by reaſon of their ſin, they attained not to the enjoyment of all the proſperity, which was engaged to them *conditionally* in their national covenant. And though Chriſtians are under a better covenant, ſecured by better promiſes, yet very few, if any of them, live in this world in the actual enjoyment of all that peace, and conſolation, that is contained in the promiſe; and this is the effect of their remaining unbelief, ſloth, and attachment to the world.

V. 5. *I will not fail*, &c.] The application of this promiſe by the apoſtle, (*Heb.* c. xiii. v. 5, 6,) encourages us to expect the performance of every promiſe in the Scripture to ourſelves; if we are real Chriſtians, and walking in the Lord's ways, and if they ſuit our caſe, and if their accompliſhment would conduce to our real advantage.

V. 7. *That thou mayeſt*, &c.] As the ſucceſſor of ſo eminent a ſervant of God, as Moſes, as ruler over ſo numerous, and untractable a people, as Iſrael; and as employed in ſo perilous an undertaking, as the conqueſt of Canaan, much of the ſtrength of grace, and courage of faith would be needful to Joſhua; that he might perſevere in the path of duty, unmoved by terrors, difficulties, or perſuaſions, and neither turn to the right hand, or to the left.

V. 8. *This book*, &c.] By conſtant meditation the good treaſure of God's word was to be depoſited in his heart; that from that abundance his mouth might ſpeak, as occaſion required, for the people's conviction, direction, or encouragement.

V. 11. *Prepare you victuals*, &c.] The manna had not yet ceaſed to fall; but they probably had uſed more of other proviſion, after they had taken poſſeſſion of the kingdoms of Sihon, and Og. And the words in general may mean, prepare all things neceſſary for the expedition. This ſeems to have been commanded after the return of the ſpies, as recorded in the ſubſequent chapter, who were abſent from them more than three days.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The removal of thoſe, who have been faithful, and uſeful in their generation, ſhould quicken their ſurvivors to double earneſtneſs, and activity; both to make up, as much as in them lieth, the public loſs, and to prepare for their own diſſolution. (*Eccleſ.* c. ix. v. 10.) Every one of the Lord's ſervants having performed the work aſſigned them, retire to reſt, and others are raiſed up to ſucceed

thy commandment, and will not hearken unto thy words in all that thou commandeſt him, he ſhall be put to death: only be ſtrong, and of a good courage.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. Two ſpies ſent by Joſhua, entering Jericho, protected by Rahab, and informed of the terror which had ſeized the Canaanites, v. 1—11. 2d. Her agreement with them for her own ſafety, and that of her friends, v. 12—21. 3d. Their preſervation, return, and report to Joſhua, v. 22—24.

AND Joſhua the ſon of Nun ſent out of Shittim two men, to ſpy ſecretly, ſaying, Go view the land, even Jericho. And they went, and came into an harlot's houſe named Rahab, and lodged there.

2 And it was told the king of Jericho, ſaying, Behold, there came men in hither to-night of the children of Iſrael, to ſearch out the country.

3 And the king of Jericho ſent unto Rahab, ſaying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine houſe: for they be come to ſearch out all the country.

4 And the woman took the two men, and

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them, until their ſervices alſo are finiſhed: and generally, they who have in the cloſe of life been moſt honoured, have been previouſly ſubmiſſive, and diligent in a more obſcure ſituation. No conſciouſneſs of inferiority, of inſufficiency, or even of unworthineſs, ſhould induce us to decline the ſervice, which is allotted to us; for the ſame fulneſs, whence prophets, and apoſtles received all their ſufficiency, is open for us alſo; and in our more limited ſpheres, and for our leſſer ſervices, we have a warrant to expect, that the Lord will be with us, as he was with Moſes, or Paul; tho' we muſt not imagine that he will ſpeak to us face to face, or give us a viſion of the third heavens, and thoſe unutterable things, which are there diſplayed. Nor ought we to fear any oppoſition, or difficulty, whilſt the promiſes of God are in our hands, and we have received faith to embrace them, and a heart to plead them in prayer. That man has need to be ſtrong in faith, and very courageous, who in this evil world would do his whole duty, and not turn aſide to the right hand, or to the left, on account of any temptation, or through fear of any conſequence whatſoever: but when the Lord commands us to be ſtrong, and courageous, we ſhould conſider the precept, as a memento, to cry earneſtly to him that he may give us all neceſſary ſtrength and courage; and in this dependance we may go forth aſſured that nothing can ſtand before, or impede our courſe; for the Lord will not fail us, nor forſake us.—But warranted confidence is always connected with proportionable humility, and conſcientiouſneſs: and genuine courage chiefly appears in daring to do our duty, though cenſured by misjudging friends, or threatened by malicious enemies. And that we may be ſecured from deception, and be aſſured that we are reproached or perſecuted, not for following our own fancies, but for obeying God's commands, we muſt endeavour by daily meditation, and prayer, to obtain that digeſted acquaintance with the precepts, as well as the promiſes of God's word, which may render our path of duty evident to our own minds, and enable us to explain our reaſons, and motives ſatisfactorily to the candid, and pious, when occaſion requires. Then will our hearts be encouraged in every circumſtance; and he, whoſe commands we are attempting to obey, will effectually ſupport us, and perhaps will influence the hearts of thoſe to favour us, who once were our enemies. However when we act by his commiſſion, and according to his inſtructions, he will find us all needful aſſiſtance: and when perſons of different ranks, and in due ſubordination, harmoniouſly concur in endeavours to promote the welfare of the church, and with one accord ſeek the preſence, and bleſſing of the Lord therein, the proſpect of ſucceſs is very pleaſing; and they who oppoſe ſuch efforts merit the ſevereſt puniſhment. May the Lord help us then to truſt in him; to ſubmit to thoſe, whom he hath placed over us, and to aſſiſt them with our prayers, and in every way that we are able; and to be helpful to one another in the moſt diſintereſted manner, and with the moſt exact punctuality to our engagements! And eſpecially may he enable us to ſubmit to the authority, and enliſt under the banner of the Captain of our ſalvation; and to be obedient to his commands, and to fight the good fight of faith, in concurrence with all that truſt in and love his name, and in oppoſition to all within and without, which oppoſe his authority. For whoever refuſes to obey him muſt inevitably be deſtroyed from amongſt his people.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. v. 1.] We have no reaſon to charge Joſhua with timidity or diſtruſt in this tranſaction. It might be very uſeful to him, as commander, to learn many things reſpecting the ſituation of Jericho, and the diſpoſition of its inhabitants, which might be known by ordinary means, as well as by immediate revelation. The ſpies were only two, not men of eminent rank, but of approved intrepidity and faith, ſent by Joſhua to ſearch out Jericho and its confines, and to bring their report to him, and not to the congregation. Probably it was done by divine intimation, as they were evidently guided and protected in a remarkable manner, and many important good conſequences reſulted from their enterprize.

An harlot's houſe, &c.] There can be no doubt but this woman had been an harlot; but probably ſhe had before this altered her courſe of life: and as ſhe was afterwards married to a prince in Iſrael, and ſo brought into the line of the Meſſiah, ſhe could not have been very old at this time. Though it is probable that ſhe kept an houſe of entertainment for travellers, from her alledging, that two men had indeed come to her, of whom ſhe knew nothing; yet it is evident, from the whole narrative, that the ſpies were led thither by the ſpecial providence of God, and that ſhe entertained them out of regard to Iſrael and Iſrael's God, and neither for lucre, or for any evil purpoſe.

V. 4. *And hid them*, &c.] Theſe words might be rendered hid

hid them, and ſaid thus, There came men unto me, but I wiſt not whence they *were*.

5 And it came to paſs *about the time* of ſhutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out; whither the men went I wot not: purſue after them quickly; for ye ſhall overtake them.

6 But ſhe had brought them up to the roof of the houſe, and hid them with the ſtalks of flax which ſhe had laid in order upon the roof.

7 And the men purſued after them the way to Jordan, unto the fords: and as ſoon as they which purſued after them were gone out, they ſhut the gate.

8 And before they were laid down, ſhe came up unto them upon the roof;

9 And ſhe ſaid unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint becauſe of you.

10 For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red ſea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that *were* on the other ſide Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly deſtroyed.

11 And as ſoon as we had heard *theſe things*, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, becauſe of you: for the LORD your God, he *is* God in heaven above, and in earth beneath.

12 Now therefore I pray you, ſwear unto me by the LORD, ſince I have ſhewed you kindneſs, that ye will alſo ſhew kindneſs unto my father's houſe; and give me a true token:

13 And *that* ye will ſave alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my ſiſters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death.

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dered, "had hid them." It is evident, that Rahab was acquainted with their buſineſs, before ſhe received the meſſage from the king; and ſenſible of the danger to which they would be expoſed, when every one was upon the watch, being acquainted with the ſituation and purpoſes of Iſrael, ſhe had previouſly concealed them. It has been much conteſted, whether Rahab ſinned in the anſwer which ſhe returned to the meſſengers, and in her manner of conducting this buſineſs. Some think her treachery to her king and country cannot be vindicated: but as ſhe was influenced "by faith" in the whole tranſaction, (*Heb.* c. xi. v. 31,) and firmly believed, that the God of heaven had devoted the Canaanites to be utterly deſtroyed by the Iſraelites, ſhe muſt either have ſided with Iſrael, and Iſrael's God, againſt her country, or have periſhed with it, in a hopeleſs conteſt with the Almighty: in this caſe ſhe would have proved, that her faith was dead and uſeleſs; therefore in her circumſtances ſhe could not act otherwiſe, if ſhe poſſeſſed true and living faith, (*James*, c. ii. v. 26.) Every one, who is truly converted, equally renounces the alliance of the Lord's enemies, however nearly connected, and muſt refuſe to join with them in their rebellion againſt God, and their perſecution of his ſervants. But as no nation can poſſibly produce ſuch an authenticated commiſſion from God to deſtroy another nation, as Iſrael had to deſtroy the Canaanites: ſo Rahab's conduct in uniting intereſts with the enemies and invaders of her country, though it was her abſolute duty, cannot now be drawn into precedent. In reſpect of the falſehood which ſhe uttered, were not a general queſtion of ſome importance, and of great difficulty, involved in it, it were moſt obvious to reſolve it into her ignorance of the divine law; and to ſay, that the principle and ſubſtance of her conduct, being good, were accepted, and that the ſin which incidentally mixed with it, was pardoned. But if it were her indiſpenſable duty to protect the ſpies, and there were no other conceivable way of doing it, it ſeems not abſolutely neceſſary to condemn her conduct *in toto*. (2 *Sam.* c. xvi. v. 18, 19. c. xvii. v. 20. 2 *Kings*, c. vi. v. 19.) Stratagems of war, and other impoſitions upon determined enemies and perſecutors, are not abſolutely condemned in Scripture, though not conſiſtent with exact veracity. And if deception could in any caſe be juſtifiable, we can ſcarce imagine one in which it would be more ſo, than this was. This however is certain, that in no caſe, except one equally extraordinary, ought this example to be imitated. Her acknowledgment, that two men had come to her, gave credit to her latter aſſertion: and her apparent earneſtneſs to have them apprehended, prevented ſuſpicion, and tended to ſend the purſuers out of the way.

V. 7. *Unto the fords*, &c.] By theſe fords the ſpies had probably paſſed the river, and afterwards returned the ſame way, though they were not proper for the paſſage of the whole multitude of the Iſraelites, eſpecially when Jordan overflowed its banks, (chap. iii. v. 15.)

V. 8—13.] We have here Rahab's faith, and its fruits, which are highly celebrated in the New Teſtament, and muſt be briefly conſidered. She had heard of the miracles that God had wrought for, and the promiſes that he had made to Iſrael; and whilſt the ſame report exaſperated or intimidated the other inhabitants of the land, ſhe was led to believe, that Jehovah was the only true God, in heaven, and earth; and that the Iſraelites were his only accepted worſhippers; that his promiſes would certainly be fulfilled, and his threatenings take effect; and that there was no way of eſcape, but by reconciliation to him, and uniting intereſts with his people. Of all theſe truths, Balaam ſeems to have been convinced in his judgment, as well as to have profeſſed them with his lips; tho' his ambitious, and covetous *heart* abhorred them, and he perſiſted in his enmity to God, and Iſrael unto his death. But the conduct of Rahab proved, that ſhe had the genuine principle of divine faith,

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Richter del. Reynolds sc.

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14 And the men anſwered her, Our life for your's, if ye utter not this our buſineſs. And it ſhall be, when the LORD hath given us the land, that we will deal kindly and truly with thee.

15 Then ſhe let them down by a cord through the window: for her houſe *was* upon the town-wall, and ſhe dwelt upon the wall.

16 And ſhe ſaid unto them, Get ye to the mountain, leſt the purſuers meet you; and hide yourſelves there three days, until the purſuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.

17 And the men ſaid unto her, We *will be* blameleſs of this thine oath which thou haſt made us ſwear.

18 Behold, *when* we come into the land, thou ſhalt bind this line of ſcarlet thread in the window which thou didſt let us down by: and thou ſhalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's houſehold, home unto thee.

19 And it ſhall be, *that* whoſoever ſhall go out of the doors of thy houſe into the ſtreet, his blood *ſhall be* upon his head, and we *will be* guiltleſs: and whoſoever ſhall be with thee in the houſe, his blood *ſhall be* on our head, if *any* hand be upon him.

20 And if thou utter this our buſineſs, then we will be quit of thine oath which thou haſt made us to ſwear.

21 And ſhe ſaid, According unto your words ſo *be* it. And ſhe ſent them away, and they departed: and ſhe bound the ſcarlet line in the window.

22 And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the purſuers were returned. And the purſuers ſought *them* throughout all the way, but found *them* not.

23 So the two men returned, and deſcended from the mountain, and paſſed over, and came to Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and told him all *things* that befel them.

24 And they ſaid unto Joſhua, Truly the

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which would diſpoſe her to receive further information concerning the Meſſias, and the way of acceptance through thoſe ſacrifices, which typified his atonement, when proper inſtruction was afforded her. By that faith, which ſhe had already received, ſhe renounced all her intereſts amongſt, and connexion with the devoted Canaanites; and ſhe ventured her life, and expoſed herſelf to the imminent danger of the moſt cruel tortures, in expreſſing her love for the people of God; without aſking any other recompenſe, than preſervation for herſelf and her near relations, when the word of God received it's expected accompliſhment. That very regard to her relatives, who were not ſenſible of their own danger, was a genuine effect of true grace: ſhe gave the ſpies alſo all the information, which ſhe could, and all, that they wanted; and ſhe deemed the ſolemn oath of Jehovah a ſufficient ſecurity for the performance of their engagements. When with great attention, hazard, and trouble ſhe had diſmiſſed them with proper counſel, ſhe performed her promiſe of ſecrecy; and at the appointed time collected her relatives into her houſe, as had been agreed: and thus without reſerve joined intereſts with the people of God: (*Ruth*, c. i. v. 15—18.) The whole of her conduct manifeſted a reverential fear of the Lord, an entire belief of his word, a deſire, and hope of his favour, an affection for his people, and a diſpoſition to forſake, venture, and ſuffer any thing for his ſake. Multitudes, who had ſeen all the Lord's miracles, and had had every advantage of inſtruction in the camp of Iſrael, continued unbelievers; very few indeed manifeſted ſuch ſtrong faith, ſuch holy fear, ſuch confidence in God, and ſuch a diſpoſition to labour, and ſuffer for his ſake, as the inhabitant of accurſed Jericho, who had only heard a vague report of the wonderful works of the Lord for Iſrael. With theſe things in our minds we cannot doubt, but her faith had before this been accompanied with repentance, and the forſaking of thoſe ſinful practices, from which ſhe derived the name of "the harlot;" which yet is given her, where her faith, and works are moſt celebrated, as illuſtrating the great evangelical truth, "that where ſin "hath abounded, grace much more aboundeth."

17. *We will be blameleſs*, &c.] As men, who reverenced an oath, and dreaded the guilt of perjury, they deſired to have the terms of the agreement, to which they acceded in the name of Iſrael, preciſely ſtated, and exactly explained.

V. 18, 19.] That houſe, which had protected the ſpies of Iſrael, was ſelected as the refuge of thoſe, who were found in it, when others were utterly deſtroyed. Though the Iſraelites were forbidden to form any alliance with the nations of Canaan; yet individuals, who came cordially into their intereſts, might be ſpared, eſpecially in requital of ſpecial favours ſhewn them. This paſſage reminds us of the blood-beſprinkled door, which was the ſecurity, when the deſtroying angel was ſlaying the firſt-born of Egypt. And both of them call to our remembrance the ſinner's ſecurity under the protection of the atoning blood; having fled thereto for refuge, from the wrath, and curſe of an offended God.

V. 23. *So the two men*, &c.] Having been thus wonderfully protected, and reſtored in ſafety, the ſpies make no mention of the ſtrict watch, which was kept by the inhabitants of Jericho, nor of their narrow eſcape: But reported the diſmay of their enemies; not only as an encouraging circumſtance, but as a token that the Lord had delivered them into their hands, having thus begun

LORD hath delivered into our hands all the land: for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. Orders given, and preparation made for Israel's passage over Jordan, v. 1—6. 2d. The Lord encouraging, and directing Joshua, and Joshua the people with relation thereto, v. 7—13. 3d. At the approach of the priest's bearing the ark, the waters of Jordan divided; and whilst they stood in the midst, the whole multitude passing over, v. 14—17.

AND Joshua rose early in the morning; and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they passed over.

2 And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;

to perform his promises in that behalf. (*Deut.* c. xi. v. 25.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the greatest, wisest, and best of men must on many occasions make use, as it were, of the eyes, and ears of others, it is of vast importance, that those should be selected, whose veracity, and fidelity may be depended on. The Lord hath "a remnant according to the election of grace," in many unlikely situations, and of such, who have *previously* born very bad characters; for he will glorify his mercy, and grace, in saving some sinners of every kind. The reproach of former sins, which rests upon the reputation of atrocious offenders, after they are pardoned, ought to be patiently submitted to, and they should thence take occasion to renew their repentance; and to pour out their earnest prayers, that their future conduct may both demonstrate the reality, and illustrate the nature of that grace, which they have received: that those may be ashamed, who persist in reviling them; and that many may glorify God on their account, be edified by their example, and encouraged by witnessing their good conversation in Christ. The feeblest means, when accompanied by the divine blessing, will produce most glorious effects: whilst the carnal heart will be hardened in infidelity under the most conclusive evidence, and the most convincing ministry of the word. When the worst of sinners are brought to believe the word of God, a change will infallibly take place; and that faith will produce a fear of wrath, a desire of escape, a hope of mercy, a reverence of the name and authority of the Lord, and a love to him and his people, manifested by such means, as they have opportunity, and ability to perform. They will be sure to repent of, and forsake known sin; to renounce worldly interests, and connexions, when the necessity of so doing is perceived; and to unite interests with the people of God: they will be induced to self denial, and to take up their cross, and to venture persecution, and even death itself, rather than to give up their hope, and pursuit of salvation. Such persons may at first have small explicit knowledge of divine truth; and much infirmity, and many mistakes may mix with their endeavours to obey God, and serve his people; but their conduct will be conscientious, and their disposition teachable, and their light will increase continually: and no faith, which produces not such fruits of obedience, and good works, will justify the sinner's person before God, or his profession before his fellow creatures. When we really discover the danger, to which our souls are exposed, from the wrath of an offended God, and are earnestly seeking the assurance of salvation from it; we shall feel for those, who are not sensible of their own misery: and this desire will induce us to attempt doing good to our beloved friends, and relations: and thus such persons, as have been the grief, and disgrace of their families, may, by the mercy of God, become their protection, as well as ornament. We sinners, having a prospect of escaping destruction, should not seek great things for ourselves, either in the world, or in the church; yet such distinctions are often conferred on those, who aspire the least unto them. Whilst we are serving God, and employed for the good of his people, we may securely confide in his protection, and need not fear what man can do unto us; as the dangers to which we may be exposed, will eventually issue in admiration of the Lord's truth, love, and power, in our preservation: yet we should use every prudent, and lawful means of safety; and be thankful to, and recompense the instruments of it. But even in the exercise of gratitude, we must not oblige our benefactors in any thing, that is contrary to the will of God, or the interests of his people; nor flatter them with the hope of deliverance from future punishment, except in the method of the gospel: and if any of our engagements are ratified with an oath, the utmost reverence and caution should be used in taking, and the greatest exactness in fulfilling that solemn obligation. Whilst the accomplishment of some of God's promises, is a pledge for the performance of the whole to the true believer: those terrors of conscience, and that sense of divine wrath, which dismay the ungodly, but bring them not to repentance, are fearful presages of approaching destruction. But grace yet abounds to the chief of sinners; let them without delay flee to Christ, and all shall be well.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *And Joshua*, &c.] Early in the morning, Joshua took measures for the people's march from the place of their encampment, to the very borders of the river Jordan; where they arrived in the evening, and lodged there that night, that they might be ready to pass over the next morning.

V. 2. *After three days*, &c.] That is from the orders before mentioned, (c. i. v. 11,) and perhaps from the return of the spies, during which time they had made all requisite preparations. It does not appear whether the people expected a miraculous interposition to facilitate their passage, or whether they had thoughts of any other method of getting over; but they were very obedient, and tractable, and seem to have harboured no distrust about the event. At any time the passage of such a multitude of men, women, and children, and flocks and herds, and all their substance, by fords, or other ordinary means, must have been attended with much difficulty, and delay; and with great danger

3 And they commanded the people, saying, When ye see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it.

4 Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go; for ye have not passed *this* way heretofore.

5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the LORD will do wonders among you.

6 And Joshua spake unto the priests, saying, Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass over before the people. And they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people.

7 And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with thee.

8 And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When ye are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still in Jordan.

9 And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the LORD your God.

10 And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God *is* among you, and *that* he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites.

11 Behold, the ark of the covenant of the LORD of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan.

12 Now therefore take ye twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man.

13 And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the LORD, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, *that* the waters of Jordan shall be cut off *from* the waters that come down from above; and they shall stand upon an heap.

14 And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people,

15 And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of

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also, if the enemies had opposed them: but when Jordan overflowed all his banks, it would probably have been impracticable; for whatever appearance this river may make to modern travellers, the whole history represents it as being at that time a considerable, and rapid stream. However the passage of Jordan recorded in this chapter was peculiarly suited to attend all the other wonders, which the Lord had wrought for Israel: by a repetition of the miracles of drying up the floods, their entrance into Canaan corresponded with their departure out of Egypt; the dismay of the Canaanites would be increased, the faith of the Israelites strengthened, their expectations raised, and their conquests facilitated; and in all these things God would be glorified. It can only be attributed to a supernatural power intimidating or infatuating the minds of the Canaanites, that they never attempted to defend this barrier of their country, or to obstruct the passage of the Israelites.

V. 3, 4.] The priests (who were Levites of the family of Kohath) bearing the ark, were commanded to march near three quarters of a mile before the people, until they arrived at their destined station; by which it appeared that this symbol of the divine presence protected them, not they it. A noble defiance of the enemies of Israel was thus given; who were, in some sense, challenged to attack the unarmed priests, or to attempt to seize the unattended ark: the faith, and courage of the priests were also tried, and displayed for an example to the people: a reverence for the symbol of the divine presence, suited to that dispensation of darkness and distance, was expressed: The whole congregation would also have a fairer opportunity of viewing the ark, the division of Jordan, and "the "way, by which they were to go," than if it had been nearer; and as they witnessed the obedience of the inanimate creation to their covenant God, they might also be instructed to obey likewise.

V. 5. *Sanctify*, &c.] *(See note, Exod.* c. xix. v. 10.)

V. 7. *This day*, &c.] The people wanted some proof that the Lord was with Joshua, as he had been with Moses, (c. i. v. 17,) but by this event, that was rendered unquestionable. At the river Jordan, and probably at Bethabara, or the house of passage, that is, in the very same place, where Israel passed over that river, the Lord Jesus began to be magnified, by a voice from heaven, &c.

V. 8. *When ye are come to the brink*, &c.] At the brink of the river the priests were commanded to stop, until the channel was dried; and then to take their station in the midst of it, till all the people were passed over, (v. 17.)

V. 15. *For Jordan*, &c.] This arose from the melting of the snows upon mount Libanus; and this circumstance seems to have been purposely chosen, to render the miracle more incontestible, and stupendous.

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the water, (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks all the time of harveſt,)

16 That the waters which came down from above ſtood, *and* roſe up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that *is* beſide Zaretan: and thoſe that came down toward the ſea of the plain, *even* the ſalt ſea, failed, *and* were cut off; and the people paſſed over right againſt Jericho.

17 And the prieſts that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD ſtood firm on dry ground in the midſt of Jordan, and all the Iſraelites paſſed over on dry ground, until all the people were paſſed clean over Jordan.

V. 16, 17.] The waters below ran off towards the Dead Sea, and left the channel dry for the ſpace of ſeveral miles; whilſt thoſe above accumulated by the miraculous power of God, and ſtood like mountains very far back towards the ſea of Tiberias; without inundating the adjacent country. With an illuſtrious example of faith, and obedience, the prieſts bearing the ark, marched into the midſt of the dry channel, and there took their ſtand, with the waters piled up over their heads, and nothing to prevent their being overwhelmed by them, but the inviſible power of God. In this ſtation they abode all the day long, until the people, encouraged by their example, had in ſucceſſion marched over, with all that appertained to them, and were all ſafe landed on the further ſhore. The paſſage through the Red Sea was in the night, when fleeing from the Egyptians, and with trepidation: but they paſſed Jordan in the day time, with previous warning, leiſurely, directly oppoſite to Jericho, and with a triumphant defiance of the Canaanites. This paſſage over Jordan after their weary wanderings in the wilderneſs, as an entrance into Canaan, ſhadowed out the believer's paſſage through death to heaven, after he hath finiſhed his wanderings in this ſinful world. From his firſt deliverance from the yoke of ſin, he hath been in a wilderneſs, and though fed with the bread of heaven, and drinking of the waters of life and ſalvation; though guided, guarded, and encouraged by the Providence, the Word, and the Spirit of God, he hath long been weary with his toilſome march, and hath wiſhed for reſt. To others death may well be terrific, for the conſequence is tremendous: but to the believer the river is, as it were divided, the terror is removed, the paſſage is ſafe, and ſometimes joyful, and the event glorious; for the waters are cut off; the ſecond death beyond the grave hath no power over them: Chriſt the true ark hath paſſed before them in the ſame way to glory; yea he comes and meets them, and by his animating preſence, and ſure protection, maintains their faith and hope, until they iſſue in viſion and enjoyment, being ſafe landed on Canaan's ſhore.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They who are attentive to the duties of their ſtation, and enemies to ſloth, and ſelf-indulgence in every form, are likely to be eminent, and uſeful; nor can any others expect to be ſo.—We muſt not heſitate in our courſe, becauſe of diſtant difficulties, which we perceive not how we ſhall be able to ſurmount: but ſhould ſtill proceed as far as we can, and truſt in the Lord to remove the obſtacles, when the critical moment arrives; for his interpoſitions are intended to excite, not to ſuperſede our activity. But, in depending upon the Lord's aſſiſtance, we muſt look well to the path of our feet, eſpecially when "we "have not paſſed that way heretofore:" the precepts of the word of God, the diſpenſations of his Providence, the counſel, and example of his miniſters, and people, together with the inward teaching of his Holy Spirit, when properly attended to, and humbly ſought for, will make our way plain *to us*, though perplexed in itſelf: and we cannot in general go out of our way, in keeping cloſe to the ordinances of God, and *thus* following the ark in all it's removals. In the path of duty, in this manner aſcertained, we need not fear rivers of trouble, mountains of difficulty, or hoſts of oppoſing foes; but confiding in the faithful promiſe, the Almighty power, and covenant love of our God, who "is the God of the whole earth," we may proceed with all boldneſs, and alacrity. Whether we be called to endure poverty, pain, labour, perſecution, reproach, or death, we are following the author and finiſher of our faith; nor can we ſet our foot in any perilous, or arduous ſpot, through our whole journey, but faith will there deſcry the print of the Redeemer's foot, who trod that very path to glory above, and bids us follow him, "that "where he is, there we may be alſo." His miniſters are called to ſet the people an example of conſtancy, patience, and unſhaken confidence in him, by abiding in thoſe perilous, and difficult ſtations, which he hath aſſigned them, when others fear to paſs that way; and in ſo doing they may expect peculiar ſupport and protection: (*Acts*, c. viii. v. 1:) but if they heſitate to take the lead in facing danger, and enduring hardſhip; and ſhew an undue attention to their own eaſe, ſecurity, and indulgence, their exhortations will be very lightly regarded by the people. The more adventurous we are *in the path of duty*, the greater evidence we ſhall have of the Lord's love to us, and care of us; for he will not diſappoint the expectation of faith, but rather exceed, in due ſeaſon, our moſt enlarged hopes. But would we experience the more ſignal effects of his love and power, we muſt ſtudy to put away from us the pollutions of ſin, and be peculiarly careful not "to grieve the Holy "Spirit of God;" we muſt diligently obey his commandments, follow his directions, expect help from him, and give him all the glory.—The Chriſtian's courſe originates from "the working of the mighty power of God," in his converſion, and proceeds in a daily experience of that ſame power maintaining, and carrying on the work of "renew-"ing in the Spirit of his mind," in the midſt of innumerable ſnares, temptations, and counteracting obſtacles: but in the laſt conflict eſpecially the believer will find that the Lord "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all "that he aſks, or thinks, according to that power, which "now worketh in him." And ſhould the King of terrors aſſume his moſt horrid form, (like Jordan overflowing all his banks,) yet the true Chriſtian may be aſſured of a ſpeedy victory, and a glorious triumph over this laſt enemy. Yea the feeble Chriſtian, as well as he who has the ſtrongeſt faith, ſhall conquer in this conflict; ſhall paſs ſafe through

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. A two-fold monument of Israel's passage over Jordan, erected by the command of God, v. 1—9. 20. 2d. Further particulars of that event; the priests ascending out of the river, and the waters returning to their course, 10—18. 3d. The date of the transaction, the place of their encampment, and the prescribed use of the appointed memorials, v. 19. 21—24.

AND it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the LORD spake unto Joshua, saying,

2 Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man;

3 And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests feet stood firm, twelve stones; and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging-place where ye shall lodge this night.

4 Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man;

5 And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of Jordan, and take ye up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel;

6 That this may be a sign among you, *that* when your children ask *their fathers* in time to come, saying, What *mean* ye by these stones?

7 Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.

8 And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the LORD spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there.

9 And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day.

10 For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until every thing was

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this path, beset with terrors, until all the company of the redeemed "are clean passed over," and landed safe on Canaan's shore. — For though they have none of them passed this way heretofore; yet Jesus their brother, and friend hath gone before, and crossed the river, when it's floods were swelled to a tremendous height: and by passing through he hath divided the floods before them; and he safely reached the heavenly shore, when he rose from the dead as the first-fruits of his people, and ascended into heaven as their forerunner: and he began to be magnified in the sight of all Israel; when thus risen and ascended he sent down his Holy Spirit, to give assistance to his apostles, and success to his preached gospel. Now therefore they may march through this dreaded river without danger, or terror, if they are but able to keep the eye of faith fixed upon his person, his complete salvation, his word of promise, and the inheritance, which he hath provided for them on the other side. Let us then treasure up our experiences of his faithful and tender care in the whole course of our lives, that they may come in aid to our faith, and hope in this last conflict: let us carefully consider the examples of others, whose deaths we witness, or of which we read and hear, to allay our fears, and encourage our hearts: let us prepare daily for death, by the habitual exercise of faith and repentance, and a conscientious, and diligent attention to the duties of our station; and let us watch and pray against the anxious, or distressing fear of it. The Lord will provide for our passage of this Jordan, when the time comes; and we shall soon join the innumerable multitude, that in the Canaan above are singing the praises of their great Deliverer, who hath both redeemed them from Egyptian bondage, and brought them safe to the promised land, through his precious blood, and by his all-conquering arm.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *Take you*, &c.] These twelve men had before been selected to hold themselves in readiness. One was chosen to represent every tribe; for though some had received their inheritance on the other side of Jordan, they were all brethren united in one interest, and of one religion; and, to cement their union, they were all to join in securing the remembrance of this signal miracle.

V. 3—9.] After the people were all passed over Jordan, and before they marched to the place of their encampment, or had opportunity of refreshing themselves, or taking care for their families, they were required, without delay, to take these measures of perpetuating the remembrance of this important event. The priests patiently and courageously kept their station, not only until the people were all passed over; but until these men had returned into the midst of the river, and taken each a large stone, probably as great as they could carry, and brought it on shore; and until twelve stones had been in the midst of the river formed into a monument of the event, which doubtless was at some times visible long afterwards.

V. 10. *That Moses*, &c.] We read not that Moses gave any instructions about their passage over Jordan: but he

finiſhed that the LORD commanded Joſhua to ſpeak unto the people, according to all that Moſes commanded Joſhua: and the people haſted and paſſed over.

11 And it came to paſs, when all the people were clean paſſed over, that the ark of the LORD paſſed over, and the prieſts, in the preſence of the people.

12 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manaſſeh, paſſed over armed before the children of Iſrael, as Moſes ſpake unto them.

13 About forty thouſand, prepared for war, paſſed over before the LORD unto battle, to the plains of Jericho.

14 On that day the LORD magnified Joſhua in the ſight of all Iſrael; and they feared him, as they feared Moſes, all the days of his life.

15 And the LORD ſpake unto Joſhua, ſaying,

16 Command the prieſts that bear the ark of the teſtimony, that they come up out of Jordan.

17 Joſhua therefore commanded the prieſts, ſaying, Come ye up out of Jordan,

18 And it came to paſs, when the prieſts that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD were come up out of the midſt of Jordan, *and* the ſoles of the prieſts feet were lifted up unto the dry land, that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place, and flowed over all his banks, as *they did* before.

19 And the people came up out of Jordan on the tenth *day* of the firſt month, and encamped in Gilgal, in the eaſt border of Jericho.

20 And thoſe twelve ſtones, which they took out of Jordan, did Joſhua pitch in Gilgal.

21 And he ſpake unto the children of Iſrael, ſaying, When your children ſhall aſk their fathers in time to come, ſaying, What *mean* theſe ſtones?

22 Then ye ſhall let your children know, ſaying, Iſrael came over this Jordan on dry land.

23 For the LORD your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were paſſed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red ſea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over;

24 That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* mighty; that ye might fear the LORD your God for ever.

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charged Joſhua to obey the Lord, and the people to be obſervant of Joſhua; to which they peculiarly attended on this occaſion. It is ſaid, "that the people haſted;" they none of them waſted any time; and ſome of them were timorous through unbelief: but there was no undue haſte or confuſion.

V. 12, 13.] This armed body of men, unincumbered with families or flocks, and prepared to repel the enemy, if they attacked them, would leave thoſe of the other tribes more at liberty to attend upon their perſonal, and domeſtic concerns.

V. 14. *They feared*, &c.] They honoured his perſon, and ſubmitted to his authority ever after, as they had to thoſe of Moſes, perceiving that the Lord was with him, as he had been with Moſes.

V. 16—18.] The prieſts moved not from their ſtation, till Joſhua, who had commanded them thither, had ordered them thence; nor did he give them their diſmiſſion, till he had inſtructions for the Lord ſo to do: ſo obedient were all parties, in proper ſubordination, to the word of God, and ſo entirely confident of his protection. Probably Eleazar the high prieſt inquired of, and received anſwers from the Lord for Joſhua on theſe occaſions, having a ſpecial injunction ſo to do, (*Num.* c. xxvii. v. 21.) As ſoon as the prieſts had reached the ſhore, and the ark, the ſymbol of the Lord's preſence, had left the river, the waters gradually reverted to their natural courſe, and flowed over all the banks as before; ſhewing that the power of him, who enacted the laws of nature, had, for the ſake of his people, for a time ſuſpended them.

V. 19. *On the tenth day*, &c.] This is computed to have been exactly five days ſhort of forty years after they ſet out from Egypt, and juſt in time to prepare for the celebration of the paſſover, upon their entrance into Canaan, as they had done previous to their departure from Egypt.

V. 20—24.] Some ſuppoſe that theſe ſtones were to be ſeen until the time of Chriſt, or even later: they would be an abiding memorial of this extraordinary miracle; from age to age inquiries would be excited reſpecting them; the tradition of the event would be thus perpetuated, and circulated; many both of the Iſraelites, and of the inhabitants of diſtant nations, might have their curioſity excited to look into the Scriptures, and to inquire after the wonderful works of the Lord for Iſrael; and parents would have an opportunity of diverting the inquiſitiveneſs of their children into a profitable channel, by encouraging them to aſk, and by reſolving their queſtions concerning them: and in all theſe ways they might ſubſerve the intereſts of godlineſs. Some conſider theſe twelve ſtones as types of the twelve apoſtles, who were choſen witneſſes of the Saviour's reſurrection.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The works of the Lord are ſo worthy of remembrance, and the heart of man is ſo prone to forget them, that vari-

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1st. The consternation of the Canaanites, v. 1. 2d. The circumcision of the Israelites, and their celebration of the passover, &c, with the ceasing of the manna, v. 2—12. 3d. Joshua favoured with a remarkable vision, v. 13—15.

AND it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which *were* on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which *were* by the sea, heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted; neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.

2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

3 And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins.

4 And this *is* the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt *that were* males, *even* all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt.

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ous methods have been adopted to refresh our memories, for the glory of God, and for our advantage, and that of our children. In order to concur in so reasonable a service, our ease must be disregarded, and our ordinary employments and refreshments postponed, that we may lose no time in rendering the tribute of praise for mercies received, whilst the sense of gratitude glows in the heart, and before the lively impression hath time to wear off. There is a style in the works, and in the word of God: majestic in simplicity, expressive and emphatic; but with genuine dignity, disdaining the incumbrance of useless ornament, and affected splendour. Never did triumphal column, or arch, with all the magnificence of architecture, so aptly record a memorable victory, as these twelve rude stones from Jordan's channel, recorded the miraculous passage of Israel into Canaan, under the conduct of the ark of the Lord. Such is the instituted memorial of the Redeemer's dying love: simple, expressive, and descriptive both of the purchase, and of the appropriation of his salvation, of our repentance, faith, love, and gratitude; of our profession, of our dependance upon him, devotedness to him, and fellowship with him, and with his people, and of our future harmonious felicity in the realms above. Yet is all this instruction clothed with such external meanness, that the carnal eye can see no comeliness or excellency therein, more than in him, whose love is therein commemorated. To make it suit the groveling minds, and selfish purposes of ambitious men, it hath been dressed up with pomp, and parade, of meaning, and of ceremony, which have so disguised and perplexed the divine appointment, that many of the true disciples of Christ have been strangely frighted from it, as if some formidable mischief lay concealed within, to the dishonour of the Lord, and the detriment of their own souls. But we should take every proper occasion of attending on that sacred ordinance, and learning from the word of God it's simple meaning and intention; and, should gladly speak of them, when opportunity is afforded, to our children, our neighbours, and to every inquirer, who seeks information upon the important subject. In this, and every thing else, the curiosity of our children should be improved as an opening to their instruction: and they who take pleasure in searching out the works of the Lord, and in diffusing their knowledge amongst strangers, or perpetuating it to posterity, shall more and more understand his loving kindness and mercy. Gladly should we all render every service we can to the church of God, and consider ourselves as having one common interest with all the families of the redeemed, however separated by rivers, seas, or mountains; or the more *unnatural* partition walls of sects and parties; and in so doing, we may safely commit our families, and interests to the protection of Israel's God. When, with careful attention to the commands and providence of God, we have taken the place, and engaged in the service assigned us; we ought patiently to abide in it, and not to attempt to remove, till he evidently commands us thence. Nothing can hurt us in, and nothing should intimidate us from so doing. In like manner also, we ought patiently to wait our dismission from this sinful world, ready to depart, but willing to bear the cross, and maintain the conflict, till the Lord's purposes for his own glory, and his people's good, be accomplished in us. But the removal of the righteous is freqently like the opening of the flood-gates of divine judgments upon guilty nations, which have been restrained by their presence, example, and prayers: much more when the ministers, and ordinances of God are removed, may national calamities be expected: but let us bless God that this is not, and let us unite in prayer that it may not be the case with our favoured land; and let us remember, that we are benefited by, and are bound to bless God for all the mercy shewn to his church in all ages, and nations; and every recent favour should excite us to repeat his praises for former blessings.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Their heart melted*, &c.] Though great terror had before pervaded the minds of the inhabitants of Canaan; yet their kings seem to have kept up their courage: until they heard that the barrier of the land was broken through, by a miracle similar to the dividing of the Red sea, and that the vast multitudes of Israel were actually encamped in their country, with the express purpose of possessing it, and extirpating the former inhabitants: on hearing this their hearts melted with terror, as wax before the fire, which both anticipated, and facilitated their destruction.

V. 2—8. *Circumcise again—the second time*, &c.] It appears probable from this passage, that there was a general circumcision of all the Israelites, who had been left uncircumcised in their bondage, previous to their departure out of Egypt: In reference to which, this is called "the second time." It is evident, that the Israelites, who had

5 Now

5 Now all the people that came out were circumciſed; but all the people *that were* born in the wilderneſs by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, *them* they had not circumciſed.

6 For the children of Iſrael walked forty years in the wilderneſs, till all the people, *that were* men of war, which came out of Egypt were conſumed, becauſe they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD ſware, that he would not ſhew them the land which the LORD ſware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey.

7 And their children *whom* he raiſed up in their ſtead, them Joſhua circumciſed: for they were uncircumciſed, becauſe they had not circumciſed them by the way.

8 And it came to paſs, when they had done circumciſing all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole.

9 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you: wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day.

10 And the children of Iſrael encamped in Gilgal, and kept the paſſover on the fourteenth day of the month at even, in the plains of Jericho.

11 And they did eat of the old corn of the land on the morrow after the paſſover, unleavened cakes, and parched *corn* in the ſelf-ſame day.

12 And the manna ceaſed on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Iſrael manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.

13 And it came to paſs, when Joſhua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there ſtood a man over againſt him, with his ſword drawn in his hand: and Joſhua went unto him, and ſaid unto him, *Art* thou for us, or for our adverſaries?

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been born in the wilderneſs, were generally left uncircumciſed: but the cauſe of this intermiſſion is very much controverted; whether it aroſe from their ſinful negligence; or whether the Lord diſpenſed with it, during their wanderings; or whether they were laid under a kind of interdict, when the rebellious generation was doomed to die in the wilderneſs. However the command given to Joſhua, and by him to the people, to perform ſo painful an operation upon ſo great a multitude, immediately upon entering the enemy's country, when it was well known that they would thereby for ſome days be utterly diſabled, (*Gen.* c. xxxiv. v. 25, 26;) formed a very great trial of their faith: and their prompt and univerſal obedience in ſuch critical circumſtances manifeſted a confidence in the Lord's protection, and a ſubmiſſion to his will, which confirm the ſentiment, that this was the beſt of all the generations of Iſrael. As circumciſion was performed by any perſon, though the number to be circumciſed was great, it would ſoon be completed, probably on the very firſt day, after their paſſage over Jordan.

V. 9. *Have I rolled away*, &c.] When the Iſraelites were thus brought into the promiſed land, and the covenant of the Lord was thus ſolemnly ratified with them, by the appointed ſeal, the reproach of their Egyptian bondage, and idolatrous cuſtoms was rolled away; and it was plain, that the Lord had not brought them forth into the wilderneſs to deſtroy them. The word Gilgal ſignifies to roll away: the ſame place being alſo called "the Hill of "Foreſkins;" becauſe of the numbers, whoſe foreſkins were left buried there.

V. 10. *Kept the paſſover*, &c.] This general circumciſion was ordered as preparatory to the ſolemn obſervance of the paſſover in it's ſeaſon, for no uncircumciſed perſon might eat thereof. This was a proper entrance upon the promiſed land, as a holy land: the celebration of the paſſover immediately preceded their departure out of Egypt; and the ſame was their firſt employment upon their entrance into Canaan: for they were both brought out of Egypt, and into the land of their inheritance, "that they might "keep the Lord's ſtatutes, and obſerve his laws:" (*Pſalm* cv. v. 43—45.) The circumciſion being performed on the 11th day of the month, they would be enabled to eat the paſſover on the evening of the 14th; and by the time that the days of unleavened bread were ended, they would be perfectly healed, and fit for action. In the mean time, the Canaanites were intimidated, and reſtrained of God from aſſaulting them; (*Exod.* c. xxxiv. v. 24.) Nay, their very confidence in thus ſetting their enemies at defiance, whilſt they attended to the ordinances of their religion, and engaged Jehovah to fight their battles, if it were known amongſt the inhabitants of the land, would tend to increaſe their conſternation.

V. 11. *The old corn*, &c.] This they would find plentifully in the deſerted granaries of the affrighted inhabitants: and thus the manna, being no longer neceſſary, ceaſed, after having been ſent them regularly for almoſt forty years!

V. 13—15. *By Jericho*, &c.] Joſhua was either taking a view of the city, in order to attack it, or employed in ſerious meditation, or both alternately; when he was ſurpriſed with the appearance of one, in form as a man, with a drawn ſword in his hand: but not at all intimidated, he accoſted him, and demanded of him, whether he were an ally or an enemy; (for there were to be no neuters in that war;) and received for anſwer "that he was come, not only as an

14 And he said, Nay; but *as* captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my LORD unto his servant?

15 And the captain of the LORD's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest *is* holy. And Joshua did so.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. Directions, and promises from the Lord to Joshua, relative to the siege of Jericho, v. 1—5. 2d. The directions punctually observed, v. 6—16. 3d. The devoting of the city and all therein to utter destruction, except Rahab, and those in her house, and the metals, which were consecrated to the Lord, v. 17—19. 4th. The destruction of Jericho, and the preservation of Rahab, &c. v. 20—25. 5th. A curse denounced on him, who should rebuild that city, v. 26, 27.

NOW Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel: none went out, and none came in.

2 And the LORD said into Joshua, See I have given into thine hand Jericho, and the king thereof, *and* the mighty men of valour.

"ally but as commander in chief over the Lord's host, and "over Joshua himself:" upon which Joshua recognized, and worshipped him as his Lord; and reverently prostrating himself upon the earth, waited and asked to know his will. This worship was not only received, but he was further commanded to shew the same token of respect to the heavenly vision, which had been required, when the Lord appeared to Moses in the bush: this being done, he received from him the orders, contained in the ensuing chapter, which is a continuation of the subject. All these circumstances establish, beyond a doubt, the conclusion, that this *armed man*, was no other than the Son of God, Jehovah, the second person in the sacred Trinity, the Captain of our salvation, anticipating his incarnation, and assuring Joshua of success in this war; which in all respects was typical of the good fight of faith, that every true Christian must fight under his banner, and in which he will conquer by his presence and assistance.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

How dreadful is their case, whose condemnation is irreversible, for whom no mercy is reserved, and who see the wrath of God, and his deserved vengeance advancing towards them with steady pace, without any possibility of averting or escaping them! Such will be the horrible situation of the wicked, when summoned to appear before the tribunal of an offended God; nor can words express the anguish of their feelings, or the greatness of their terror, when they shall in vain call upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them and hide them from the intolerable frown of their angry Judge, and the dire sentence which they will perceive him prepared to utter against, and execute upon them! As their hearts cannot endure, nor their hands be strong in such circumstances, O! that they would now take warning, and before it be too late, would flee for refuge to lay hold on that hope, which is set before them in the salvation of the gospel. The maxims, and conduct of the church of God are not conformed to those of the world: what general ever opened a campaign in an enemy's country in the manner that Joshua did? On such occasions all attention paid to the exercises of religion, is too generally considered, as a needless waste of time. Yet, if the help of God be the best security of success, and if his anger be more to be feared than the sword of any enemy, it will be found true policy to begin every expedition, with repentance of sin, and attendance on his solemn worship, and with using every method of securing his protection; though to a carnal eye the tendency may appear unfavourable to success. However, the Christian soldier must thus begin his spiritual warfare; nor can he face any of his enemies, without the true circumcision of the heart, as the internal seal of the righteousness of faith, and the ratification of the new covenant betwixt a reconciled God and his soul: then feeding on Christ, the true Paschal Lamb, who was sacrificed for sinners, and keeping the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, he will be prepared for the conflict. Yet he will not prosper so long, as he neglects any of the ordinances, or commandments of God; or lays under the reproach of being in bondage to any sin, of living in conformity to the world, or of acting in any thing inconsistent with his holy profession. But duly attending to the worship of God, and the means of grace, and daily girding on his divine armour, (*Eph.* c. vi. v. 11—18;) he may boldly defy all his enemies, and rest assured of the presence and protection of the great Captain of our salvation; whose person he will reverently worship, whose orders he will diligently observe, on whose assistance he will entirely depend, and by whom he will at length be made more than conqueror. Many things are amiss in the best state of the church on earth: but when young persons have not so much as the appearance of religion, it will redound to the parent's reproach, being generally the consequence of the parent's misconduct. When the upright believer is convinced of his neglect or sin, he will readily set about amendment; and when he is in a proper frame of mind, he will account the most self-denying commands, or mysterious dispensations of the Lord, reasonable, wise, and kind. Finally, what the Lord requires of his people, he will supply them with the means of performing; when one source of provision fails, he will open another: nor shall the manna for their souls ever fail them, till they arrive at the Canaan above, and banquet on it's rich and inexhaustible provisions.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *Straitly shut up*, &c.] The king, and people of Jericho did not possess courage enough to attack the invaders; but shut themselves up in the city, where doubtless they expected to defend themselves under the protection of their walls, till succours should arrive from other quarters. We do not find that they made any advances towards an accommodation.

V. 2. *And the Lord*, &c.] The same person, who in

3 And ye shall compass the city, all *ye* men of war, *and* go round about the city once. Thus shalt thou do six days.

4 And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams horns: and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times, and the priests shall blow with the trumpets.

5 And it shall come to pass that when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, all the people shall shout with a great shout; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him.

6 And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests, and said unto them, Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams horns before the ark of the LORD.

7 And he said unto the people, Pass on, and compass the city, and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the LORD.

8 And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken unto the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams horns passed on before the LORD, and blew with the trumpets: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them.

9 And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets, and the rere-ward came after the ark, *the priests* going on, and blowing with the trumpets.

10 And Joshua had commanded the people, saying, Ye shall not shout, nor make any noise with your voice, neither shall *any* word proceed out of your mouth until the day I bid you shout; then shall ye shout.

11 So the ark of the LORD compassed the city, going about *it* once: and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, and the priests took up the ark of the LORD.

13 And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams horns before the ark of the LORD, went on continually, and blew with the trumpets: and the armed men went before them; but the rere-ward came after the ark of the LORD, *the priests* going on and blowing with the trumpets.

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the preceding chapter, called himself "the captain of the "host of the Lord," is here called Jehovah: by commission from him, and according to his instructions Joshua was to commence, and conduct his hostilities against the Canaanites: and his authority sanctioned, and even sanctified all the terrible executions, with which it was attended; the sword in his hand being the sword of justice drawn against condemned criminals.

V. 3—5.] By this extraordinary method of besieging the city, the Lord was pleased to put honour upon the ark, as the symbol of his presence, and to manifest that all their victories were from him; for this was a specimen, and key, for the explanation of those that followed, by what means soever they were obtained. The faith, and patience of the people were thereby proved, and increased. The nature, and the utility of divinely appointed means were also illustrated, which must not be neglected, though utterly ineffectual *in themselves*. The people's regard to the priesthood would be augmented, and they would more readily give them their dues, when the Lord had thus employed them in the conquest of the land: and the preached gospel, and it's effects, were typified thereby.—The word translated "of rams horns," may be rendered "trumpets "of jubile," that is such as were to be blown in the year of jubile: for their entrance upon the promised land was indeed a jubile unto them: instead of the dreadful trumpet of war, they were to sound the trumpet of joy, as already conquerors, in the anticipation of assured faith. Probably they were the same trumpets, whose use was prescribed before. (*Numb.* c. x. v. 1—10.) But as the number of the priests increased, more trumpets were formed either of silver, or of some other materials. The repeated prescription of the number seven on this occasion must not pass unnoticed: "Seven priests," "seven trumpets," "seven "days," and "seven times on the seventh day." This attention to the number seven in Scripture probably had reference to the creation of the world in six days, and the Lord's resting on the seventh, which completed the first week; and was the first reason assigned for the sanctification of the sabbath; and occasioned the measuring of time, by the periodical return of the seventh day, in almost all ages and nations ever since. One of these seven days must have been a sabbath-day; the Jews say, that it was the last, on which the city was taken: and as the labour employed was in the work of God, and immediately for his glory; and as it also typified the preached gospel, which abounds most on the Lord's day, no objection arises against it from the fourth commandment; any more, than against the man's carrying his bed on the sabbath day, in honour of Christ, who had healed him.

V. 7. *Pass on*, &c.] This would be needful in order to level the fences, and remove all obstructions out of the way, in passing round the city. This unprecedented procession would create much surprise, and some consternation at first among the inhabitants: but when one day passed after another, and the Israelites did not assault the city, and no effect followed from their marching about it; they would probably become secure, and treat the whole business with derision, as a mere senseless parade.

14 And

14 And the second day they compassed the city once, and returned into the camp: so they did six days.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and compassed the city after the same manner seven times: only on that day they compassed the city seven times.

16 And it came to pass at the seventh time, when the priests blew with the trumpets, Joshua said unto the people, Shout; for the LORD hath given you the city.

17 And the city shall be accursed, *even* it, and all that *are* therein, to the LORD: only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that *are* with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent.

18 And you in any wise keep *yourselves* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselves* accursed when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

19 But all the silver, and gold, and vessels of brass and iron, *are* consecrated unto the LORD: they shall come into the treasury of the LORD.

20 So the people shouted when *the priests* blew with the trumpets: and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that the wall fell down flat, so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city.

21 And they utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both men and women, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

22 But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country, Go into the harlot's house, and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath, as ye sware unto her.

23 And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel.

24 And they burnt the city with fire, and all that *was* therein: only the silver, and the gold, and the vessels of brass, and of iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD.

25 And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel *even* unto this day: because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 And Joshua adjured *them* at that time, saying, Cursed *be* the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-

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V. 17—19.] (*Note, Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 28.) This city was, as it were, the first-fruits of Canaan, and was as such to be wholly devoted to the Lord: the only advantages, which the people derived from this miraculous victory, were the destruction of their enemies, the dominion of the land, and the enriching of the sanctuary. Every living creature was commanded to be slain, except Rahab, and those, who had taken refuge in her house; and whatever was not consumed with fire was to be brought into the treasury of the Lord. And if any Israelite dared to appropriate any part to himself, the curse of Jericho would rest upon him, and upon the camp of Israel, until he also, and all that appertained to him, were utterly destroyed. The whole was to be a solemn, and awful sacrifice to the justice of God upon them, who had filled up the measure of their iniquities.

V. 22. *Go into the harlot's house,* &c.] As Rahab's house stood upon the wall of the city, the preservation of it must be the effect of the Lord's special care of her: for had he so pleased, she might have perished with the other inhabitants, without any violation of the spies engagement in behalf of Israel. But her faith saved her: the temporal deliverance was the pledge of eternal felicity; she was first honoured as an instrument for the preservation of her relations; then she became a wife, and mother in Israel, and an ancestor of David, and of Christ.

V. 26. *Cursed be the man,* &c.] Jericho, as devoted to utter destruction, was to continue a perpetual desolation, and if any man ventured to rebuild it, he would do it at his peril, (1 *Kings*, c. xvi. v. 34,) for it was to be an emblem of the "everlasting punishment," into which they shall go away, who are sentenced to depart accursed from God at the day of judgment.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When sinners are not only repeatedly warned to flee from the wrath to come, but are alarmed, and disquieted in their consciences with the apprehensions of impending vengeance; yet harden their hearts in impenitency, and disdain to sue for peace, or to ask forgiveness of God; they may be considered as "devoted to utter destruction:" nor can any counsel, courage, strength, or numbers afford them the least security, in their infatuated contest with the Almighty.

born,

born, and in his youngeſt *ſon* ſhall he ſet up the gates of it.

27 So the LORD was with Joſhua; and his fame was *noiſed* throughout all the country.

When the Lord effects his purpoſes by ſuch means, and inſtruments, as we deem *adequate*; our views are apt to terminate upon *them*, and to overlook *him*, "who worketh "all things according to the counſel of his own will." To obviate this propenſity of the human mind, the Lord ſometimes deviates from the common track, and works by methods, or inſtruments, which in themſelves have no *real*, or *apparent* ſuitableneſs to, or connexion with the effect to be produced by them. (1 *Cor.* c. i. v. 27, 28.) But our duty is to uſe only thoſe means, which the Lord appoints, or allows; to ſubmit to his will, and depend upon his bleſſing in ſo doing; and with patient waiting, and ſelf-denying diligence to expect the event; and we ſhall thus ſucceed, as far as it is conducive to our real good. The Lord takes peculiar pleaſure in leading men's attention to, and increaſing their regard for his own truths, and ordinances; in exerciſing their faith, and patience, in inuring them to ſubmit their underſtandings implicitly to his teaching, and their will to his authority; and in ſecuring to himſelf their praiſes, and thankful acknowledgments.—In promoting true religion eſpecially he works by means, and inſtruments, which the proud, the learned, the wiſe, and the wealthy of this world generally deſpiſe. The doctrine of a crucified Saviour, who is "GOD MANIFESTED "IN THE FLESH," as the only foundation of a ſinner's hope of pardon and acceptance, and the only ſource of ſanctifying grace, and true holineſs; preached by miniſters *generally* of obſcure original, and moderate abilities, and deſtitute of the advantages of eminent learning, or eloquence; *ſometimes* even homely, and uncouth in their appearance, and addreſs; and who are themſelves conſcious of much unworthineſ, infirmity, and inſufficiency for ſo arduous, and important an employ: this, I ſay, from generation to generation, in every country of the world, hath been the Lord's ordinary methods of accompliſhing thoſe purpoſes, which philoſophers, moraliſts, and lawgivers have attempted in vain; namely, "of teaching numbers to do "good, who have been accuſtomed to do evil." The diſregarded trumpet, blown by the deſpiſed miniſter; "the "preaching of the croſs," which is fooliſhneſs to them "that periſh," is only the token; the operation is from God. When that ſignal is given, in ſimple dependance upon "the exceeding greatneſs of his mighty power," it becomes indeed mighty through God, and ſatan's ſtrong holds fall before it; (2 *Cor.* c. x. v. 4, 5.) Thus, at different periods have heathen idolatry, and Popiſh ſuperſtition fallen before this trumpet's feeble blaſt, attended with the ſhout, the fervent united prayers of the true Iſrael of God.—At ſome future period, (perhaps commencing early in the ſeventh thouſand years,) this goſpel ſhall be preached more earneſtly, more generally, and more ſucceſsfully than ever, and ſatan's remaining bulwarks ſhall all fall down to the ground; "and the kingdoms of the earth ſhall become "the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt."—In the mean time this goſpel is never preached in vain, in any nation, city, town, village, or houſe, by miniſters of any name, or ſect, who ſimply ſeek the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſouls thereby. Let experience decide, whether in our age and nation, this ſame "fooliſhneſs of preach-"ing," notwithſtanding all the imperfection of the inſtruments, hath not done more towards checking the enormous progreſs of profligacy, and open ungodlineſs, and producing a regard to the ordinances, and commandments of God, in every part of the land, than all other means combined: and whether a greater number of undeniable inſtances of open, hardened, atrocious ſinners being transformed into new creatures, and leading new lives, and becoming excellent relations, and members of ſociety, cannot be produced amongſt thoſe who profeſs, and preach, "Chriſt "Jeſus and him crucified!" than amongſt thoſe, who patroniſe a ſyſtem profeſſedly more rational, wiſe, and liberal. The latter is man's contrivance, and is left to it's own efficacy; the former is God's ordinance, and like the trumpets ſounding round the walls of Jericho, is rendered effectual by the power of God.—But would we witneſs more of theſe bleſſed effects of a preached goſpel, the miniſters muſt ſtrictly adhere to the Lord's directions, and ſimply depend on, expect, pray, and wait for his bleſſing; and not yield to wearineſs, though they long ſeem to labour in vain: they muſt be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; embracing every opportunity of preaching the word to few, or to many, every day, but abounding therein on the Lord's day; and they muſt diſregard the cauſeleſs reproaches, ſcoffs, and ſlanders of oppoſers; but ſhould be careful that they give no occaſion to thoſe, who ſeek occaſion of ſpeaking reproachfully. The people alſo, who know the joyful ſound ſhould ſhew their concurrence by a diligent attendance upon the word preached; they ſhould endeavour to ſtrengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts of the miniſters, by their holy examples, and concurring endeavours, in their families, and amongſt their connexions; and they ſhould eſpecially unite in earneſt, and conſtant prayers for the bleſſing of God upon their labours. But it ſhould be peculiarly noticed that the ſame goſpel, which proclaims ſalvation to the chief of ſinners, who believe, becomes the occaſion of increaſing, and accelerating condemnation to the obſtinate, and impenitent, who are never more in danger of immediate deſtruction, than when moſt careleſs, and ſecure; (1 *Theſ.* c. v. ver. 3.) Where the Lord hath given faith, he will in due time complete ſalvation: and when his grace is beſtowed upon one in a family, that one is often made the honoured inſtrument of bringing others of them to partake of the ſame bleſſings. The ſevereſt judgments of God, however they are at preſent objected to, will at the day, when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be diſcloſed, appear moſt perfectly righteous. Whoſoever is honoured as an inſtrument in the Lord's work, ſhould count the glory of God his firſt object, and patiently wait his time, and manner of being graciouſly recompenſed; for a covetous ſelfiſh profeſſor, or miniſter, who is more attentive to his own gain, than the glory of God, is not only accurſed himſelf, but a curſe to the ſociety, or congregation, to which he belongs. That can never be loſt, which is devoted to God, nor waſted, that is ſpent in his ſervice; nor will the leaſt kindneſs ſhewn to any of his people, for his ſake, go unrewarded. But how deep are the counſels of God! Grace abounds to ſome of the chief of ſinners; whilſt vengeance is poured out upon others of

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. Achan's sin occasioning Israel's defeat before Ai, v. 1—5. 2d. Joshua, attended by the elders, humbling himself before God; with complaints, and discouragement, v. 6—9. 3d. The Lord declaring the reason of their defeat, and directing the removal of it, v. 10—15. 4th. The criminal detected, confessing, condemned, and executed, with all belonging to him, v. 16—26.

BUT the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

2 And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai.

3 And they returned to Joshua, and said unto him, Let not all the people go up; but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai, *and* make not all the people to labour thither: for they *are but* few.

4 So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men; and they fled before the men of Ai.

5 And the men of Ai smote of them about thirty and six men: for they chased them *from* before the gate *even* unto Shebarim, and smote them in the going down; wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water.

6 And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the even-tide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads.

7 And Joshua said, Alas! O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan!

8 O LORD, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies!

9 For the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear *of it*, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?

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them. His salvation, and his curse are both of them for ever; and wo be to that man who attempts to obliterate the memorials, or disannul the attestations, which the Lord hath made of his abhorrence of sin, and of his vengeance against impenitent sinners.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1. *But the children*, &c.] We have repeatedly read of the most promising appearances being blasted by the sins of the people: but here we read of wrath coming upon the whole congregation, through the sin of one man. Contrary to the express command, and in contempt of the awful curse of God, Achan had ventured to appropriate part of the spoil of Jericho. The temptation was strong, and he was overcome by it; we have rather cause to admire, that none else were guilty, than that one was. At the opening of the tabernacle worship we met with one striking instance of the severity of divine justice: here, upon the commencement of the wars of Canaan, we read of another: and the infancy of the Christian church presents to our view a similar example. All were doubtless intended to increase reverence, and godly fear, to promote circumspection, and to prevent wickedness in general, and hypocrisy in particular, from disgracing the camp of Israel, or the church of God. And that the instance before us might excite the more general vigilance in Joshua, in the elders, and in every Israelite; they were made to understand, that the guilt of an individual in these atrocious crimes, would be accounted the sin of them all; until detected, and punished; for they were all one body, nor could any part be infected with so dire a disease, without the detriment, and danger of the whole.

V. 3—5.] Their easy conquest of Jericho had not only encouraged them to hope for great success, through the power of the Lord fighting for them; but had also excited a contempt of the enemy, a disposition to spare themselves, and one another's labour, and to expect the Lord to do all for them, without their using the proper means. Thus do men abuse the doctrines of divine grace, and the promises of God, into an excuse for their own sloth, and self-indulgence! Nor can we entirely exculpate Joshua, as he seems to have formed his measures, without asking counsel of the Lord; who left them to follow their own devices, in order to bring to light, and punish Achan's sin.

V. 5. *About thirty, and six men*, &c.] Whether these men were peculiarly guilty of secret sin, or not, (*Gen.* c. xxxviii. v. 7,) the Lord had righteous, and wise reasons for his conduct; and the consideration of man's sinfulness, and of a future state of retributions, will solve the difficulties in all such providential dispensations.

V. 6—9.] Joshua, and the elders very justly considered this ill success as a divine rebuke, and properly thus expressed their sorrow and humiliation before the ark of the Lord, in the most self abasing posture: Joshua's plea in prayer also was excellent; and his concern for the honour of God, more than even for the fate of Israel, if their enemies should prevail over, and destroy them, was the genuine language of the Spirit of adoption. But all this was

10 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Get thee up; wherefore lieſt thou thus upon thy face?

11 Iſrael hath ſinned, and they have alſo tranſgreſſed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accurſed thing, and have alſo ſtolen, and diſſembled alſo, and they have put *it* even amongſt their own ſtuff.

12 Therefore the children of Iſrael could not ſtand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, becauſe they were accurſed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye deſtroy the accurſed from amongſt you.

13 Up, ſanctify the people, and ſay, Sanctify yourſelves againſt to-morrow; for thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, *There is* an accurſed thing in the midſt of thee, O Iſrael: thou canſt not ſtand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accurſed thing from among you.

14 In the morning therefore ye ſhall be brought according to your tribes: and it ſhall be, *that* the tribe which the LORD taketh ſhall come according to the families *thereof*; and the family which the LORD ſhall take ſhall come by houſholds; and the houſhold which the LORD ſhall take ſhall come man by man.

15 And it ſhall be, *that* he that is taken with the accurſed thing ſhall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath; becauſe he hath tranſgreſſed the covenant of the LORD, and becauſe he hath wrought folly in Iſrael.

16 So Joſhua roſe up early in the morning, and brought Iſrael by their tribes; and the tribe of Judah was taken:

17 And he brought the family of Judah; and he took the family of the Zarhites: and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man; and Zabdi was taken:

18 And he brought his houſhold man by man; and Achan, the ſon of Carmi, the ſon of Zabdi, the ſon of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.

19 And Joſhua ſaid unto Achan, My ſon, give, I pray thee, glory to the LORD God of Iſrael, and make confeſſion unto him: and tell me now what thou haſt done; hide *it* not from me.

20 And Achan anſwered Joſhua, and ſaid, Indeed I have ſinned againſt the LORD God of Iſrael, and thus and thus have I done:

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evidently mixed with much infirmity: his conſidering this trivial check, as a forerunner of total ruin; his inquiring wherefore the Lord had brought them over Jordan; and above all his implied ſuſpicion, that it was in order to deliver them into the hands of the Amorites, may eaſily be accounted for, but cannot be excuſed.

V. 10. *Get thee up*, &c.] The Lord rebukes his deſpondency, and unbelieving fears, and intimates, that as chief magiſtrate, he hath other work to attend to, and had ſpent a full proportion of time in thus proſtrating himſelf before the ark; and that his prayers would be anſwered, when he had performed his duty, in removing the accurſed thing from amongſt them.

V. 11. *Iſrael hath ſinned*, &c.] The Lord had not broke his word, nor was his arm ſhortened, but Iſrael had ſinned, (*Iſaiah*, c. lix. v. 1—4;) and the crime was ſo great, that unleſs the offender were made a public example of, it would be interpreted as a breach of covenant, and the Lord would be with them no more.

V. 16—18.] The Lord was not pleaſed to point out the criminal immediately, but left the matter in ambiguity for ſome time, and at laſt brought it to light gradually; not only that both magiſtrates, and people might learn to do their duty, and to keep a vigilant eye over one another: but that the delay, and the proceſs might make the tranſaction more ſolemn, and excite the more ſelf examination, and earneſt ſanctification of themſelves, as they were commanded, by every method, which was appointed in their law. Then the matter ſeems to have been decided by lot, as an appeal to the heart-ſearching God. The feelings of Achan muſt have been very poignant, when he was thus ſingled out as the accurſed perſon, for whoſe ſake wrath was come upon Iſrael; (*Jon.* c. i. v. 7—12.) The tribe, family, and parentage of the offender are thus ſpecified, that the infamy of ſuch a crime might not reſt on the reputation of any other perſon, of the ſame name.

V. 19. *My ſon give*, &c.] Without any reproach, or inſult, with much calmneſs, and meekneſs Joſhua gave Achan the beſt counſel, of which his circumſtances could poſſibly admit: he addreſſed him even with the tender appellation of "my ſon," and exhorted him "to give glory unto "God, by confeſſing his ſin." This would imply an acknowledgment that the commandment was reaſonable, and the penalty equitable, that he himſelf was indeed the tranſgreſſor, and merited the puniſhment. It would give the Lord the glory of his omniſcience, of his juſtice, of his holineſs, of his authority, of his truth, and indeed of all his perfections; and by taking ſhame to himſelf, and accepting the puniſhment of his ſin in this world, he might beſt ſeek for mercy to his ſoul in the world to come. In all this Joſhua's conduct is worthy of the imitation of all Chriſtian magiſtrates, when under the painful neceſſity of pronouncing the ſentence of death upon criminals.

V. 20. *Indeed I have ſinned*, &c.] Had not Achan's confeſſion been extorted by the preceding proceſs, and delayed till he could no longer conceal his guilt, one would

21 When I ſaw among the ſpoils a goodly Babyloniſh garment, and two hundred ſhekels of ſilver, and a wedge of gold of fifty ſhekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they *are* hid in the earth in the midſt of my tent, and the ſilver under it.

22 So Joſhua ſent meſſengers, and they ran unto the tent; and, behold, *it was* hid in his tent, and the ſilver under it.

23 And they took them out of the midſt of the tent, and brought them unto Joſhua, and unto all the children of Iſrael, and laid them out before the LORD.

24 And Joſhua, and all Iſrael with him, took Achan the ſon of Zerah, and the ſilver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his ſons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his aſſes, and his ſheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them into the valley of Achor.

25 And Joſhua ſaid, Why haſt thou troubled us? the LORD ſhall trouble thee this day. And all Iſrael ſtoned him with ſtones, and burned them with fire, after they had ſtoned them with ſtones.

26 And they raiſed over him a great heap

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have deemed him a true penitent. However, though late, it was frank, and ingenuous: he not only allowed the fact, and the offence againſt Iſrael, but confeſſed "that he had "ſinned againſt the Lord God of Iſrael;" (*Pſalm* li. v. 4;) he deſcended to particulars, attempted no excuſe, or extenuation, complained not of the ſeverity of the ſentence, and made no attempts to prevent it's execution. As Joſhua ſays, (. 25,) "the Lord ſhall trouble thee this day," ſome have thence argued the ſalvation of his ſoul; but we have nothing to do with deciding ſuch qu ſtions.

V. 21. *I ſaw*, &c.] The temptation entered by the carnal ſenſe, and excited the concupiſcence of the carnal heart; thus luſt was conceived, and ſin was brought forth. The goodly Babyloniſh garment, ſome coſtly robe, far fetched, and dear bought, was reſcued from the flames: and gold, and ſilver to the amount of eighty, or ninety pounds, were ſacrilegiouſly kept back from the treaſury of the Lord. For ſuch a *goodly* price, did Achan render himſelf accurſed, forfeited the fair proſpect of a rich inheritance in Canaan, became the troubler of Iſrael, and ruined his whole family; beſides the imminent danger, to which he expoſed his immortal ſoul! Such *folly*, as well as wickedneſs did he work in Iſrael, where true wiſdom might readily have been learned. No ſooner had he got poſſeſſion of his plunder, than it became his burden; and had he not been miraculouſly detected, he would have been conſumed with terrors, and would not have dared to uſe his ill-gotten treaſure: and when the other Iſraelites had been enriched, and enjoyed their abundance with credit, and a bleſſing, he would have loſt all the comfort of his portion, through this accurſed thing. So differently do the objects of temptation appear at a diſtance, to what they do, when apprehended, and when the infatuation ceaſes!

V. 23. *Laid them out before*, &c.] Being thus ſeparated from Iſrael's ſubſtance, and laid before the Lord, they both evidenced Achan's guilt, and the innocence of the others, that the wrath of the Lord might reſt on him, and be turned away from them.

V. 24. *His ſons*, &c.] This was forbidden to magiſtrates upon their own authority: but all lives are the Lord's, and he can ſet all right in a future ſtate; the ungodly deſerve worſe puniſhment than temporal death, and the righteous are only the ſooner taken to heaven. This circumſtance would be a vehement expreſſion of the exceeding enormity of the offence; and render the example more affecting, and alarming.

V. 25, 26.] It ſeems that they were firſt ſtoned, and then burned; which might denote the anger of God, that beyond death will purſue, and puniſh the impenitent. The heap of ſtones would perpetuate the memory of his ſin, and puniſhment, for the inſtruction of future generations: as would alſo the name given to the place, which ſignifies "trouble." (*Hoſea*, c. ii. v. 15.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When men by their crimes provoke the Lord to anger, he commonly leaves them to their own miſtaken counſels, and thus their own iniquity corrects them. The people of God can never expect to proſper in any undertaking, concerning which they have not inquired of the Lord to know his will, and crave his aſſiſtance; or in which they have indulged ſloth, or vain confidence, or tempted the Lord by expecting his aſſiſtance in the neglect of proper means. But human nature is prone to extremes: like children, we are eaſily elated by a little ſucceſs, and fancy that we ſhall now carry all before us: and when, in order to humble us, and to check the growth of ſelf-confidence, the Lord is pleaſed to throw ſome diſcouragement in our way; we are as eaſily thrown into deſpondency, and induced to forebode the moſt fatal conſequences. Every failure of ſucceſs in ſuch undertakings, as are evidently according to the will of God, and the duty of our place, and ſtation, ſhould cauſe us to humble ourſelves before God, and to flee to his mercy ſeat, to pour out our hearts before him, and inquire wherefore he contendeth with us? to plead his promiſes, and the glory of his great name, as engaged to ſupport that cauſe, which we are endeavouring to promote, whatever becomes of us, and our worthleſs names. But in the very prayers of the beſt of men there is much evil, which the Lord might *juſtly* condemn, and for which he will frequently rebuke, and chaſten them: eſpecially when they appear ungrateful for former mercies, murmuring, or deſponding on account of preſent trials, diſtruſtful of his faithfulneſs, or ſuſpicious of his future intentions reſpecting them. But what ſhall we *then* ſay, "when Iſrael turneth their backs "before their enemies?" It is not enough that the forces be recruited, that the paſſes be ſtrengthened, that the cowards be puniſhed, that the valiant be rewarded, that the

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of ſtones unto this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceneſs of his anger: wherefore the name of that place was called, The valley of Achor unto this day.

ſoldiers be animated by word, and deed, and that the enſuing aſſault be conducted with more ſkill, and circumſpection. The matter is not thus: Iſrael hath ſinned, and God is provoked; and nothing can enſure ſucceſs, until his indignation be turned away, and the accurſed thing be removed out of the camp. Times therefore of public danger, and calamity with nations profeſſing Chriſtianity, and the proteſtant religion, ſhould be times of peculiar reformation; notorious criminals ought then to be ſearched out, and brought to condign puniſhment, eſpecially ſuch as have enriched themſelves by ſacrilege, by perjury, by murder, oppreſſion, and iniquitous traffic. And whilſt ſuch criminals are connived at, and ſuffered to eſcape with impunity: yea, until ſomewhat effectual hath been done towards expiating national guilt, by the execution of public juſtice, on thoſe whoſe daring crimes, have brought the wrath of God on a guilty land, there is no cauſe to wonder, that they turn their backs upon their enemies, and little hope that God will be with them any more, notwithſtanding all their faſtings and prayers. And ſince theſe things have been ſo much diſregarded in proteſtant countries, they have been left to quarrel with one another; and to become the inſtruments of each other's correction, inſtead of being united, and proſpering in repelling the aſſaults of their common enemies. But may it not alſo be ſeriouſly queſtioned whether the caſe be not the ſame with reſpect of the ſucceſs of the preached goſpel, and the ſtate of religion amongſt us? It is to be feared that there hath been ſometimes more zeal ſhewn in ſupporting the intereſts of one party, againſt thoſe of other parties, than the intereſts of vital Godlineſs, againſt thoſe of infidelity, profligacy, and formal profeſſion: and that the favour, and concurrence of many a covetous Achan, has not only been accepted of, but aſſiduouſly ſought after, and with competition. Still more evidently doth it appear that there hath not always been due care taken to cenſure, and proteſt againſt, or exclude ſuch profeſſors, who are evidently the ſlaves of avarice, worldly luſts, and the pride of life; and to direct the ſearching word of God to their conſciences, in ſuch a manner, as *effectually* to make them underſtand, that their profeſſion of the doctrines of the goſpel, their attendance on the ordinances, and ſupport of the miniſters of God, will never ſave their ſouls, unleſs their idols be dethroned, and their hearts and lives renewed, by the converting grace of God. It is to be apprehended that there are ſome Achans in our congregations, whoſe lives prejudice men's minds againſt the truth, and bring a ſecret blaſt upon our miniſtry; nor will the Lord be with us any more, as he hath been with others before us, unleſs we do our beſt endeavours, without any partial, or perſonal regards, to ſeparate from amongſt us. And it is propoſed as a matter of ſerious inquiry, whether the preſent lamentable diviſions amongſt the profeſſors of ſerious Godlineſs; the confeſſedly ſmall ſucceſs of the preached goſpel, compared with that of former times; and the moſt alarming progreſs of open infidelity, be not in great meaſure to be aſcribed to the ſame cauſe, as Iſrael's defeat before Ai. But firſt of all we ſhould look at home, into our own hearts, and into our own houſes; and make diligent ſearch, whether there be not ſome accurſed thing there, which God ſees, and abhors; ſome unmortified luſt, ſome iniquitous gain, "put amongſt "our own ſtuff;" ſome withholding from God, and the poor their dues, in order to gratify avarice, or ſupport the expence of luxury, and the pride of life. If this be the caſe, no wonder we do not proſper in our ſouls, or in our miniſtry; no wonder if we get no benefit from our attendance upon ordinances, nor ſee any conſiderable effects from our unremitted, and moſt earneſt preaching from year to year. Nor can we expect to proſper any better, until the accurſed thing be deſtroyed out of our hearts, and removed out of our habitations, and forſaken in our lives. Nor muſt we only be careful that we ourſelves do not diſſemble any ſecret iniquity; but muſt remember that we are accountable for our families alſo, if we do not uſe all our circumſpection, and exert our authority to preſerve them free from every accurſed thing. In this way will Iſrael proſper, our ſouls will be like a watered garden, (*Iſaiah*, c. lviii. v. 11.) and the word of God will have free courſe, and be glorified, our God will be with us, and fight for us, and Iſrael ſhall no more turn their backs upon their enemies. Would we avoid the commiſſion of groſs iniquity, we muſt make a covenant with our eyes, and with all our ſenſes; we muſt learn to behold every ſurrounding object by faith, through the medium of God's word, not by ſenſe, through the medium of a worldly judgment, and a carnal mind: we muſt repreſs the firſt movings of concupiſcence in our hearts, and pray earneſtly, not to be led into temptation; we muſt habituate ourſelves to meditate upon the future conſequences of ſinful gratifications, to our characters, families, connexions, and temporal intereſts; to our conſcience, peace, and eternal concerns; to the church of God, and to the world around us; and to place ourſelves, by an effort of the imagination, in thoſe very circumſtances, in which we ſhall be, when the ſin is committed, and the infatuation is vaniſhed; and to conſider what our judgments, and feelings in that caſe would be. We ſhould alſo treat all expectations of ſecrecy, and impunity, as the deluſions of ſatan, and ſhould beware of hypocriſy: from our judge we can conceal nothing; and ſecreting our offences from our fellow criminals will avail us very little, and we may be ſure our iniquity will at length find us out. We ſhould alſo accuſtom ourſelves to ſelf-denial, and patient waiting; for the bleſſings, which God reſerves for his people, are like fruit, which will be wholeſome, when it hath had time to ripen, but will certainly be noxious, if greedily ſeized before the proper ſeaſon. When we are conſcious, that we have ſinned, we ſhould without delay confeſs our guilt fully, and ingenuouſly; and if the matter requires it, we ſhould glorify God and take ſhame to ourſelves, by an open acknowledgment of our crimes, and juſtify him, in all the temporal puniſhments, which we endure: for, bleſſed be his name, through him, who was made a curſe for us, all manner of ſins, and blaſphemies ſhall be forgiven to the true believer. But even, when final condemnation is eſcaped, what terrible effects doth ſin produce! What fatal conſequences often enſue in this world to the ſinner himſelf, and to all belonging to, or connected with him! How one ſinner deſtroyeth much good! What

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The Lord inſtructing and encouraging Joſhua, about the taking of Ai, v. 1—2. *2d. That city beſieged and taken; the ſlaughter of the inhabitants, the city burned, the ſpoil divided, and the king executed, v.* 3—29. *3d. The appointed ſacrifices offered; and the bleſſings, and curſes proclaimed from mount Gerizzim, and mount Ebal, v.* 30—35.

AND the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Fear not, neither be thou diſmayed; take all the people of war with thee, and ariſe, go up to Ai: ſee, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land.

2 And thou ſhalt do to Ai and her king, as thou didſt unto Jericho and her king: only the ſpoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, ſhall ye take for a prey unto yourſelves. Lay thee an ambuſh for the city behind it.

3 So Joſhua aroſe, and all the people of war, to go up againſt Ai: and Joſhua choſe out thirty thouſand mighty men of valour, and ſent them away by night.

4 And he commanded them, ſaying, Behold, ye ſhall lie in wait againſt the city, *even* behind the city; go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready:

5 And I, and all the people that *are* with me, will approach unto the city: and it ſhall come to paſs, when they come out againſt us as at the firſt, that we will flee before them,

6 (For they will come out after us,) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will ſay, They flee before us, as at the firſt: therefore we will flee before them.

7 Then ye ſhall riſe up from the ambuſh, and ſeize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand.

8 And it ſhall be, when ye have taken the city, *that* ye ſhall ſet the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD ſhall ye do. See, I have commanded you.

9 Joſhua therefore ſent them forth; and they went to lie in ambuſh, and abode between Beth-el and Ai, on the weſt ſide of Ai: but Joſhua lodged that night among the people.

10 And Joſhua roſe up early in the morning, and numbered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Iſrael, before the people to Ai.

11 And all the people, *even the people* of war that *were* with him, went up, and drew nigh, and came before the city, and pitched on the north ſide of Ai: now *there was* a valley between them and Ai.

12 And he took about five thouſand men, and ſet them to lie in ambuſh between Beth-el and Ai, on the weſt ſide of the city.

13 And when they had ſet the people, *even* all the hoſt that *was* on the north of the city,

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will then be the wrath to come? let us take warning, and without delay flee from it to Jeſus Chriſt, the ſinner's friend. Finally, though atrocious criminals ſhould be puniſhed with unrelenting firmneſs, and all ſhould unite in their proteſt againſt their crimes; yet their miſery ſhould not be inſulted, nor their immortal ſouls forgotten: but calm expoſtulations, ſerious inſtructions, and compaſſionate exhortations ſhould unite to bring them to repentance, that they may obtain mercy from God in a future world: and every method ſhould be adopted, which can render the example of public juſtice productive of as deep, and durable an impreſſion upon the minds of the ſurvivors, as poſſible.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 2. *Lay thee an ambuſh*, &c.] This ſtratagem of war was of God's own appointment: the war was not only lawful but holy; and it was equally lawful to outwit, as to overpower their enemies. No treaties were hereby violated, no oaths broken, no falſehoods uttered; and it cannot be requiſite to inform our enemies of our intentions, and purpoſes, however they may be deceived by appearances. But infractions of treaties, lies, perjuries, &c. cannot in any war, or in any caſe be allowable, or excuſable. Jericho had been taken by miracle, without the people's danger or fatigue, in order to teach them to depend on, and to give God the glory of all their ſucceſs. But they were diſpoſed to infer that they might deſpiſe their enemies, and indulge themſelves; and that the Lord would fight for them, without their interference. They were therefore in the next inſtance to be inſtructed, that diligence, ſelf-denial, and the exertion of all their powers both of body and mind was required of them, in order to attain ſucceſs. The whole force of Iſrael was therefore commanded to march againſt this ſmall city, and an ambuſhment was alſo to be formed: yet when all was done, they were taught to depend upon the Lord to deliver it into their hands, and to acknowledge him in it, as much, as in the caſe of Jericho.

V. 7—12. *Five thouſand*, &c.] There is much difficulty in determining from this narrative, whether the thirty thouſand men before mentioned aſſaulted the city openly, whilſt only theſe five thouſand lay in ambuſh: or whether the whole force of Iſrael appeared in arms againſt Ai, and the thirty thouſand formed an ambuſhment, and the five thouſand formed a ſecond ambuſhment, or were ſent to join them. But the matter is not important, and hath nothing to do with our edification.

and their liers in wait on the weſt of the city, Joſhua went that night into the midſt of the valley.

14 And it came to paſs, when the king of Ai ſaw *it*, that they haſted and roſe up early, and the men of the city went out againſt Iſrael to battle, he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain; but he wiſt not that *there were* liers in ambuſh againſt him behind the city.

15 And Joſhua and all Iſrael made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderneſs.

16 And all the people that *were* in Ai were called together to purſue after them: and they purſued after Joſhua, and were drawn away from the city.

17 And there was not a man left in Ai, or Beth-el, that went not out after Iſrael: and they left the city open, and purſued after Iſrael.

18 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Stretch out the ſpear that *is* in thy hand toward Ai: for I will give it into thine hand. And Joſhua ſtretched out the ſpear that *he had* in his hand toward the city.

19 And the ambuſh aroſe quickly out of their place, and they ran as ſoon as he had ſtretched out his hand: and they entered into the city, and took it, and haſted, and ſet the city on fire.

20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they ſaw, and behold, the ſmoke of the city aſcended up to heaven; and they had no power to flee this way or that way: and the people that fled to the wilderneſs turned back upon the purſuers.

21 And when Joſhua and all Iſrael ſaw that the ambuſh had taken the city, and that the ſmoke of the city aſcended, then they turned again, and ſlew the men of Ai.

22 And the other iſſued out of the city againſt them; ſo they were in the midſt of Iſrael, ſome on this ſide, and ſome on that ſide: and they ſmote them, ſo that they let none of them remain or eſcape.

23 And the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joſhua.

24 And it came to paſs, when Iſrael had made an end of ſlaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderneſs wherein they chaſed them, and when they were all fallen on the edge of the ſword until they were conſumed, that all the Iſraelites returned unto Ai, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword.

25 And *ſo* it was, *that* all that fell that day, both of men and women, *were* twelve thouſand, *even* all the men of Ai.

26 For Joſhua drew not his hand back, wherewith he ſtretched out the ſpear, until he had utterly deſtroyed all the inhabitants of Ai.

27 Only the cattle, and the ſpoil of that city, Iſrael took for a prey unto themſelves, according unto the word of the LORD, which he commanded Joſhua.

28 And Joſhua burnt Ai, and made it an heap for ever, *even* a deſolation unto this day.

29 And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until even tide: and as ſoon as the ſun was

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V. 17. *There was not a man*, &c.] Greater infatuation cannot be imagined than this was: upon ſuch a trifling advantage, as the former, and upon ſo ſlight an appearance of further ſucceſs, to leave the city defenceleſs, that they might purſue ſuch a numerous army! But they were left to be blinded by pride, obſtinacy, and rage againſt Iſrael, to their more ſpeedy deſtruction. The king, and people of Beth-el appear to have been confederate with thoſe of Ai, and to have been ſubdued and deſtroyed at the ſame time.

V. 26. *Wherewith he*, &c.] Joſhua ſtretched forth his hand with the ſpear, at God's command, as a ſignal to thoſe, who lay in ambuſh, and as a token of the divine aſſiſtance: and he appears to have remained upon ſome eminence in the ſight of the Iſraelites, and to have perſevered in the ſame ſignal, till all the enemies were deſtroyed. Thus Joſhua conquered by ſeeming to yield: which hath been accommodated to Chriſt, when by yielding to death he overcame him, who had the power of death, deprived the king of terrors of his power to hurt his people, and prepared the way for the utter deſtruction of this laſt enemy.

V. 27. *Only the cattle*, &c.] We may ſuppoſe that this was divided according to the example before given, (*Num.* c. xxxi. v. 27, 28—47;) or by ſome other equitable and regular method of proceeding. Thus the people began to receive a gracious recompenſe for their ſelf-denial in refraining from the devoted ſpoil of Jericho: whilſt Achan received the juſt puniſhment of his ſacrilege.

V. 29. *He hanged on a tree*, &c.] The kings of Canaan were under the ſame curſe, as their ſubjects, and probably more deeply criminal: and the reſerving of the king of Ai for a more ſolemn execution, would tend to ſtrike down,

down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcase down from the tree, and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city, and raise thereon a great heap of stones, *that remaineth* unto this day.

30 Then Joshua built an altar unto the LORD God of Israel in mount Ebal;

31 As Moses the servant of the LORD commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, An altar of whole stones, over which no man hath lifted up *any* iron: and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the LORD, and sacrificed peace-offerings.

32 And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel.

33 And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark, and on that side, before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, as well the stranger as he that was born among them; half of them over against mount Gerizzim, and half of them over against mount Ebal; as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel.

34 And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law.

35 There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them.

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terror into the rest of them, would contribute to the success of the Israelites, and give the whole the greater appearance of a judicial process, and of the executing of the Lord's vengeance upon his enemies. As Israel acted by a peculiar commission, none of their conduct can be drawn into precedent.

V. 30—35.] (*See Notes*, &c. *Deut.* c. xxvii.) As soon as ever Joshua had access to the mountains, which the Lord by Moses had appointed, without delay, and without regarding the unsettled state of Israel, or the machinations of their enemies, he proceeded to ratify the covenant of the Lord with his people: by building the occasional altar, and offering the instituted sacrifices; writing the abstracts of the law on the plastered stones; proclaiming the blessings and curses from the two mountains according to the prescribed form; and reading over himself the whole law to the people. Thus by the precepts of the law sin is detected; by its curses, the desert, and danger of the sinner are discovered; in the sacrifice of Christ the self-condemned transgressor finds pardon, and peace; and enjoying the comfort of communion with God, manifests his faith, and love by walking in the ways of chearful obedience; and in this manner obtains, and enjoys the blessings of the new covenant of mercy and grace.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When sin is repented of, and put away as an accursed thing with abhorrence, we may expect encouragement, assistance, and a blessing from our reconciled God and Father: and the more we fear God with filial reverence, and are afraid of offending him, the less need we fear what man can do unto us; and with the greater confidence may we expect success in our spiritual warfare, and in our zealous endeavours to serve God, and to promote the prosperity of his people. When we *truly believe, and rightly understand* that "without the Lord we can do nothing," and that our sufficiency and success must come from him, and all the glory be rendered unto him, we shall be far from lying down in supineness, and self-indulgent sloth: on the contrary, we shall be excited to use every commanded, and allowable means, which we can devise, with all our might; and to seek the help, and blessing from the Lord, to render them effectual. The former inference is satan's comment, approved by the carnal heart, and suited to it's disposition: the latter is according to the general tenor of the word of God, which every where calls upon us to strive, labour, and give diligence; and is approved of by every heaven-born soul, as the proper practical deduction from the important, but humbling truth. For this is the language of common sense, in all other concerns, that the less we can do to help ourselves, in a matter of importance, the more occasion have we to seek the help, and to observe the directions of those, who are able, and disposed to assist us. Thus also the Lord applies his salvation to our souls, by stirring us up, through his preventing grace, to be diligent in the use of appointed means, and through those means communicating all sufficiency for every good work, (Phil. c. ii. v. 12, 13.) In this way to be diligent, and earnest with all our heart, and soul in seeking salvation, resisting temptation, and striving against sin, is true Christian wisdom, and the due medium, betwixt the extremes to which human nature is propense. In every undertaking prudent counsel is as conducive to success, as vigorous exertion; and on some occasions well-timed yielding secures the advantage better than pertinacious opposition. They, who honour the Lord with their substance, and are not in haste to be rich, will eventually be no losers by their liberal obedience, and patient waiting; though Christians must tarry until they arrive at the heavenly Canaan, before they receive their full reward: there will they enjoy their everlasting portion, when that of worldlings will be all spent, and their souls in utter misery: (*Luke* c. xvi. v. 19—31.) And indeed the prosperity of fools destroys them, and their short-lived presumptuous rejoicing will speedily issue in lamentations and mourning and woe: and as the Lord gives wisdom to those, whom he loves, and will prosper; so he infatuates those, who have filled up the measure of

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The kings of Canaan confederating againſt Iſrael, v. 1—2. *2d. The Gibeonites beguiling Joſhua into a covenant of peace, v.* 3—15. *3d. The Iſraelites detecting the impoſture, yet ſparing their lives, and reducing them to bondage, to which they willingly conſented, v.* 16—27.

AND it came to paſs, when all the kings which *were* on this ſide Jordan, in the hills and in the valleys, and in all the coaſts of the great ſea over againſt Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebuſite, heard *thereof*,

2 That they gathered themſelves together to fight with Joſhua, and with Iſrael, with one accord.

3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joſhua had done unto Jericho and to Ai,

4 They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambaſſadors; and

their iniquity. Our duty is to reverence the aged, to honour thoſe, who are placed in authority over us, and to compaſſionate the weak and the helpleſs, the feebler ſex, and the tender age: but the Judge of all the earth will involve all impenitent ſinners in one common condemnation, without any other diſtinction, than that of their different degrees of guilt: by which rule, they, who have abuſed the greateſt abilities, riches, or authority, will be only diſtinguiſhed by the larger meaſure of divine vengeance. However buſy, unſettled, or expoſed we are, our God, and our religion muſt have our firſt attention; ſeeking firſt the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, all things elſe ſhall be added unto us. In doing this we muſt reſt our hope upon the atonement of the great Redeemer, according to the goſpel of our ſalvation; and keep the holy law of God continually before our eyes, as the rule of our evangelical obedience: we muſt remember the awful curſes of the old covenant, to quicken our pace in fleeing to the refuge, which is appointed us; and to keep alive the ſalutary fears of coming ſhort of it; (*Heb.* c. iv. v. 1;) and to reſtrain us from ſin in an hour of temptation: (*Luke* c. xii. v. 4, 5:) and we muſt embrace and plead in prayer the precious promiſes of the new covenant for our encouragement, in denying ourſelves, and bearing the croſs. In the ſame important ſubjects we muſt inſtruct our families, and train up our children; and ſpeak of them freely even to ſtrangers, who are converſant amongſt us. And it is happy for them, who begin early in life to attend to theſe needful concerns; that in their declining age, (ſhould they live ſo long,) they may look back with comfort to their early engagements, and the unnumbered benefits, which have reſulted from them.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *Heard thereof*, &c.] In general they had heard, that the Iſraelites had paſſed over Jordan, and commenced hoſtilities; in particular they had heard of the deſtruction of Jericho, and Ai, and of their ſolemn covenanting with the Lord, as if already in poſſeſſion of the land. Had they not been intimidated, and infatuated, they would with combined force have oppoſed their paſſage over Jordan: but after all the miracles, which had been wrought, an accommodation, if poſſible, was the only thing, which they could reaſonably attempt: from this they were withheld by a deſperate obſtinacy, and rage; being ripe for deſtruction they were left to be hardened, and blinded to ruſh upon it of their own accord.

V. 3. *The inhabitants of Gibeon*, &c.] The Gibeonites had heard of the deſtruction of Jericho, and Ai, with the ſlaughter of all the inhabitants, as well as the former miracles, wrought in Egypt, and more recently in the deſtruction of Og and Baſhan, with their ſubjects. They had alſo learned that the Iſraelites were commanded to deſtroy all the inhabitants of the land, without entering into any league with, or giving any quarter to them; and that the Lord had promiſed to give them the victory over them all. The other inhabitants of the land had heard the ſame; but they were only exaſperated, and rendered the more determined in their oppoſition by theſe reports: but the Gibeonites, or at leaſt ſome of their leading men, (for we read not that they were governed by a king,) were induced to believe that the word of the Lord would certainly be accompliſhed, and that all oppoſition to the Iſraelites would be unavailing: moved therefore with the fear of impending deſtruction, they conſidered, that the only proſpect of ſafety lay in an accommodation with Iſrael upon any terms. Had they caſt themſelves without reſerve upon the mercy of Iſrael, and of Iſrael's God, there is no doubt but they would have been ſpared, as Rahab, and her relations were: for though the Lord would not allow the people to make exceptions to his general rule of deſtroying the Canaanites, for their own eaſe, and emolument, by forming alliances with them continuing idolaters: yet in this, and in all other caſes, he was ready to make exceptions to his threatenings, in favour of thoſe who repented, and truſted in his mercy. But not being acquainted with this limitation, and interpreting the general command in it's utmoſt rigour, they deſpaired of being preſerved, if they were detected; yet they conceived an idea, that if they could bring the rulers of Iſrael under the bond of an oath, though the effect of a deception, that oath would ſecure them from being put to death. Accordingly they formed a ſtratagem, which cannot be vindicated, but may admit of ſome excuſe from their imminent danger, and from their ignorance of God, and of his law; in which they ſucceeded according to their expectation.

V. 4. *Ambaſſadors*, &c.] It is likely that theſe were the chief perſons amongſt them, but they profeſſed themſelves the ambaſſadors of ſome foreign princes: and, according to the cuſtoms of thoſe days, when inns at regular ſtages were not known, and conſequently men took with them all their proviſions for their journey, as we do for a voyage, they fitted themſelves out in ſuch a manner, that they appeared to have come from a very diſtant country,

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took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;

5 And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* mouldy.

6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country; now therefore make ye a league with us.

7 And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you?

8 And they said unto Joshua, We *are* thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who *are* ye? and from whence come ye?

9 And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come, because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.

10 And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites that *were* beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which *was* at Ashtaroth.

11 Wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We *are* your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us.

12 This our bread we took hot *for* our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy:

13 And these bottles of wine which we filled, *were* new; and behold they be rent, and these our garments and our shoes are become old, by reason of the very long journey.

14 And the men took of their victuals, and asked not *counsel* at the mouth of the LORD.

15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.

16 And it came to pass at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbours, and *that* they dwelt among them.

17 And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjath-jearim.

18 And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes.

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and they pretended that their provisions were either exhausted, or spoiled by the length of their journey; and even their clothes, and vessels worn out.—We may be sure the several circumstances were artfully devised, and appeared very plausible to Joshua, and Israel, though we cannot well judge of them by modern manners and customs.

V. 9. *A very far country*, &c.] They intended to intimate that their country was so distant, that the Israelites had never heard the name of it: but that they had so far off heard the report of the works, which God had wrought for his people in desolating Egypt, and bringing them forth thence; and in destroying before them the kings of the Amorites: and that these reports had so impressed their minds, that they were desirous of amity with them upon any terms: and that for this purpose they had undertaken so very fatiguing a journey; and were willing to become their servants, and tributaries, if they might in return have security, that they should not be destroyed at any future period by the increasing power, and spreading dominion of Israel: At the same time they artfully avoided any mention of the passage of the Israelites over Jordan, and the destruction of Jericho, and Ai, as willing that it should be understood, that they had not yet heard of these more recent miracles, and successes. This address was well calculated to insinuate itself into the minds of the Israelites, who would be exceedingly gratified with the Idea, that they were a people of such renown, and that their power was dreaded, and their friendship courted by such distant nations: and the favour of Joshua, and of the more pious amongst them would be conciliated by the respectful mention which they made of the name, and works of the Lord; especially as it had been foretold that these miracles should have this effect. (*Exod.* c. ix. v. 16.)

V. 14, 15. *Took of their victuals*, &c.] Examining their provisions, they hastily concluded, that the state of them corroborated the account, which the supposed ambassadors had given, and without any further hesitation entered into league with them, as representatives of their people, and by oath engaged not to destroy them. There was much credulity, and impolicy in this precipitated treaty, entered into with strangers, to which they had little inducement, except flattering words, and fair speeches: but the chief fault of Joshua, and of the princes was, that they did not ask counsel of the Lord, in a matter of such importance, when they always had the means of so doing present with them. But the Lord over-ruled it for good, though not without rendering them ashamed of suffering themselves to be thus imposed on.

V. 18. *Murmured against the princes*, &c.] Because they were restrained from taking immediate possession of, and

19 But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore, we may not touch them.

20 This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them.

21 And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.

22 And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We *are* very far from you; when ye dwell among us?

23 Now therefore ye *are* cursed; and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.

24 And they answered Joshua, and said, Because it was certainly told thy servants, how that the LORD thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you, therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing.

25 And now, behold, we *are* in thine hand: as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us, do.

26 And so did he unto them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not.

27 And Joshua made them that day hewers

plundering their cities: yet we have reason to conclude that the Israelites possessed them afterwards; for we find them mentioned in the division of the land; (c. xv. ver. 60. c. xviii. v. 25, 26.)

V. 20. *Because of the oath*, &c.] Had the oath been in itself unlawful, it would not have been binding; for no obligation can render it our duty to commit a sin. But it was not in itself unlawful to spare the lives of those Canaanites, who, without having ever attempted to assault the Israelites, or ever intending to do it, entirely submitted to them, and renounced their idolatry, desiring only that their lives might be spared on any terms. The princes of Israel had indeed been imposed upon by a false pretext; but they had solemnly engaged by oath to the deputies of Gibeon that they would let the people live, from whom they came; they were themselves faulty in engaging so rashly in this matter, and were not allowed to violate their oath, though it was to their own hurt; (*Psalm* xv. v. 4.) And it is evident that God approved of their conduct in keeping their oath, and was displeased with Saul, when he long afterward infringed it; (2 *Sam.* c. xxi. v. 1—3.) So that even in this war, which by special commission Israel waged against the accursed Canaanites, the infraction of solemn treaties, and the violation of solemn oaths were not to be allowed. This deserves the serious consideration of those, who are concerned in the government of states and kingdoms, where politicians are seldom found so scrupulous, as these princes of Israel were, when interest, and popular prejudice, or clamour unite to tempt them to break through such obligations. And were there any heretics more certainly devoted to destruction than the accursed Canaanites, none but antichrist would conclude that no faith was to be observed with them, or that the most solemn oaths sworn to them might be dispensed with. But if the deception, that the Gibeonites practised, did not dissolve the obligation under which the princes of Israel had brought themselves; the simplicity, sincerity, and honesty of those, with whom we are connected, should be considered as an additional bond on our conscience, to be scrupulously exact and punctual in all our dealings with them.

V. 23. *Ye are cursed*, &c.] The original curse pronounced upon the descendants of Canaan was, that they should be "the servants of servants:" if the Gibeonites therefore have their lives spared, in regard to the oath of God, which was all that was engaged for to them, they must consent to become not only tributaries, but the meanest slaves to Israel; especially as they had beguiled them, and therefore could not expect to have a treaty fraudulently obtained, interpreted in any other than the strictest sense. If therefore they would consent to become hewers of wood, and drawers of water to the congregation, and especially to the priests, and Levites, without excepting even the chief men amongst them, their lives should indeed be spared. These appeared very humiliating, and rigorous terms, when we consider, "that "Gibeon was as one of the royal cities, and all the men "thereof were mighty;" but they readily acquiesced therein: which shewed how much in earnest they were, and how desirous upon any terms to escape the doom of the Canaanites, and to make an accommodation with Israel: and it forms a considerable proof, that the managing men at least in the whole transaction were actuated by a true faith, and the fear of God, notwithstanding all the intermixture of evil, coincident therewith: and it very aptly represented many things, which take place in the conversion of sinners to Jesus Christ.—Accordingly their cities, and lands seem to have been afterwards ceded to the Israelites, nor was any of them freed from being bondmen: and as the Israelites were not allowed to keep any perpetual slaves, but of other nations; so the Gibeonites were made the slaves of the priests, and Levites; to do the meanest, and the hardest work belonging to the sanctuary service, under the name of Nethinims. Thus was the matter settled to the satisfaction of all parties: the people were satisfied with having their estates, and the benefit of their services in the sanctuary, and whilst they continued together, for themselves also. The priests, and Levites had a valuable acquisition, and would not only be exempted from much hard labour, but set at liberty to attend more devotedly to their proper work: (*Acts*, c. vi. v. 2—4:) the Gibeonites preserved

of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the LORD, even unto this day, in the place which he ſhould chooſe.

their lives; and though laid under a preſent rebuke for their prevarication, the appointment was over-ruled for their great advantage, by their being brought in to the courts of the Lord, and ſo favourably employed for the good of their ſouls; and inſtead of being deſtroyed as accurſed from God, they were admitted into his ſervice, as wholly devoted to him. The whole had a very favourable aſpect upon the Gentile nations, and pre-intimated their admiſſion into the church.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilſt the people of God are the moſt zealouſly engaged in their devotions, their enemies are peculiarly inſtigated by Satan, to confederate againſt them: but they, who aſſociate themſelves againſt thoſe, who are devoted to the ſervice of God, will only the more ſpeedily be broken in pieces: (*Iſai.* c. viii. v. 9.) And though the conduct of the enemies of true Godlineſs is both hateful, and infatuated: yet frequently their unanimity may ſuggeſt a profitable hint to the people of God; and ſhame them out of their *inteſtine* contentions, and diſputes, and inſtruct them to unite in oppoſing the incurſions of their common enemies. It is a great bleſſing for any people to be under the government of thoſe, who in any degree fear God, and are anxious to avert his impending wrath from a guilty land, and to adopt any ſincere, and deciſive meaſures for that purpoſe: ſuch will eſcape, when others are hurried on into deſtruction, by hardened, obſtinate, and atheiſtical rulers. For the ſame warnings, and promiſes of God's word, and the ſame reports of his mercy to his people, and judgments upon his enemies, which move ſome to flee from the wrath to come, and to ſeek ſhelter from the threatening ſtorm; only irritate the enmity, and increaſe the deſperation of others: and every thing good, or tending to good cometh from God, to whom belongeth all the praiſe. But when the conſciences of ſinners are firſt alarmed with the dread of wrath, and filled with the anguiſh of bitter remorſe, they are generally actuated by a ſpirit of bondage; and being greatly ignorant of God, of his law, and of his goſpel of rich grace abounding to the chief of ſinners, they frequently ſeek relief by ſuch methods, as only ſerve to increaſe their guilt, and involve themſelves the more: and their carnal contrivances, and falſe dependances are ſeldom free from aſſumed appearances, and hypocritical pretences, by which they attempt to impoſe upon others, and actually impoſe upon themſelves. But when men are really in earneſt to eſcape the wrath of God, they will not long be left to reſt in forms, and falſe refuges, but will appear in the midſt of all, willing to venture, ſuffer, and ſtoop to any thing, in order to obtain ſalvation: and though the Lord Jeſus (the true Joſhua) ſees through every diſguiſe, and abhors all iniquity, he will not reject even ſuch ſinners, as theſe, either on account of their former crimes, or of the manifeſt evil, which pollutes their endeavours for ſalvation: but he will reprove them for, and convince them of their guilt; he will bring them to repentance, and gradually purify them from thoſe evils; he will take them off from all their falſe dependances, and ſhame them out of their ſecret hypocriſy; he will teach them to truſt in, and make them partakers of his mercy; he will ſave their ſouls, and, make them his ſervants; and though he correct them for their ſins, or allot them a low ſtation, and hard ſervice in his church; yet he will teach them to acquieſce, and be thankful, and readily to ſay, "behold we are in thy "hand: as it ſeemeth good, and right unto thee to do unto "us, do." Thus that which is begun with a very large portion of evil, may end well; and ſinners who were under an awful curſe, may by grace be made a bleſſing: and to exchange the higheſt ſtation in the world, for the meaneſt place amongſt the ſervants, and in the courts of the Lord, though it appear a degradation, and a trial, is indeed a very great preferment, and will appear ſo in due ſeaſon. Flattering words, and plauſible pretences to religion are apt to induce even wiſe, and good men too eaſily to lay aſide ſuſpicion, and to give countenance to impoſture: nor do any act wiſely, who proceed with ſuch precipitation, as not to take time to conſult the Lord. But he over-rules many things for his own glory, and the advantage of his church, which are not done according to his commandments, and conſequently are not examples for us to imitate. Though we have been impoſed upon, we muſt not think ourſelves at liberty to retaliate: and ſolemn engagements entered into, even to our hurt, muſt be conſcientiouſly adhered to: and much allowance ſhould be made for thoſe, whoſe minds are diſquieted with the fear of impending ruin, and who have not enjoyed the advantage of good inſtruction. But if men, in order to ſave their lives, are conſidered as acting reaſonably, when they renounce all their intereſts, ſtoop to any conceſſions, accept of any terms, and become willing to endure any hardſhips: how reaſonable muſt it be for us to be influenced by the fear of eternal puniſhment, and the hope of everlaſting life; to renounce the world, to mortify our luſts, to deny ourſelves, to ſubmit to the croſs; to humble, and abaſe ourſelves in the very duſt before God; to count all but dung, that we may win Chriſt, and be found in him; to be in haſte to have the covenant of peace ratified to our ſouls; to cut off the offending limb, and to pluck out the offending eye; and in ſhort to yield up ourſelves to the Lord without reſerve, craving only that our ſouls may be ſaved, and that he would make us his ſervants, though in the loweſt place, and though called to endure the greateſt hardſhips? In coming thus unto the Saviour we do not proceed upon a peradventure; we are invited to draw nigh, and we are aſſured that "him, that cometh to "him, he will in no wiſe caſt out." And even thoſe things, which ſound harſh, and are humiliating, and form very ſharp trials of our ſincerity, will in the event prove the ſources both of real advantage, and of ſtrong conſolation. But let us look to it, that we come, and cleave to the Lord with an upright heart; we hope indeed that many of the Gibeonites were true believers, though not native Iſraelites: but we are ſure, that many, who preach, and write, and labour very diligently, and even uſefully to others, are only hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation of the Lord, and have no inheritance in Iſrael, but are themſelves caſtaways.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. Five kings confederating againſt Gibeon, v. 1. 5. *2d. Joſhua, at Gibeon's requeſt, attacking, overcoming, and deſtroying their armies: whilſt the Lord ſlew ſtill greater numbers by hailſtones, and cauſed the ſun and moon to ſtay their courſe, till the victory was completed; their kings taken priſoners, and put to death, v.* 6—27. *3d. The conqueſt of ſeveral cities, and countries, and the return of Iſrael to Gilgal, v.* 28—43.

NOW it came to paſs, when Adoni-zedec king of Jeruſalem had heard how Joſhua had taken Ai, and had utterly deſtroyed it; as (he had done to Jericho and her king, ſo he had done to Ai and her king;) and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Iſrael, and were among them;

2 That they feared greatly, becauſe Gibeon *was* a great city, as one of the royal cities, and becauſe it *was* greater than Ai, and all the men thereof *were* mighty.

3 Wherefore Adoni-zedec king of Jeruſalam ſent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachiſh, and unto Debir king of Eglon, ſaying,

4 Come up unto me, and help me, that we may ſmite Gibeon: for it hath made peace with Joſhua, and with the children of Iſrael.

5 Therefore the five kings of the Amorites, the king of Jeruſalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachiſh, the king of Eglon, gathered themſelves together, and went up, they and all their hoſts, and encamped before Gibeon, and made war againſt it.

6 And the men of Gibeon ſent unto Joſhua to the camp to Gilgal, ſaying, Slack not thy hand from thy ſervants; come up to us quickly, and ſave us, and help us: for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together againſt us.

7 So Joſhua aſcended from Gilgal, he, and all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valour.

8 And the LORD ſaid unto Joſhua, Fear them not; for I have delivered them into thine hand: there ſhall not a man of them ſtand before thee.

9 Joſhua therefore came unto them ſuddenly, *and* went up from Gilgal all night.

10 And the LORD diſcomfited them before Iſrael, and ſlew them with a great ſlaughter at Gibeon, and chaſed them along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and ſmote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah.

11 And it came to paſs, as they fled from before Iſrael, *and* were in the going down to Beth-horon, that the LORD caſt down great ſtones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: *they were* more which died

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 3. *Wherefore Adoni-zedec*, &c.] The name of this king ſignifies "the Lord of righteouſneſs," and he probably was a deſcendant, as well as ſucceſſor of Melchizedek, ("the king of righteouſneſs,") who retained nothing of his progenitor's piety, but the mere name, which his conduct belied.—Whilſt thoſe kings, whoſe dominions lay further north, who had confederated againſt Iſrael, were probably collecting their forces for a general aſſault; the report of Gibeon's alliance with Iſrael prevailed upon theſe five kings, both from fear of the conſequences of ſuch an example, and out of a deſire of revenge, to attack the Gibeonites ſeparately, that they might firſt cruſh them, and intimidate others from imitating them, and ſo might be afterwards the more at liberty to attack the Iſraelites: but they only accelerated, and facilitated their own deſtruction.

V. 6. *Sent unto Joſhua*, &c.] The Gibeonites had that confidence in Joſhua, and Iſrael, that they did not fear, but that they would come to the defence of thoſe, whom they had admitted to be their ſervants; for ſubjection entitles to protection: and they had that confidence in the God of Iſrael, that they did doubt of their ſucceſs in the expedition: but they informed him, that no time was to be loſt.—"Come up to us quickly," ſay they, "and "ſave us," &c.

V. 7. *From Gilgal*, &c.] Their head-quarters were ſtill at Gilgal: there Joſhua left the bulk of the people, doubtleſs with a ſufficient guard; and marched with the men of moſt approved valour, to defend the Gibeonites againſt the kings of Canaan.

V. 10. *The Lord diſcomfited*, &c.] Joſhua was an able commander, and headed a numerous army of "mighty "men of valour;" his meaſures were concerted with prudence, and executed with vigour, and diſpatch: he marched all night, attacked the enemy at unawares, and doubtleſs his troops behaved well: yet the Lord's promiſe (v. 8.) was his encouragement, and the whole victory is here aſcribed to him.—Their prudence, courage, and ſtrength were from the Lord; he intimidated, and confounded their enemies, and he ſucceeded their meaſures. The ſame holds good in all our undertakings, and ſucceſſes, whether in temporal, or in ſpiritual things.

V. 11. *Great ſtones*, &c.] Hailſtones of ſuch enormous ſize were ſhowered down from above, and directed with

with hail-ſtones, than *they* whom the children of Iſrael ſlew with the ſword.

12 Then ſpake Joſhua to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Iſrael, and he ſaid in the ſight of Iſrael, Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13 And the ſun ſtood ſtill, and the moon ſtayed, until the people had avenged themſelves upon their enemies. *Is* not this written in the book of Jaſher? So the ſun ſtood ſtill in the midſt of heaven, and haſted not to go down about a whole day.

14 And there was no day like that before it, or after it, that the LORD hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the LORD fought for Iſrael.

15 And Joſhua returned, and all Iſrael with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

16 But theſe five kings fled, and hid themſelves in a cave at Makkedah.

17 And it was told Joſhua, ſaying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.

18 And Joſhua ſaid, Roll great ſtones upon the mouth of the cave, and ſet men by it for to keep them;

19 And ſtay ye not, *but* purſue after your enemies, and ſmite the hindmoſt of them; ſuffer them not to enter into their cities: for the LORD your God hath delivered them into your hand.

20 And it came to paſs, when Joſhua and the children of Iſrael had made an end of ſlaying them with a very great ſlaughter, till they were conſumed, that the reſt *which* remained of them entered into fenced cities.

21 And all the people returned to the camp to Joſhua at Makkedah in peace; none moved his tongue againſt any of the children of Iſrael.

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in ſo extraordinary a manner by the Lord, that they ſmote, and ſlew the fugitive Canaanites in vaſt multitudes, but fell not upon any of their purſuers: (*Exod.* c. ix. v. 23—26. 29—33.)

V. 12. *Sun ſtand*, &c.] Joſhua doubtleſs acted by an immediate impulſe upon his mind from the Spirit of God, on this occaſion. Firſt he ſpake to the Lord, in earneſt prayer, and then to the ſun, and moon as by authority from God, commanding thoſe luminaries to ſtay their courſe: this was done publicly before all Iſrael, that they might hear the charge he gave, and obſerve the obedience, which the heavenly bodies rendered thereto. It was not neceſſary that Joſhua ſhould ſpeak, or the miracle be recorded, according to the terms of modern aſtronomy. The ſun appeared to the Iſraelites over Gibeon, and the moon over the valley of Ajalon: and there they appeared to be ſtopped from proceeding on their courſe for one whole day; either for the ſpace of about twelve or fourteen hours, or for the time of one diurnal revolution. Much has been written in reſpect of the way, in which this miracle was wrought, and many difficulties, and objections have been urged againſt underſtanding it literally. But the fact, as far as we are concerned about it, is authenticated by the divine teſtimony; the manner in which it was accompliſhed, lies beyond the proper limits of our inquiries, becauſe beyond our diſcovery, and comprehenſion. "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" forms a ſufficient anſwer to ten thouſand difficulties, which puny objectors, under the aſſumed title of philoſophers, have in every age been ſtarting againſt the truth of God in his written word.—The ſame power, which produced the effect, could prevent all thoſe ſuppoſed conſequences, which are objected: and as we have no records of profane hiſtory ſo ancient as this event, we need not wonder, that Pagan authors have not noticed it.—This extraordinary miracle would not only give Iſrael an opportunity of completing their victory, but would render Joſhua honourable in the eyes of all the people; and both him and them terrible to the ſurrounding nations: it was moreover a public proclamation that the God of Iſrael was the God of the whole earth, and heavens alſo; and a proteſtation againſt idolatry; whilſt the ſun, and moon, the worſhip of which formed the moſt ancient, and plauſible kind of idolatry, were obedient to the commands of the ſervants of Jehovah, the God of Iſrael. And it may be conſidered, as repreſenting the light of revelation ſhining by the command of Jeſus Chriſt from age to age, in the midſt of this dark world, by means of which his true people are directed in obtaining and completing their ſpiritual victories.

V. 13. *In the book of Jaſher*, &c.] This ſeems to have been a collection of records, or poems, concerning the chief events of the wars of Iſrael. In this probably there were further particulars, concerning this miracle, or a poem upon the occaſion, to which the ſacred writer referred, as being well known amongſt them. (*Num.* c. xxi. v. 14. 2 *Sam.* c. i. v. 18.)

V. 15.] It is not at all likely that Joſhua and all his army, ſhould march near thirty miles, in the midſt of the victory, and previous to their purſuit of their vanquiſhed foes, and juſt after the above-mentioned miracle had been wrought, to give them time to complete their deſtruction. (v. 19.) This verſe therefore forms an evident interruption of the narrative; it is not found in ſome verſions, and is *verbatim* the ſame with the laſt verſe of the chapter, and moſt probably was miſplaced here by the error of ſome ancient tranſcribers.

V. 20. *The reſt*, &c.] A few ſtragglers, who eſcaped the general carnage, got refuge in the fenced cities, but were ſoon met with there, and deſtroyed.

V. 21. *The camp at Makkedah*, &c.] Probably a camp was prepared in this place for the reception, and accommodation of the army after the victory, in conſequence of

22 Then ſaid Joſhua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out thoſe five kings unto me out of the cave.

23 And they did ſo, and brought forth thoſe five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jeruſalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachiſh, *and* the king of Eglon.

24 And it came to paſs, when they brought out thoſe kings unto Joſhua, that Joſhua called for all the men of Iſrael, and ſaid unto the captains of the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of theſe kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

25 And Joſhua ſaid unto them, Fear not, nor be diſmayed, be ſtrong, and of good courage: for thus ſhall the LORD do to all your enemies againſt whom ye fight.

26 And afterward Joſhua ſmote them, and ſlew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.

27 And it came to paſs, at the time of the going down of the ſun, *that* Joſhua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and caſt them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great ſtones in the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

28 And that day Joſhua took Makkedah, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword, and the king thereof he utterly deſtroyed, them, and all the ſouls that *were* therein; he let none remain: and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joſhua paſſed from Makkedah, and all Iſrael with him, unto Libnah, and fought againſt Libnah:

30 And the LORD delivered it alſo, and the king thereof, into the hand of Iſrael; and he ſmote it with the edge of the ſword, and all the ſouls that *were* therein: he let none remain in it; but did unto the king thereas he did unto the king of Jericho.

31 And Joſhua paſſed from Libnah, and all Iſrael with him, unto Lachiſh, and encamped againſt it, and fought againſt it:

32 And the LORD delivered Lachiſh into the hand of Iſrael, which took it on the ſecond day, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword, and all the ſouls that *were* therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah.

33 Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachiſh: and Joſhua ſmote him and his people, until he had left him none remaining.

34 And from Lachiſh Joſhua paſſed unto Eglon, and all Iſrael with him, and they encamped againſt it, and fought againſt it:

35 And they took it on that day, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword; and all the ſouls that *were* therein he utterly deſtroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachiſh.

36 And Joſhua went up from Eglon, and all Iſrael with him, unto Hebron, and they fought againſt it:

37 And they took it, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the ſouls that *were* therein: he left none remaining, (according to all that he had done to Eglon,) but deſtroyed it utterly, and all the ſouls that *were* therein.

38 And Joſhua returned, and all Iſrael with him, to Debir; and fought againſt it:

39 And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and they ſmote them with the edge of the ſword, and ut-

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the kings being impriſoned in the cave near to it. No mention is made of any Iſraelite being ſlain, miſſing, or wounded, though we are particularly informed of the thirty-ſix men, who were ſlain before Ai; but they are *all* ſaid to return in peace to the camp, ſo that we may infer, that they were all preſerved; and the victory was ſo complete, that there was none that durſt ſo much as ſpeak a word in contempt, or reproach againſt them. (v. 43. *Num.* c. xxxi. v. 49.)

V. 24. *Put your feet*, &c.] This was not intended to inſult over them as *their* enemies, but to ſubſcribe, as it were, their condemnation as the hardened enemies of God; as rejoicing in his victory, and triumph over them, and as taking encouragement from thence reſpecting the remaining kings of Canaan. The tranſaction is alſo evidently typical of the conqueſts of the Redeemer, rejoiced in by his people; who in overcoming their ſpiritual enemies by his help anticipate that glorious ſeaſon, when all his and their foes ſhall be put under his feet.

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terly deſtroyed all the ſouls that *were* therein; he left none remaining: as he had done to Hebron, ſo he did to Debir, and to the king thereof, as he had done alſo to Libnah, and to her king.

40 So Joſhua ſmote all the country of the hills, and of the ſouth, and of the vale, and of the ſprings, and all their kings: he left none remaining, but utterly deſtroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Iſrael commanded.

41 And Joſhua ſmote them from Kadeſh-

V. 40.] When Iſrael had firſt paſſed Jordan, they made but ſlow progreſs. Jericho was taken by miracle; but the city, and all the ſpoil, were either deſtroyed, or dedicated to ſacred uſes: they ſhared the ſpoil of Ai, but the city was burnt, and made an heap; Gibeon ſurrendered, and was ſpared: but when their faith, patience, and obedience had been properly proved, their ſucceſs was more rapid; and they were enriched by the ſpoil of all theſe cities, which were preſerved for their uſe, and by the acquiſition of all the adjacent country, and all it's flocks, and herds, and crops, &c; whilſt all the ancient inhabitants, were either exterminated, or utterly driven away. Yet the Iſraelites ſtill continued in a body at Gilgal, and did not go to dwell in their cities for the preſent.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When ſinners renounce the ſervice of ſatan, and the friendſhip of the world, that they may make their peace with God, and join intereſts with Iſrael, they muſt not marvel if the world hate them, if their former friends become their moſt rancorous foes, and if they meet with unexpected oppoſition, and temptations, with which they have hitherto been unacquainted. By ſuch methods ſatan, the God of this world, diſcourages many, who are convinced of their danger, and almoſt perſuaded to be Chriſtians, but are ſo afraid of the croſs, that they dare not venture to act according to the dictates of their own conſciences. But theſe things ſhould quicken them, in ſeeking the comfortable aſſurance that the covenant of peace is ratified with them by a merciful God; in ſurrendering themſelves the more unreſervedly to be his ſervants, and in applying to him for protection, aſſiſtance, and deliverance. And the meaneſt, and moſt feeble of thoſe, who have juſt begun to truſt in, and ſerve the Lord, notwithſtanding former crimes, later miſcarriages, and preſent ignorances and infirmities, are equally intitled to his defence with thoſe, who have long, and faithfully been his ſervants. They, who are enemies to the Lord's people, becauſe they belong to him, are adjudged his enemies: nor do any, more haſten and augment their own condemnation, than thoſe, who combine to impede the progreſs of true religion, by perſecuting thoſe, who have embraced, and intimidating thoſe, who appear diſpoſed to embrace it. No difficulties, or dangers need diſmay the believer, when in the path of duty, and confiding in the Lord: and it is peculiarly incumbent upon us to defend, and reſcue the oppreſſed, and afflicted, who have expoſed themſelves to trouble on our account, or for the ſake of the goſpel; and who look to us for help. In ſuch a cauſe we ought not to be backward to endure hardſhip, and fatigue, and expoſe ourſelves to loſs, or inconvenience, without grieving thoſe, who depend on our help, by needleſs delays. The aſſurance of divine aſſiſtance ſhould animate us to action, and in deviſing, and executing every proper plan, to enſure ſucceſs: and when we truſt in the Lord, and are diſpoſed to give him the praiſe, we ſhall experience aſſiſtance, in ſome meaſure proportioned to our boldneſs, and diligence. The ſun, moon, and ſtars in their courſes, yea, the whole creation will fight for the Lord's people, againſt his enemies, though not ſo miraculouſly, yet as effectually, as in the days of Joſhua; for all things combine to promote the ſalvation of the righteous, and the deſtruction of the wicked. How infatuated then are they, who harden their hearts againſt that God, whoſe mandate can arm the whole creation, as executioners of his vengeance upon his enemies! though hand join in hand, they cannot eſcape unpuniſhed: their wiſeſt counſels prove a ſnare to take themſelves withal: their moſt valiant, and vigorous exertions expoſe their weakneſs, and iſſue in diſgrace, and diſmay: their choiceſt bleſſings are changed into a curſe; and their ſecure retreats become their priſons, or their graves: kings, and mighty captains, who are diſobedient to God will at laſt be treated as arch-rebels, to be diſtinguiſhed only by the deepeſt infamy, and heavieſt load of vengeance: and all the Iſrael of God will join the triumph of the Captain of their ſalvation, in trampling upon the necks of their proudeſt oppoſers, and exclaiming, "So "let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord:" (*Pſalm* cxlix. v. 6—10.) This will be the final event of all the conflicts betwixt the church of God, and it's perſecutors: but at preſent we are not called to avenge ourſelves upon our enemies, but to forgive, love, pray for, and do good to them; and to endeavour to conquer their hearts with perſevering patience, and kindneſs. The Chriſtian's warfare is of another nature: our worſt enemies are our own luſts, as in league with the powers of darkneſs: our ſharpeſt conflicts, and moſt glorious victories conſiſt in reſiſting the devil, ſubduing the fleſh, and ſtriving againſt ſin. In this war we muſt form no alliance, enter into no treaty, nor give any quarter: and our once domineering ſin, whether it be covetouſneſs, pride, ſenſuality, malice, &c, muſt be marked as the object of our peculiar enmity, and oppoſition; this, this eſpecially muſt be crucified. Activity, vigilance, courage, and wiſdom, which this warfare requires, muſt be ſought of God in earneſt prayer; and thus we muſt "put on the whole armour of God;" to him we muſt look, on him we muſt depend, and to him give the glory, but without ſlacking our hands, or abating our diligence, and ſelf denial: nor muſt we be ſatisfied with obtaining ſome important victory, but muſt puſh our advantages, and purſue our ſcattered enemies, ſearching out the remains of ſin, as it riſes up in our hearts; and thus purſue the conqueſt, till we have ſet our feet upon the neck of every luſt, and completed it's entire deſtruction. In ſo doing we may confidently expect the aſſiſtance of the Lord; he will ſlay the ſin that dwelleth in us yet ſpare us, though the union ſeem to us inſeparable: he will afford us light during our whole conflict, until the warfare be accompliſhed: he will make one victory the forerunner and

barnea even unto Gaza, and all the country of Goshen even unto Gibeon.

42 And all these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time; because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel.

43 And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. The other kings of Canaan confederating against Israel, v. 1—5. 2d. Joshua, encouraged, instructed, and assisted of God, attacking, conquering, and utterly subduing them; and a commendation of his obedience, v. 6—15. 3d. A general account of his wars, and conquests, v. 16—18. 4th. A note of the hardness of the Canaanites hearts, with the reason of it, v. 19, 20. 5th. The destruction of the Anakims, v. 21, 22. 6th. The conclusion of the war, v. 23.

AND it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard *those things*, that he sent to Jobab king of Madon, and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,

2 And to the kings that *were* on the north of the mountains, and of the plains south of Cinneroth, and in the valley, and in the borders of Dor on the west;

3 *And to* the Canaanite on the east and on the west, and *to* the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Jebusite in the mountains, and *to* the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh.

4 And they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that *is* upon the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many.

5 And when all these kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom, to fight against Israel.

6 And the LORD said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them; for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel: thou shalt hough their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.

7 So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly, and they fell upon them.

8 And the LORD delivered them into the

earnest of another; he will encourage, and lead us on from strength to strength, until he hath made us more than conquerors. And though the war will be attended with labour, and self-denial, yet there is not the least peril, to the true soldiers, who face their enemies; for not one of them shall perish. The Lord God of Israel fighteth for Israel; and when he hath exercised their faith, patience, and subjection to his will, he will bring them to the mansions above, enriched with the spoils of their conquered enemies, to join in songs of everlasting triumph, and joyful praise. But let every Israelite remember, that he is a soldier belonging to a great army, whom he is to assist with all his power. Besides those particular advantages, which he obtains for his own soul, the whole army are attempting to gain advantages against the common enemy, by the daily increase of the numbers of true believers. No single soldier can detachedly do any thing very considerable: but the combined efforts of the whole army, according to their several battalions, and every one manfully maintaining his post, may produce extensive, and durable effects. And O, that God would incline the hearts of all, who love Jesus Christ, and his cause of truth, and righteousness, to lay aside their petty disputes, and self-seeking, with their care about the interests of a party, that they might all concur in this glorious warfare; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; boldly professing their attachment to, and dependance on the crucified Saviour; and striving to let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father, which is in heaven!

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—5.] We read (c. ix. v. 1, 2,) that all the kings betwixt Jordan and the Mediterranean sea, from north to south, confederated against Israel: but it seems the events, which were recorded in the two preceding chapters, disconcerted, and intimidated for a time the other kings, who possessed the northern part of the land: and as Joshua did not proceed to attack them, they might have concluded that the Israelites, being satisfied with their present acquisitions, would push their conquests no further, if they were not molested. But their enmity and resentment would not permit them to be quiet, and when their courage was somewhat recovered, they renewed their confederacy against Israel. By which means it was so ordered of God, that in the whole war, except in the taking of Jericho and Ai, the Canaanites were the aggressors, and rushed forward upon their own destruction.

V. 4. *As the sand*, &c.] Josephus mentions three hundred thousand foot, with horses, and chariots in proportion. We may with certainty infer the populousness, and fertility of the promised land, from the expression in the text: as well as perceive the occasion, which Joshua had of encouragement, who had neither chariots, nor horsemen in his army; but notwithstanding had marched out to meet the enemy.

V. 6. *Thou shalt hough*, &c.] That is, cut the sinews of their legs, or some way entirely disable them for any thing, except the drudgery of agriculture, &c, in which they might employ them. Joshua, and the princes of Israel

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hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Mizrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and they smote them, until they left them none remaining.

9 And Joshua did unto them as the LORD bade him: he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

10 And Joshua at that time turned back and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof with the sword: for Hazor before-time was the head of all those kingdoms.

11 And they smote all the souls that *were* therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying *them:* there was not any left to breathe; and he burnt Hazor with fire.

12 And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them, did Joshua take, and smote them with the edge of the sword, *and* he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD commanded.

13 But *as for* the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; *that* did Joshua burn.

14 And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves: but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

15 As the LORD commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and so did Joshua: he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

16 So Joshua took all that land, the hills, and all the south country, and all the land of Goshen, and the valley, and the plain, and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same;

17 *Even* from the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir, even unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under mount Hermon: and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them.

18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings.

19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon; all *other* they took in battle.

20 For it was of the LORD to harden their

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might have thought this a good opportunity of furnishing themselves with horses, and chariots for their future use: but Israel was not permitted to trust in chariots, and horses; (*Deut.* c. xvii. v. 16. *Psalm* c. xx. v. 7:) they were therefore commanded to disable all the horses, and burn all the chariots; and they implicitly obeyed the command.

V. 9.] This formed a proper trial, and a remarkable proof of their obedience of faith; and expressed a contempt for, and defiance of the most formidable enemies, and preparations of war, having the Lord on their side; which was both becoming their character, and honourable to his name.

10 *Turned back*, &c.] Joshua had carried the war to the most northern extremities of the land, even to the great, and ancient city of Zidon; he then turned back to destroy Hazor, and it's king, who had taken shelter in his capital, and who was at the head of the confederacy: and as that city was not intended to be the chief city of the Israelites, it was utterly destroyed.

V. 18. *A long time*, &c.] Caleb was forty years of age, when he went from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and he was eighty-five when the conquests were completed, (c. xiv. v. 7—10:) near thirty-nine years were expired before the Israelites passed over Jordan; this calculation therefore leaves between six or seven years for the term of Joshua's wars. The whole country from north to south was then subjected, and all the inhabitants destroyed, whom they had met with: the subsequent history shews, that they were not exterminated; but concealed themselves by one means or other, till they were again able to make head against the Israelites.

V. 19, 20.] The Lord had forbidden the Israelites to make any league with the idolatrous inhabitants of the land: but the examples of Rahab, and of the Gibeonites shew, that individuals, or cities, who would renounce their idolatry, and heartily come into the interests of Israel might be spared: but the Canaanites in general were not in the least disposed so to do; and never so much as proposed any terms of accommodation. This we are told was of the Lord: they had *previously* filled up the measure of their iniquity; and were *judicially* left to the blindness, pride, obstinacy, and enmity of their own hearts, and to the power of satan, all restraints being entirely withdrawn: and the dispensations of God's providence were so appointed, as tended to harden them in opposition, and drive them to desperation; in order that they might bring upon themselves that vengeance, which they had justly merited, which the Lord had purposed to inflict, and of which he had constituted the Israelites his executioners by the commandment, which he had given to Moses. This last reason is added, and repeatedly mentioned, to shew that Joshua, and Israel did not act, in this business, out of cruelty, revenge, or avarice; but simply in obedience to God; *which alone* could induce real godly men, to make such undistinguishing slaughter of their fellow creatures; and in doing which, doubtless, many of them did great violence to their own feelings and inclinations.

hearts, that they ſhould come againſt Iſrael in battle, that he might deſtroy them utterly, *and* that they might have no favour, but that he might deſtroy them; as the LORD commanded Moſes.

21 And at that time came Joſhua, and cut off the Anakims from the mountains; from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, and from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Iſrael: Joſhua deſtroyed *them* utterly with their cities.

22 There was none of the Anakims left in the land of the children of Iſrael; only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Aſhdod, there remained.

23 So Joſhua took the whole land, according to all that the LORD ſaid unto Moſes, and Joſhua gave it for an inheritance unto Iſrael, according to their diviſions by their tribes. And the land reſted from war.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, a catalogue of the kingdoms ſubdued, 1ſt. By Moſes, eaſt of Jordan, v. 1—6. 2d. By Joſhua weſt of Jordan, v. 7—24.

V. 21. *The Anakims*, &c.] The Anakims, whoſe name had ſo terrified the unbelieving Iſraelites formerly, (*Num.* c. xiii. v. 33,) no ways diſtinguiſhed themſelves in this war, but were ſubdued, and deſtroyed with the other inhabitants.

V. 23. *The land reſted*, &c.] The cities, which had been taken were doubtleſs garriſoned, and ſome of the people diſperſed through the country to cultivate the lands; and preparation was making for the regular partition of it amongſt their tribes and families. New occupations, of which they had no experience, now called for their attention: but the Lord, who gave them the land, was able to teach them to cultivate it, and they would ſoon make proficiency in ſuch a work, under ſuch a teacher. (*Iſa.* c. 28. v. 24—29.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The believer muſt never put off his armour, or expect durable peace, till he cloſe his eyes in death: nay as his ſtrength, experience, conſolations, and uſefulneſs are increaſed, he may expect more heavy trials, and more ſevere conflicts: but the Lord will not permit any of his enemies to aſſault him, until he hath prepared him for the battle. The ſtrongeſt faith will naturally be enfeebled, if we are left to ourſelves; and whenever we view difficulties or dangers with an eye of ſenſe, our hearts are overwhelmed with diſcouragement. But Jeſus ever liveth to intercede for his people, and their faith ſhall not fail, however ſatan may obtain permiſſion to aſſault them. By waiting upon the Lord they will renew their ſtrength; and their hopes will revive, and their hearts rejoice, even in the midſt of tribulation. Such perplexing trials will render their faith in, and dependance on God more ſimple, their prayers more fervent, and in the event their gratitude more lively: and without exception every croſs, and temptation, which the believer is enabled properly to endure, will enrich his ſoul with increaſing holineſs, and enlarge his everlaſting inheritance. The poſſeſſion of thoſe things, on which the carnal heart is prone to depend, is inimical to the life of faith, and the walk with God: therefore it is better to be without ſecular advantages, than to have our everlaſting intereſts endangered by them. True faith will produce obedience, and in proportion to the ſtrength of that faith: and they who proſper in the ways of God, take the precepts and directions from his word, as well as the promiſes, with equal ſimplicity of ſubmiſſion, and diligent obſervance. The Lord's ſervants have different employments allotted them, but every act of obedience will go counter to ſome natural inclination of our hearts; and therefore without a habit of ſelf-denial, and ſubjection of our will to the command of God, we cannot render unreſerved obedience. Nay, many times, in pleaſing God, we muſt expoſe ourſelves to the cenſure, and reproach of our fellow-creatures; and our beſt actions will by ill-judging men be ſuppoſed to reſult from the worſt of principles. But the teſtimony of our conſcience, and the approbation of our Judge will compenſate all conſequences. Would we approve our obedience upright, and the indubitable evidence of juſtifying faith, we muſt "leave nothing un-"done, which the Lord hath commanded to us:" for tho' omiſſions are neither ſo ſcandalous in the world, or in the church, as commiſſions, they are as certainly acts of diſobedience, and effects of a will unſubjected to God's authority. But however tedious, ſharp, and difficult the believer's warfare is, his patience in tribulation, may be encouraged by the joyfulneſs of hope; for he will ere long reſt in the Canaan above, from ſin, and from ſorrow. But how dreadful is the caſe of the obſtinate unbeliever, who is neither moved by promiſes, or warnings, judgments, or mercies, to ſeek peace with, and reconciliation to his offended God! When ſuch tranſgreſſors have provoked God to leave them to themſelves, they ſoon by their increaſing preſumption, and hardneſs of heart make way for the execution of his purpoſed vengeance, and for the diſplay of his righteouſneſs in their eternal deſtruction: nor will numbers, ſtrength, or carnal confidences avail any thing, when God ſhall ariſe to execute judgment upon his enemies. Thoſe trials, and perils, the proſpect of which deter many from a life of godlineſs, and often excite the apprehenſions of the true believer, are frequently in experience too inconſiderable for notice, and only excite ſhame and ſurpriſe, upon the recollection of the alarms, which they occaſioned. Let ſinners then take warning not to harden their own hearts, leſt God ſhould give them up to *judicial* hardneſs: let them lay down their arms of rebellion, and humbly ſue for peace, and they ſhall make peace, (*Iſaiah* c. xxvii. v. 5;) the effect of which ſhall be quietneſs and aſſurance for ever, (*Iſaiah* c. xxxii. v. 17.) And let none of us dread any thing in compariſon of the wrath of God, which is more terrible that we can poſſibly conceive.

NOW these *are* the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote, and possessed their land on the other side Jordan, toward the rising of the sun; from the river Arnon unto mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east;

2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, *and* ruled from Aroer, which *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and from the middle of the river, and from half Gilead, even unto the river Jabbok, *which is* the border of the children of Ammon:

3 And from the plain to the sea of Chinneroth on the east, and unto the sea of the plain, *even* the salt-sea on the east, the way to Beth-jeshimoth; and from the south, under Ashdoth-pisgah:

4 And the coast of Og king of Bashan, *which was* of the remnant of the giants, that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei.

5 And reigned in mount Hermon, and in Salcah, and in all Bashan, unto the border of the Geshurites, and the Maachathites, and half Gilead, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon;

6 Them did Moses the servant of the LORD, and the children of Israel smite: and Moses the servant of the LORD gave it *for* a possession unto the Reubenites, and Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

7 And these *are* the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west, from Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the mount of Halak, that goeth up to Seir; which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel *for* a possession, according to their divisions:

8 In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country; the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

9 The king of Jericho, one: the king of Ai, which *is* beside Beth-el, one:

10 The king of Jerusalem, one: the king of Hebron, one:

11 The king of Jarmuth, one: the king of Lachish, one:

12 The king of Eglon, one: the king of Gezer, one:

13 The king of Debir, one: the king of Geder, one:

14 The king of Hormah, one: the king of Arad, one:

15 The king of Libnah, one: the king of Adullam, one:

16 The king of Makkedah, one: the king of Beth-el, one:

17 The king of Tappuah, one: the king of Hepher, one:

18 The king of Aphek, one: the king of Lasharon, one:

19 The king of Madon, one: the king of Hazor, one:

20 The king of Shimron-meron, one: the king of Achshaph, one:

21 The king of Taanach, one: the king of Megiddo, one:

22 The king of Kedesh, one: the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one:

23 The king of Dor, in the coast of Dor, one: the king of the nations of Gilgal, one:

24 The king of Tirzah, one: all the kings thirty and one.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. *Now these are*, &c.] This chapter connects the history of the conquest of Canaan, with that of the division of it, which follows.

V. 14.] The Israelites utterly destroyed king Arad, and his cities, in the life-time of Moses, and called the name of them Hormah; (*Numb.* c. xxi. v. 1—3.) Probably the king of Arad here mentioned is the same person. As his kingdom, was on the southern border of Canaan, and not east of Jordan, his country came into the possession of Israel, under Joshua; and therefore he is numbered in that division of the kings, though subdued under Moses. But Hormah is here mentioned as a distinct kingdom, from that of Arad; and probably there was another of that name; (*Numb.* c. xiv. v. 45.)

V. 24.] Every considerable town, or city was under the government of a king, who possessed the adjacent fields, and ruled with a despotic sway, as is generally supposed: and though they doubtless waged frequent wars with each other, and gained advantages over each other: yet no one had acquired the sovereignty of the whole. A single view of a good map of ancient Canaan, will shew the reader all that learned men have conjectured or determined concerning the relative situation of the several places, which are mentioned in this, and the following chapters. And as that is the easiest, and indeed the only method of convey-

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. Joshua directed of God to divide the land by lot, v. 1—7. 2d. A description of the country, east of Jordan, which had before been divided, v. 8—32. 3d. The Levites repeatedly excluded from any share in the land, v. 14. 33.

NOW Joshua was old *and* stricken in years; *and* the LORD said unto him, Thou art old *and* stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.

2 This *is* the land that yet remaineth: all the borders of the Philistines, and all Geshuri,

3 From Sihor, which *is* before Egypt, even unto the borders of Ekron northward, *which* is counted to the Canaanite: five lords of the Philistines; the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avites:

4 From the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that *is* beside the Sidonians, unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites:

5 And the land of the Giblites, and all Lebanon toward the sun-rising, from Baalgad under mount Hermon unto the entering into Hamath;

6 All the inhabitants of the hill-country, from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim, *and* all the Sidonians: them will I drive out from before the children of Israel; only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance, as I have commanded thee.

7 Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of Manasseh,

8 With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance, which Moses gave them, beyond Jordan eastward, *even* as Moses the servant of the LORD gave them:

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ing a *clear idea* of the subject into the mind, the discussion of it, in this place, will be almost entirely waved.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The enjoyment of present blessings should revive the memory of, and gratitude for former mercies: and the benefit derived from the labours of the living servants of the Lord should remind us to respect the memories of those, who have heretofore served God, and their generation. The national covenant mediated by Moses, engaged many temporal advantages to a small number of the Israel of God; but Jesus alone brings the whole multitude of them to the promised rest, and inheritance: and though his true people enjoy many blessings from him in this world; yet they do not enter upon the possession of their complete felicity, till they pass over the Jordan of death to the mansions above. The vengeance of a righteous God inflicted upon all these kings, and their numerous subjects for their wickedness, should impress our minds with reverential awe of his majesty and purity, and with dread and hatred of sin: whilst the fruitful land, which he bestowed upon his chosen people, and *thus* prepared for their reception, should inspire our hearts with hope and confidence in his mercy, and with humble gratitude. In both, the final issue of all things is represented: when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal. Let us then flee from the wrath to come, and seek and pray to be numbered with his saints here, that we may be numbered with them in glory everlasting.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1. *Thou art old*, &c.] Joshua is supposed to have been about one hundred years of age at this time; and probably he found himself less capable of military services, than he had formerly been: much of the land yet remained in the possession of the ancient inhabitants, and perhaps he supposed, that the division was not to take place, till the whole were actually subdued. But the Lord was pleased graciously to remove his anxiety, and to direct his conduct, by commanding him, whilst he was able, and without further delay, to proceed to divide the land to those tribes, which had not received their inheritance. The whole country, not excepting those parts, which were yet in the hands of the ancient inhabitants, being ordered to be parted amongst them, tended to remind them of the extent, and certainty of the divine promise, and to encourage them to expect, and seek the more complete performance of it: it was also a caution to them not to enter into any alliance with the remains of the devoted nations: and each tribe was thereby excited to levy war against those Canaanites, who kept them out of possession of their allotted inheritance.

V. 6. *By lot;* &c.] Though they had acquired the land by conquest, they were neitherto seize upon what they could, nor to have it all in common, nor to divide it by consent, or by arbitration, but by a solemn appeal to the Lord himself, by the casting of the lot. Canaan was the Lord's land, and Israel was the Lord's people, and the case was extraordinary: and this was the readiest, and most effectual way of satisfying all parties, and preventing discontent, and intestine discord: and this method of division would best typify the Lord's choosing in his infinite wisdom, and love, the temporal provision, and eternal inheritance of his true people. As every tribe had it's proportion, and situation determined by lot; so probably afterwards the subdivisions to every family, and individual were regulated in the same manner: and thus their estates would descend to their posterity, not so much as the inheritance of their fathers, as the inheritance, which the Lord had immediately allotted them.

9 From

9 From Aroer, that *is* upon the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midſt of the river, and all the plain of Medebah unto Dibon;

10 And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heſhbon, unto the border of the children of Ammon;

11 And Gilead, and the border of the Geſhurites and Maachathites, and all mount Hermon, and all Baſhan unto Salcah:

12 All the kingdom of Og in Baſhan, which reigned in Aſhtaroth and in Edrei, who remained of the remnant of the giants; for theſe did Moſes ſmite, and caſt them out.

13 Nevertheleſs, the children of Iſrael expelled not the Geſhurites, nor the Maachathites: but the Geſhurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Iſraelites until this day.

14 Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance: the ſacrifices of the LORD God of Iſrael made by fire *are* their inheritance, as he ſaid unto them.

15 And Moſes gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben *inheritance* according to their families:

16 And their coaſt was from Aroer, that *is* on the bank of the river Arnon, and the city that *is* in the midſt of the river, and all the plain by Medeba;

17 Heſhbon, and all her cities that *are* in the plain; Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon,

18 And Jahaza, and Kedemoth, and Mephaath,

19 And Kiriathaim, and Sibmah, and Zareth-ſhahar in the mount of the valley,

20 And Beth-peor, and Aſhdoth-piſgah, and Beth-jeſhimoth,

21 And all the cities of the plain, and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heſhbon, whom Moſes ſmote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba, *which were* dukes of Sihon dwelling in the country.

22 Balaam alſo the ſon of Beor, the ſoothſayer, did the children of Iſrael ſlay with the ſword, among them that were ſlain by them.

23 And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border *thereof*. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben after their families, the cities and the villages thereof.

24 And Moſes gave *inheritance* unto the tribe of Gad, *even* unto the children of Gad, according to their families:

25 And their coaſt was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half the land of the children of Ammon, unto Aroer that *is* before Rabbah;

26 And from Heſhbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim; and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir;

27 And in the valley, Beth-aram, and Beth-nimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the reſt of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heſhbon, Jordan and *his* border, *even* unto the edge of the ſea of Chinnereth, on the other ſide Jordan, eaſtward.

28 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad, after their families, the cities, and their villages.

29 And Moſes gave *inheritance* unto the half-tribe of Manaſſeh: and *this* was *the poſſeſſion* of the half-tribe of the children of Manaſſeh by their families.

30 And their coaſt was from Mahanaim, all Baſhan, all the kingdom of Og king of Baſhan, and all the towns of Jair, which *are* in Baſhan, threeſcore cities;

31 And half Gilead, and Aſhtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Baſhan, *were pertaining* unto the children of Machir the ſon of Manaſſeh, *even* to the one half of the children of Machir by their families.

32 Theſe *are the countries* which Moſes did diſtribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab, on the other ſide Jordan by Jericho eaſtward.

33 But unto the tribe of Levi Moſes gave

V. 21. *Dukes of Sihon*, &c.] Theſe princes of Midian are here called Dukes of Sihon, probably becauſe they had formerly been either his confederates, or tributaries. Theſe authenticated records concerning the boundaries of the inheritances belonging to each tribe, were intended to prevent litigations, or decide differences in future ages: and they would be very intelligible to thoſe, who lived upon the ſpot, and at the time; though they appear obſcure, and in ſome degree unintereſting to us.

V. 33. *Moſes gave not any*, &c.] As Moſes was himſelf not

not *any* inheritance: the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, as he said unto them.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. An introduction to the division of the country west of Jordan, v. 1—5. 2d. Caleb's demand of Hebron granted, 6—15.

AND these *are the countries* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for inheritance to them.

2 By lot *was* their inheritance, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and *for* the half-tribe.

3 For Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes and an half-tribe on the other side Jordan: but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them.

4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim: therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land, save cities to dwell *in*, with their suburbs for their cattle, and for their substance.

5 As the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did, and they divided the land.

6 Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal: and Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that the LORD said unto

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of the tribe of Levi, he gave a special proof that he acted by divine authority, in thus overlooking his own family, and his own tribe: for though the Levites were well provided for, yet the continuance of that provision was so interwoven with Israel's adherence to their religion, that had they universally apostatized, the Levites would have been left destitute, whilst all the other tribes would have had possession of their estates: that is, without some immediate divine interposition. And had Moses intended that they should have any inheritance in Israel, he would probably have first provided for them; but he not only did not do this, but expressly appointed that they should have none.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Old age gradually, and almost insensibly creeps upon mankind: and though the feeling of their infirmities continually reminds aged persons of their time of life, yet they generally need to be put in remembrance of it by other methods, and excited to prepare for approaching dissolution. "Whatever our hand findeth to do," respecting the glory of God, the salvation of our own souls, or the good of our fellow creatures, "we should do it with all "our might:" and the expectation of death, as well as the calamities of life, should warn us to redeem our time, and seize upon present opportunities of usefulness. Our season of labour, and of service will soon expire, and we shall shortly be at rest; we ought not therefore *now* to indulge sloth, or shun to endure hardship. But if it be the Lord's will to lay us aside through incapacitating infirmities, we ought to be submissively willing to leave our designs unfinished, to be completed by other hands. The Lord knoweth all our infirmities, and will not forsake his servants, when they are old, and infirm, and incapable of their work: yet when the heart is zealous, they who cannot perform one service, will devise to be useful in some measure, in another, though not equally splendid, and honourable. But one succession after another of godly persons, and able ministers die, and leave much of the earth in the possession of the enemy of Christ, and of his people; though the promise assures us, that it will all in due time be wrenched out of the hands of that prince of darkness, and become entirely the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Indeed few, or none of us in this world live up to our privileges, and spiritual blessings, as delineated in the word of promise, being kept out of possession by the enemies of our souls, especially by "sin that "dwelleth in us:" but this consideration should animate us to be active, and courageous, and to expect, and seek for still greater, and richer acquisitions of knowledge, holiness, and heavenly consolations. In the present state of human nature, it is the Lord's will that there should be distinctions of property, that every one may know, and be contented with his own. And wheresoever our habitation is placed; and in whatever honest way our portion is assigned us, we should consider them as allotted us of God, and acquiesce in, be thankful for, and make use of them as such: and every prudent method should be devised to prevent litigations about property, both at the present, and in future. The mercies of the Lord to his people, and his judgments upon his enemies, especially those, who have tempted others to commit wickedness, ought never to be forgotten, and should frequently be mentioned by us; because they are honourable to God, and profitable subjects for our meditation. The ministers of the Lord should study to shew, that they are peculiarly indifferent about worldly interests, (v. 33.) and the people should take care, that they want nothing suitable to their station; that they may neither be discouraged in, nor taken off from serving at the altar. But happy are they, who have the Lord God of Israel for their inheritance, how little soever of this world falls to their share: his providence will supply their temporal necessities; his ordinances, and spiritual consolations will feast their souls, until they arrive at that fulness of joy, and those pleasures, which are at his right hand for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 4. *For the*, &c.] The descendants of Joseph forming two tribes, kept up the number of twelve, according to that of Jacob's sons; and as Joseph was allowed the double portion, Levi was otherwise provided for.

6—15.] Previous to the division of the land by lot, Caleb came unto Joshua at Gilgal, where probably the tabernacle, and ark of the Lord yet were, to prefer his claim of Moses

Moſes the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadeſh-barnea.

7 Forty years old *was* I when Moſes the ſervant of the LORD ſent me from Kadeſh-barnea to eſpy out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart.

8 Nevertheleſs, my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt; but I wholly followed the LORD my God.

9 And Moſes ſware on that day, ſaying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden ſhall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever; becauſe thou haſt wholly followed the LORD my God.

10 And now, behold, the LORD hath kept me alive, as he ſaid, Theſe forty and five years, even ſince the LORD ſpake this word unto Moſes, while *the children of* Iſrael wandered in the wilderneſs; and now, lo, I *am* this day fourſcore and five years old.

11 As yet I *am as* ſtrong this day as *I was* in the day that Moſes ſent me: as my ſtrength *was* then, even ſo *is* my ſtrength now, for war, both to go out and to come in.

12 Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the LORD ſpake in that day; (for thou heardeſt in that day how the Anakims *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fenced;) if ſo be the LORD *will be* with me, then I ſhall be able to drive them out, as the LORD ſaid.

13 And Joſhua bleſſed him, and gave unto Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh Hebron for an inheritance.

14 Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day; becauſe that he wholly followed the LORD God of Iſrael.

15 And the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba, *which Arba was* a great man among the Anakims. And the land had reſt from war.

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having Hebron, and the lands adjacent, aſſigned to him, without the caſting of lots reſpecting it: and with him came his brethren of the tribe of Judah, as ſupporting him therein. From this chapter it appears probable, that when the other ſpies terrified themſelves, and the people about the Anakims, who dwelt in Hebron, (*Num.* c. xiii. v. 22. 33,) Caleb in the confidence of faith propoſed to take that place for his inheritance, and to wait for it, till the Anakims were diſpoſſeſſed: and that by divine direction Moſes had engaged and ordered that it ſhould be ſo, at the time when the Lord declared that Joſhua and Caleb alone ſhould live to enter the promiſed land. The performance of this engagement he therefore laid claim to, and in ſupport thereof ſpake of it as well known to Joſhua, and the other parties concerned: he took occaſion to rejoice in the teſtimony, which the Lord had borne to his uprightneſs, that he had followed him wholly, and in the concurrent teſtimony of his conſcience, that he had given his report, "as it was in his "heart," with unbiaſſed ſincerity: and whilſt he intimated how the other ſpies diſcouraged the people, to their common deſtruction; he thankfully mentioned the goodneſs of God to him, in keeping him alive for forty-five years, whilſt all that generation were waſted in the wilderneſs, and amidſt all the perils of the wars in Canaan: and he obſerves that he was at eighty-five years of age as ſtrong, and as capable of war, as he had been at forty. All this became him, who was ſo eminent in character, and venerable in years, being more than twenty years older than any man in Iſrael, except Joſhua, and ſome of the Levites. It ſeems from the narration, that the Anakims had poſſeſſed themſelves of Hebron, after it was taken by Joſhua; and Caleb in conſequence undertook to drive them out: this he expreſſed his readineſs to attempt, not confiding in his ſtrength, or valour, or in the aſſiſtance of his brethren; but reſting the whole upon "the Lord's being with him;" and in intimation of his unworthineſs of ſuch a favour, though it doth not appear that he doubted the event, he expreſſed his confidence in this form: "If the Lord will be with "me, then I ſhall be able," &c. In conſequence Joſhua, and the princes conſented to his propoſal, and deemed it meet that he ſhould be thus diſtinguiſhed: Joſhua alſo "bleſſed him," that is prayed for his ſucceſs in his intended expedition, and for his comfort in his inheritance. Thus the matter was ſettled, and in the next chapter we read of his driving out the Anakims: and when the lots were caſt, Hebron fell within the lot of Judah, and he was not ſeparated from his brethren.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They, who deſire to proſper, and be comfortable, in their undertakings, and poſſeſſions, muſt acknowledge the Lord in all their ways, refer every matter to his deciſion, and regulate all their conduct by his commands. The preſervation, and contiuance of our lives, notwithſtanding internal decays, and diſeaſes, and external perils, and injuries, and whilſt ſuch numbers are dying around us, ought thankfully to be conſidered, and acknowledged as the Lord's doing: and when old perſons poſſeſs a meaſure of health, and vigour, at that time of life, which to others is labour and ſorrow, they are eſpecially called upon to be grateful. But old age, even when exempt from it's uſual attendants of infirmity and pain, is neither honourable, nor comfortable, except it be found in the way of righteouſneſs; for a long life ſpent in increaſing guilt, diffuſing wretchedneſs, and wickedneſs, and treaſuring up wrath againſt the day of wrath, will in the event prove the moſt direful of all evils. Yet they who ſeek the Lord early, and follow him wholly, and ſtand immoveably firm, in times of general apoſ-

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1st. The boundaries of the inheritance of Judah, v. 1—12. 2d. Caleb obtaining possession of Hebron; Othniel's marriage to Caleb's daughter, as a recompense for taking Debir: her request granted by her father, v. 13—19. 3d. A list of the cities in the lot of Judah, v. 20—63.

THIS then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families; *even* to the border of Edom; the wilderness of Zin southward *was* the uttermost part of the south coast.

2 And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea, from the bay that looketh southward:

3 And it went out to the south side to Maaleh-acrabbim, and passed along to Zin, and ascended up on the south side unto Kadesh-barnea, and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar, and fetched a compass to Karkaa:

4 *From thence* it passed toward Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt; and the goings out of that coast were at the sea. This shall be your south coast.

5 And the east border *was* the salt-sea, *even* unto the end of Jordan: and *their* border in the north quarter *was* from the bay of the sea, at the uttermost part of Jordan.

6 And the border went up to Beth-hogla, and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah; and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben.

7 And the border went up toward Debir from the valley of Achor, and so northward, looking toward Gilgal, that *is* before the going up to Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the river: and the border passed toward the waters of En-shemesh, and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel.

8 And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom, unto the south side of the Jebusite; the same *is* Jerusalem; and the border went up to the top of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the valley of the giants northward.

9 And the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and went out to the cities of mount Ephron; and the border was drawn to Baalah, which *is* Kirjath-jearim.

10 And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto mount Seir, and passed along

tacy, and prevailing ungodliness, and in seasons of sharp temptation, and imminent danger; if afterwards favoured with long life, and enabled to spend it all in glorifying God, and doing good, are the most distinguished, and honourable of the human species. They may look back upon their lives past, spent, by the grace of God, in some measure usefully, and they may look forward to dissolution, as speedily approaching, with holy consolation, (2 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 6—8;) every part of their lives forms a divine attestation to their integrity, and evidences his special love, and their effectual calling. They have a testimony to their characters in the hearts of others, and may rejoice in the testimony of their own consciences. Much have they to be thankful for: and it will *become them*, and *they* will know how with modesty, and humility, to speak of all, that the Lord hath done in them, for them, and by them, which will encourage others, and redound in many thanksgivings to God. And though the outward man decay, they will feel themselves as strong for their spiritual warfare as ever, and not fear by the help of God to drive out every enemy, which prevents their possession of their promised inheritance. Such eminent believers sometimes survive envy, competition, calumny, and prejudice: their sun, which hath long been obscured by intervening clouds of slanderous reports, groundless jealousies, and rancorous enmity, breaks through, and shines with bright serenity, before it sets. The Lord blesses them; all around them perceive it, and call them blessed, and concur in shewing them distinguishing respect; and great usefulness awaits their latter days, their closing scene, and dying testimony; whilst they declare to all around them, that the Lord in performing his promises, hath exceeded their largest expectations. Let then young persons be advised to seek the Lord early: let professors be warned to follow the Lord wholly: let tried and tempted Christians be encouraged to endure, and wait patiently: let those, who meet with opposition, calumny, neglect, or ill success, in their well-meant endeavours to do good, stand their ground stedfastly: let us all trust in the Lord's faithful and merciful promises entirely; and aim so to walk with God, that if we are taken away more early in life, we may be found ready; and if spared till old age, may close honourably, usefully, and comfortably.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—12.] (*Numb.* c. xxxiv. v. 3—6.) After some general survey of those parts of the land, of which they were possessed, Joshua proceeded to allot to Judah, Ephraim, and the half of Manasseh their situations and inheritances, before they left Gilgal: and afterwards, removing to Shiloh, a more extensive, and accurate survey was made, and the other tribes had their portions assigned them by lot also: (c. xviii. v. 1—10.) The inheritance which Judah after some deductions actually possessed, was large; for it was intended that this tribe should have the precedency, and it was the most numerous of them all.

unto the ſide of mount Jearim, (which *is* Cheſalon,) on the north ſide, and went down to Beth-ſhemeſh, and paſſed on to Timnah:

11 And the border went out unto the ſide of Ekron northward: and the border was drawn to Shicron, and paſſed along to mount Baalah, and went out unto Jabneel: and the goings out of the border were at the ſea.

12 And the weſt border *was* to the great ſea, and the coaſt *thereof*. This *is* the coaſt of the children of Judah round about according to their families.

13 And unto Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joſhua, *even* the city of Arba, the father of Anak, which *city is* Hebron.

14 And Caleb drove thence the three ſons of Anak, Sheſhai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak.

15 And he went up thence to the inhabitants of Debir: and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-ſepher.

16 And Caleb ſaid, He that ſmiteth Kirjath-ſepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achſah my daughter to wife.

17 And Othniel the ſon of Kenez, the brother of Caleb, took it: and he gave him Achſah his daughter to wife.

18 And it came to paſs, as ſhe came *unto him*, that ſhe moved him to aſk of her father a field: and ſhe lighted off *her* aſs; and Caleb ſaid unto her, What wouldeſt thou?

19 Who anſwered, Give me a bleſſing; for thou haſt given me a ſouth land, give me alſo ſprings of water. And he gave her the upper ſprings, and the nether ſprings.

20 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah, according to their families.

21 And the uttermoſt cities of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the coaſt of Edom ſouthward, were Kabzeel, and Eder, and Jagur,

22 And Kinah, and Dimona, and Adadah,

23 And Kedeſh, and Hazor, and Ithnan,

24 Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth,

25 And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, *and* Hezron, which *is* Hazor,

26 Amam, and Shema, and Moladah,

27 And Hazar-gaddah, and Heſhmon, and Beth-palet.

28 And Hazar-ſhual, and Beer-ſheba, and Bizjothjah,

29 Baalah, and Iim, and Azem,

30 And Eltolad, and Cheſil, and Hormah,

31 And Ziklag, and Madmannah, and Sanſannah,

32 And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain,

V. 13.] (c. xiv. v. 6—15.) Caleb, the Lord being with him, drove out the Anakims, but we do not find that he ſlew them, but probably they retired amongſt the Philiſtines, to the weſt of Hebron. This hiſtory ſeems to be introduced by way of anticipation: we ſhall meet with the ſame again; (*Judges*, c. i. v. 10—15.)

V. 15. *Debir—Kirjath-ſepher.*] Theſe names, ſignifying the one a word, or an oracle, the other the city of a book, have induced the opinion that this city, was a ſort of academy, or a repoſitory of the records, &c, amongſt the ancient inhabitants. It is not probable that writing, or books, in our ſenſe of the word, were very common: but learning of ſome ſort, and ſome method of recording remarkable events, or federal tranſactions, they doubtleſs had amongſt them. (*Acts*, c. vii. v. 22.)

V. 16, 17.] Caleb by his example, and by other methods was earneſt to excite the Iſraelites to obtain the poſſeſſion of their inheritance: but by this propoſal he moreover employed an expedient well calculated to ſecure the marriage of his daughter with a worthy man, who had previouſly entertained an affection for her, and knew the value of an alliance with a perſon ſo eminent for faith, and piety. Fathers amongſt the Jews, (and indeed amongſt all the ancients,) ſeem to have exerciſed a more abſolute authority, in diſpoſing of their daughters in marriage, than is cuſtomary amongſt us; who were in general habituated to acquieſce in the choice made for them. It ſeems the Canaanites had recovered the poſſeſſion of this city, after Joſhua had taken it; but it was in this manner again taken out of their hands.

V. 18, 19.] As Caleb had his inheritance aſſigned him, in a different way than the other Iſraelites; and as this caſe was ſingular, his daughter, being married to one of the ſame tribe, was allowed to inherit, though he had ſons. Having therefore given her a portion of land, which was much expoſed to the ſun, and not well ſupplied with water; in concert with Othniel, to whom ſhe firſt propoſed it, ſhe petitioned her father to give her another field, in which were ſprings of water. This ſhe called a bleſſing, both as a token of his paternal affection, and as conducing to her comfort in her ſituation. To this Caleb conſented, and "gave her the upper ſprings, and the nether ſprings;" both higher, and lower ground well watered. This hath been long accommodated to ſpiritual, and temporal bleſſings, as conferred by the grace, and providence of God upon believers. We ſhall meet with Othniel hereafter, as judge over Iſrael.

V. 32. *Twenty, and nine*, &c.] Thirty eight are here enumerated, but nine of them were afterwards allotted to Simeon; (c. xix. v. 1—9.)

and Rimmon; all the cities *are* twenty and nine, with their villages.

33 *And* in the valley, Eſhtaol, and Zoreah, and Aſhnah,

34 And Zanoah, and En-gannim, Tappuah, and Enam,

35 Jarmuth, and Adullam, Socoh, and Azekah,

36 And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim; fourteen cities with their villages.

37 Zenan, and Hadaſhah, and Migdal-gad,

38 And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel,

39 Lachiſh, and Bozkath, and Eglon,

40 And Cabbon, and Lahmas, and Kithliſh,

41 And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah; ſixteen cities with their villages.

42 Libnah, and Ether, and Aſhan,

43 And Jiphtah, and Aſhnah, and Nezib,

44 And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareſhah; nine cities with their villages.

45 Ekron, with her towns and her villages.

46 From Ekron even unto the ſea, all that *lay* near Aſhdod, with their villages:

47 Aſhdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages, unto the river of Egypt, and the great ſea, and the border *thereof*.

48 And in the mountains, Shamir, and Jattir, and Socoh,

49 And Dannah, and Kirjath-ſannah, which *is* Debir,

50 And Anab, and Eſhtemoh, and Anim,

51 And Goſhen, and Holon, and Giloh; eleven cities with their villages:

52 Arab, and Dumah, and Eſhean,

53 And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, Aphekah,

54 And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, (which *is* Hebron,) and Zior; nine cities with their villages:

55 Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah,

56 And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah,

57 Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah; ten cities with their villages:

58 Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor,

59 And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon; ſix cities with their villages:

60 Kirjath-baal, (which *is* Kirjath-jearim,) and Rabbah; two cities with their villages:

61 In the wilderneſs, Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah,

62 And Nibſhan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi; ſix cities with their villages.

63 As for the Jebuſites the inhabitants of Jeruſalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out: but the Jebuſites dwell with the children of Judah at Jeruſalem unto this day.

V. 36. *Fourteen*, &c.] Fifteen names are mentioned, but probably the two laſt names belonged to the ſame place. The chief uſe of theſe catalogues to us, conſiſts in helping us to underſtand ſome paſſages in the ſubſequent hiſtory. Several cities of the ſame name are enumerated, and different names are given in ſome inſtances to the ſame place: this occaſions ſome confuſion to us, but it would be plain enough to the Iſraelites: ſomewhat of the ſame kind takes place in the hiſtory, and geography of other countries. The lot of Judah contained one hundred and fourteen cities, beſides country villages, without including thoſe, which were afterwards given to the Simeonites. Even though the moſt of them were ſmall, yet the land muſt have been very populous.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord delighteth to honour and bleſs thoſe, who honour, and obey him; and to anſwer the expectations of thoſe, who confide in him: in which reſpects wiſe, and good parents will be followers of him, in their conduct towards their dutiful, and obedient children. It is a very valuable privilege to be cloſely united with thoſe families, which are diſtinguiſhed for their faith, and piety; and to contract marriage with thoſe, who have been trained up in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord. When the character of parents, their education of their children, and the children's conſequent prudent, and pious conduct, combine; there is the faireſt proſpect that in the providence of God, they will be ſettled with their parents approbation, and to the mutual comfort, and advantage of all the parties concerned. Nature teaches us to grant the deſires of our children, in giving them temporal good things: *grace* will teach it's poſſeſſors to be ſtill more deſirous of, and earneſt in uſing means for, their being made partakers of ſpiritual bleſſings. When perſons in the married ſtate conſult each other's comfort, and advantage, and ſtudy to order all their concerns with mutual confidence, and agreement, domeſtic felicity will be their recompenſe. But if affection to a creature animates men to ſuch ſtrenuous efforts, and perilous adventures, what will the love of God our Saviour do, if it bear rule in our hearts? The deſire of enjoying his favour, of expreſſing our gratitude to him, and of promoting his glory, will prove a principle of ſelf-denying obedience, and patient ſuffering for his ſake, which will be "ſtronger than death;" (*Can.* c. viii. v. 6—8.) And if earthly parents, "being evil, know how to give good gifts

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. The inheritance of Joseph's posterity, west of Jordan, v. 1—4. 2d. The borders of the lot of Ephraim, v. 5—9. 3d. Their neglect, in not driving out the Canaanites, v. 10.

AND the lot of the children of Joseph fell from Jordan by Jericho, unto the water of Jericho on the east, to the wilderness that goeth up from Jericho throughout mount Beth-el.

2 And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz, and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth,

3 And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti, unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether, and to Gezer: and the goings out thereof are at the sea.

4 So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.

5 And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was *thus*; even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth-addar, unto Beth-horon the upper;

6 And the border went out toward the sea, to Michmethah on the north side, and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh, and passed by it on the east to Janohah:

7 And it went down from Janohah to Ataroth, and to Naarath, and came to Jericho, and went out at Jordan.

8 The border went out from Tappuah westward unto the river Kanah; and the goings out thereof were at the sea. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families.

9 And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10 And they drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. The families, and inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh, v. 1—13. 2d. The petition of the sons of Joseph for an enlargement of their portion, rejected by Joshua, with his counsel on the occasion, v. 14—18.

THERE was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, (for he *was* the first-born of Joseph,) *to wit*, for Machir, the first-born of

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"to their children; how much more will our heavenly "Father give good things, to those who ask him!" Husbands, and wives frequently concur in seeking accessions to their temporal riches; and under certain limitations, it may be well: but it is much better when they concur heartily in seeking, and praying for those things, which are above, both for themselves, each other, their children, and all around them. Indeed all the blessings of both the upper, and the nether springs belong to the children of God: as related to Christ they have the first, or the largest portion for his sake, freely given them of the Father, as the lot of their inheritance. But they must exert themselves vigorously, to subdue those enemies, within, and without, which keep them out of possession of those comforts that the promise holds forth to them: and he is ever ready to assist all, who call upon him, to succour them in this warfare. May the Lord then excite our diligence, and increase our faith, that we may be strong in him, and in the power of his might: then instead of saying, "we "cannot drive them out," we shall exclaim, "I can do all "things, through Christ which strengtheneth me."

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. V. 1—8.] The inheritance of the two tribes of Ephraim, and Manasseh extended from Jordan to the Mediterranean sea, across the land; it lay north of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and Dan, and south of the other tribes. And the southern part of this general allotment was assigned to Ephraim, the northern to Manasseh. But little more can be satisfactorily determined about it.

V. 9. *The separate cities*, &c.] There were some cities, which fell within the lot of Manasseh, assigned to the Ephraimites, who more wanted them: the same seems to have been done in the case of some other tribes (ch. xvii. v. 9. 11;) according to a rule before given; (*Numb.* c. xxxiii. v. 54.)

V. 10. *Serve under tribute*, &c.] As there is no intimation that any of these Canaanites, renounced their idolatry, and came heartily into the interests of Israel; and as the Ephraimites were strong enough to subject them, and compel them to pay tribute, (c. xvii. v. 13:) no excuse can be made for their conduct, in making a league with, and sparing those whom God commanded them to destroy: but they consulted their present ease, more than either their duty, the common good of Israel, or their own true, and durable interest.

For Practical Observations, see the close of the ensuing chapter; as the two will be best considered in connexion.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *For he was*, &c.] Or "though "he was the first-born of Joseph;" yet Ephraim inherited before him. (*Gen.* c. xlviii. v. 19, 20.) Machir is supposed to have been the only surviving son of Manasseh; and in some other instances, an only son is called the first-

Manasseh,

Manaſſeh, the father of Gilead: becauſe he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Baſhan.

2 There was alſo *a lot* for the reſt of the children of Manaſſeh by their families: for the children of Abiezer, and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Aſriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida: theſe *were* the male children of Manaſſeh, the ſon of Joſeph, by their families.

3 But Zelophehad, the ſon of Hepher, the ſon of Gilead, the ſon of Machir, the ſon of Manaſſeh, had no ſons, but daughters; and theſe *are* the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

4 And they came near before Eleazar the prieſt, and before Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and before the princes, ſaying, The LORD commanded Moſes to give us an inheritance among our brethren. Therefore according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their father.

5 And there fell ten portions to Manaſſeh, beſide the land of Gilead and Baſhan, which *were* on the other ſide Jordan;

6 Becauſe the daughters of Manaſſeh had an inheritance among his ſons: and the reſt of Manaſſeh's ſons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the coaſt of Manaſſeh was from Aſher to Michmethah, that *lieth* before Shechem, and the border went along on the right hand unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah.

8 *Now* Manaſſeh had the land of Tappuah: but Tappuah, on the border of Manaſſeh, *belonged* to the children of Ephraim:

9 And the coaſt deſcended unto the river Kanah, ſouthward of the river: theſe cities of Ephraim *are* among the cities of Manaſſeh; the coaſt of Manaſſeh alſo *was* on the north ſide of the river, and the outgoings of it were at the ſea:

10 Southward *it was* Ephraim's, and northward *it was* Manaſſeh's, and the ſea is his border, and they met together in Aſher on the north, and in Iſſachar on the eaſt.

11 And Manaſſeh had in Iſſachar, and in Aſher, Beth-ſhean and her towns, and Ibleam and her towns, and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns, and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns, *even* three countries.

12 Yet the children of Manaſſeh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* thoſe cities, but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

13 Yet it came to paſs when the children of Iſrael were waxen ſtrong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute; but did not utterly drive them out.

14 And the children of Joſeph ſpake unto Joſhua, ſaying, Why haſt thou given me *but* one lot and one portion to inherit, ſeeing I *am* a great people, foraſmuch as the LORD hath bleſſed me hitherto?

15 And Joſhua anſwered them, if thou *be* a great people, *then* get thee up to the wood-*country*, and cut down for thyſelf there, in the

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born. He was a man of war; probably he had diſtinguiſhed himſelf, whilſt in Egypt, in the aſſault, which the Philiſtines made upon the Ephraimites, and had defended his brethren; *(ſee* 1 *Chron.* c. vii. v. 21.*)* And as his poſterity were ſuppoſed to inherit his valour, ſome of them had their inheritance eaſt of Jordan, upon the frontiers, that they might defend them.

V. 5. *Ten portions*, &c.] It is not exactly known how many families of the Manaſſites inherited eaſt of Jordan; but in the caſe of Zelophehad's daughters, there were five ſubdiviſions, his ſingle portion being parted amongſt them, and ſome other ſubdiviſions made the whole number ten diſtinct lots.

14 *The children of Joſeph*, &c.] Joſhua was of the tribe of Ephraim, and his brethren might expect ſome favour on that account: their inheritance perhaps was leſs valuable, than that of Judah, and only ſufficient for one tribe, and they were two: much of their land was in the poſſeſſion of the natives; and they ſuppoſed, that if the Lord bleſſed, and increaſed them in future, as he had in times paſt, they ſhould be much ſtraitened for room. Theſe formed the grounds and encouragements of their petition. But there was a great deal blameable in them; they murmured againſt the portion, which the Lord had expreſsly aſſigned them by lot; they coveted what belonged to others, and neglected to get poſſeſſion of, and to cultivate their own land.

V. 15. *If thou be a great*, &c.] As a great people they were the better able to labour, and to fight; to clear and cultivate the unimproved wood-lands, and to diſpoſſeſs the Canaanites. And as the Lord had bleſſed them hitherto, they had the more encouragement to confide in his land

land of the Perizzites, and of the giants, if mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee.

16 And the children of Joſeph ſaid, The hill is not enough for us: and all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, *both they* who *are* of Bethſhean and her towns, and *they* who *are* of the valley of Jezreel.

17 And Joſhua ſpake unto the houſe of Joſeph, *even* to Ephraim, and to Manaſſeh, ſaying, Thou *art* a great people, and haſt great power; thou ſhalt not have one lot *only:*

18 But the mountain ſhall be thine; for it *is* a wood, and thou ſhalt cut it down: and the out-goings of it ſhall be thine; for thou ſhalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, *and* though they *be* ſtrong.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The congregation aſſembling, and the tabernacle ſet up at Shiloh, v. 1. 2d. Joſhua reproving the tribes, who had not received their inheritance, cauſing a ſurvey to be made of the land, and dividing the remainder of it by lot, v. 2—10. 3d. The boundaries, and cities in the lot of Benjamin, v. 11—28.

AND the whole congregation of the children of Iſrael aſſembled together at

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aſſiſtance in ſo doing: nor would Joſhua do ought out of partiality, any more than Moſes would.

V. 16. *Chariots of iron*, &c.] Theſe chariots were armed with long ſharp ſcythes from the axles, on each ſide, underneath, and in different directions; they were drawn by ſwift, and ſtrong horſes, and driven by expert charioteers, who were generally accompanied by a warrior, that fought from the chariot. They made dreadful havock amongſt undiſciplined troops, that were not accuſtomed to them, and were exceeding formidable in the firſt onſet. But able commanders, by a ſkilful diſpoſition of their forces; and well-diſciplined troops, by regular and expeditious movements, rendered their force, and fury vain: and ſometimes by wounding and affrighting the horſes, they were driven back upon their own army with terrible confuſion and havock. Wherever therefore war became a ſcience, they fell into diſuſe, as unwieldy and dangerous.

V. 17. *Not have one lot*, &c.] Joſhua gently reproved them for calling it one lot, and pointed out the improvement of which their inheritance was capable, and the extenſive tracts of land, which might be cleared, and reſcued from the Canaanites: and aſſured them, that if they exerted their valour, force, and induſtry, according to their duty, in dependance on the Lord; the iron chariots, and the ſtrength of the Canaanites, would prove no bar to their ſucceſs and proſperity.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS on the 16th and 17th Chapters.

Though the diſtinctions of private property are from the Lord, and force or fraud muſt not be allowed to entrench upon them; yet brotherly love will not be very tenacious, but will readily communicate from its own abundance, to ſupply the wants of others, ſaying, "What is that between "me and thee?" and the more we are of this ſpirit, the greater comfort we ſhall enjoy, and the more will God be glorified: and in every thing, unity, and affection amongſt brethren is becoming, pleaſant, and mutually profitable. Alas! that even profeſſed Chriſtians ſhould be diſpoſed rather to murmur, envy, and covet, than to be content, thankful, and ready to diſtribute! Nay, we are naturally more prone to graſp at what belongs to others, than to manage our own to the beſt advantage; and many complain of poverty, and encroach upon the benevolence of others, becauſe they rebel againſt the ſentence of divine juſtice, "Thou ſhalt eat thy bread in the ſweat of thy "brow." In ſhort, men are diſpoſed to excuſe themſelves from labour by any pretence; and nothing ſerves the purpoſe better, than having rich and powerful relations, who are able to provide otherwiſe for them; though this is frequently done by a partial and unfaithful diſpoſal of thoſe emoluments, which are publicly entruſted with them. But there is more real kindneſs, in pointing out thoſe advantages, which are within our reach, and in exciting and encouraging to a due improvement of them, than in granting any indulgence to ſloth and extravagance. And true religion is far from giving the leaſt countenance to theſe evils: the apoſtolic canon is, "That they ſhall not eat, "who will not work:" and many of our "*cannots*," are only the language of ſluggiſhneſs, which magnifies every difficulty, into an impoſſibility; and repreſents every danger, as inevitable deſtruction. This is eſpecially the caſe in our ſpiritual work, and warfare: but even our profeſſed relation to the Captain of the Lord's hoſt, will not excuſe our ſloth and timidity: our very complaints, that comforts are withheld, and that our ſouls are joyleſs, frequently reſult from our indolence, and our fear of the croſs: and when we are convinced that "without Chriſt "we can do nothing," we are apt to ſit ſtill, and attempt nothing. But whom he loves, he rebukes; and if we belong to him, he will ſtir us up to diligence, boldneſs, and perſeverance in well-doing; he will require us to break our league with every luſt, and renounce our worldly pleaſures, and ſinful intereſts; to ſhake off our ſloth, and riſe ſuperior to our fears; to exert our beſt endeavours, and cry to him for help; then our coaſt will be enlarged, (1 *Chron.* c. iv. v. 9—10,) and our complainings ſilenced, or rather turned into joyful thankſgivings: and, if the Lord hath bleſſed us hitherto, we ſhould be thereby ſhamed out of our diſtruſt, and repinings. But we are again called to advert, to Zelophehad's daughters; and thence to obſerve, that prudent foreſight, and believing application to, and dependance on the Lord, producing obedience to his commands, will enſure to us an intereſt in his promiſes, and a lot amongſt his people, in a future world: O Lord teach us here to believe and obey, and give us an inheritance amongſt thy ſaints, in glory everlaſting! Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1.] The tribes of Judah, Ephraim,

Shiloh, and ſet up the tabernacle of the congregation there: and the land was ſubdued before them.

2 And there remained among the children of Iſrael ſeven tribes, which had not yet received their inheritance.

3 And Joſhua ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, How long *are* ye ſlack to go to poſſeſs the land which the LORD God of your fathers hath given you?

4 Give out from among you three men for *each* tribe; and I will ſend them, and they ſhall riſe and go through the land and deſcribe it, according to the inheritance of them: and they ſhall come *again* to me.

5 And they ſhall divide it into ſeven parts: Judah ſhall abide in their coaſt on the ſouth, and the houſe of Joſeph ſhall abide in their coaſts on the north.

6 Ye ſhall therefore deſcribe the land *into* ſeven parts, and bring *the deſcription* hither to me, that I may caſt lots for you here before the LORD our God.

7 But the Levites have no part among you; for the prieſthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance: and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manaſſeh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the eaſt, which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD gave them.

8 And the men aroſe, and went away: and Joſhua charged them that went to deſcribe the land, ſaying, Go, and walk through the land, and deſcribe it, and come again to me, that I may here caſt lots for you before the LORD in Shiloh.

9 And the men went, and paſſed through the land, and deſcribed it by cities into ſeven parts in a book, and came *again* to Joſhua, to the hoſt at Shiloh.

and Manaſſeh were ſettled in their poſſeſſions; perhaps others were diſperſed in ſome parts of the land, to cultivate it, or to gather in its fruits, where they could do it ſafely: it was therefore proper that the tabernacle, and the ark ſhould be removed to a more convenient ſituation; and Shiloh was ſelected for that purpoſe; doubtleſs by direction from the Lord, who might be conſulted on the occaſion by Urim and Thummim, (*Deut.* c. xii. v. 5. 11. 21.) This city was in the centre of the land, and as convenient as poſſible, for all the tribes; and it was meet that the ark and the tabernacle, which were the glory, and defence of the whole land, and ſtamped a relative holineſs upon it, ſhould be in the midſt of it. Shiloh was in the lot of Ephraim, the tribe, to which Joſhua belonged; and it was proper, that the ſanctuary ſhould be near the reſidence of their chief governor. As the name of this city is the ſame by which Jacob predicted the Meſſiah; (*Note*, *Gen.* c. xlix. v. 10;) it is ſuppoſed, that the city was thus called, on this occaſion, when it was ſelected for the reſting place of the ark, and for the obſervance of all thoſe inſtitutions, which typified our great Peace-maker, and acceſs to a reconciled God, through his atonement, and interceſſion. That part of the country was ſubdued, and they could aſſemble without any interruption, and all perſonal cares, and employments were laid aſide, whilſt with one conſent they attended to this ſolemn, and joyful religious duty: and probably, all the Iſraelites, who yet continued in their encampments, removed, and pitched around the ark, as before. In this place the ark, and the ſanctuary of God remained, till the former was taken by the Philiſtines, in the time of Eli. Solomon's temple was begun four hundred and eighty years after Iſrael's departure from Egypt: and this is almoſt all that can be aſcertained of the chronology of Iſrael during that period. And from this we may in general conclude that the ark remained at Shiloh betwixt three and four hundred years.

V. 3. *How long are ye ſlack*, &c.] The people enriched with the plunder of the Canaanites, and living in plenty upon the labours of their conquered enemies, ſeem to have been more intent on preſent eaſe, and indulgence, than upon obtaining poſſeſſion of their intended inheritance; which could not be done without new dangers, and fatigues, from which they were averſe. In the mean time the Canaanites were recovering their ſtrength, and courage, much of their land remained unoccupied, and uncultivated, and they were both impoveriſhing themſelves, and contracting bad habits. After a year, or more conſumed in this indolent manner, whilſt they remained ignorant of much of the land, which was not yet divided amongſt them, Joſhua reproved their ſlackneſs, and directed them in what method to proceed. We muſt ſuppoſe that ſome ſurvey had been made previous to the allotment of portions to the aforementioned tribes; but it had not been ſufficiently general, and exact. Three perſons, therefore, out of every tribe were choſen, that it might be done impartially: and perhaps they went in three companies for expedition, and made as exact an admeaſurement, and deſcription of the country, as they could: that the remaining land might be divided into ſeven parts, and the ſeven remaining tribes have their inheritances divided by lot: the ſituation being thus determined, and the quantity proportioned to their numbers. Whilſt theſe ſurveyors were employed in this perilous work, they were, doubtleſs peculiarly emboldened, and protected of God, and the Canaanites, however enraged, were reſtrained from aſſaulting them, and they all returned in ſafety to Shiloh, to Joſhua, who with religious ſolemnity caſt lots for them before the Lord. After this ſurvey it appeared that Judah's portion had been made diſproportionately large; and therefore Simeon had his taken out from it; and that of Dan alſo ſeems to have fallen within the limits firſt deſcribed for Judah.

10 And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD: and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel, according to their divisions.

11 And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families: and the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph.

12 And their border on the north side was from Jordan: and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side, and went up through the mountain westward; and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven.

13 And the border went over from thence toward Luz, to the side of Luz, (which *is* Beth-el,) southward, and the border descended to Ataroth-addar, near the hill that *lieth* on the south-side of the nether Beth-horon.

14 And the border was drawn *thence*, and compassed the corner of the sea southward, from the hill that *lieth* before Beth-horon southward; and the goings out thereof were at Kirjath-baal, (which *is* Kirjath-jearim,) a city of the children of Judah. This *was* the west quarter.

15 And the south quarter *was* from the end of Kirjath-jearim, and the border went out on the west, and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah;

16 And the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lieth* before the valley of the son of Hinnom, *and* which *is* in the valley of the giants on the north, and descended to the valley of Hinnom, to the side of Jebusi on the south, and descended to Enrogel,

17 And was drawn from the north, and went forth to En-shemesh, and went forth toward Geliloth, which *is* over against the going up of Adummim, and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben,

18 And passed along toward the side over against Arabah northward, and went down unto Arabah;

19 And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah, northward: and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea, at the south end of Jordan. This *was* the south coast.

20 And Jordan was the border of it on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families.

21 Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, and Beth-hoglah, and the valley of Keziz.

22 And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el,

23 And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah,

24 And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba; twelve cities with their villages:

25 Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth,

26 And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah,

27 And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah,

28 And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, (which *is* Jerusalem,) Gibeath, *and* Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This *is* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

V. 14. *The corner of the sea*, &c.] As the inheritance of Benjamin did not extend to the Mediterranean sea, this expression must either mean that it terminated in an angle in that part nearest the sea; or some inland lake must be intended.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The duties of religion are our most important business, and must be attended to in the *first place*, even to the neglect of wordly interests, if we would be happy in our own souls, and prosper in our most important undertakings: and the ordinances of God, when properly administered, and attended on by all ranks, and orders of men, form the glory, and bulwark, of any nation; "for those, "who honour God, he will honour, but they, who despise him shall be lightly esteemed;" (1 *Sam.* c. ii. v. 30.) Under the gospel dispensation we have the true tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat, not only in the midst of us, but every where present with us: and in our favoured land, we have the ordinances of God, almost in every district; and when they are properly attended on, he is as truly, though not so sensibly, present, as between the cherubims over the mercy-seat: but what return do we render for such benefits? What improvement do we make of them? Alas! the courts of the Lord are generally unfrequented; his sabbaths are violated, his truths are opposed, despised, or abused, and his commandments, and authority are trampled upon; and few in comparison appear to value the pardon, and everlasting life, which is

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1ſt. The lot of Simeon, v. 1—9. 2d. Of Zebulun, v. 10—16. 3d. Of Iſſachar, v. 17—23. 4th. Of Aſher, v. 24—31. 5th. Of Naphtali, v. 32—39. 6th. Of Dan, v. 40—48. 7th. The inheritance of Joſhua, v. 49—51.

AND the ſecond lot came forth to Simeon, *even* for the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families: and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah.

2 And they had in their inheritance, Beer-ſheba, and Sheba, and Moladah,

3 And Hazar-ſhual, and Balah, and Azem,

4 And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah,

5 And Ziklag, and Beth-markaboth, and Hazar-ſuſah,

6 And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen; thirteen cities and their villages:

7 Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Aſhan; four cities and their villages:

8 And all the villages that *were* round about theſe cities, to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the ſouth. This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families.

9 Out of the portion of the children of Judah *was* the inheritance of the children of Simeon: for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them; therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them.

10 And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun, according to their families: and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid.

11 And their border went up toward the ſea, and Maralah, and reached to Dabbaſheth, and reached to the river that *is* before Jokneam;

12 And turned from Sarid eaſtward toward the ſun-riſing unto the border of Chiſloth-tabor, and then goeth out to Daberath, and goeth up to Japhia,

13 And from thence paſſeth on along on the eaſt to Gittah-hepher, to Ittah-kazin, and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah;

14 And the border compaſſeth it on the north-ſide to Hannathon: and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el;

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propoſed to ſinners in the goſpel. Nay they, who profeſs to accept of it, are, often through indolence, ſelf-indulgence, and fear of difficulties, rendered very irreſolute and ſlack, in "poſſeſſing the land, which the Lord God hath "given them." Indeed many of them do not ſeem to underſtand, becauſe they have not carefully ſurveyed, the extent of their privileges: and, when they are preſerved free from terrors, and diſtreſs of conſcience, when they keep up ſome tolerable hope of getting to heaven at laſt, and taſte ſome little comfort from time to time, in the ordinances of God; they ſeem to think, that they have got all, that they can expect in this world: and conſider heaven, as an eſtate in reverſion, when they are ejected from their preſent too well beloved tenure of worldly comforts: nor are they aware, that a cloſe walk and intimate communion with God, increaſing conformity to him, love of him, and of one another, and a will united to his will form the very ſubſtance of heavenly felicity; and that much more of theſe bleſſed privileges may be enjoyed on earth, than we any of us have yet experienced. But our Joſhua will rebuke this ſlackneſs: and he commands his miniſters of every name to declare to his people the truths, which reſpect their preſent conſolation, and ſanctification, as well as their future inheritance, that they may be excited to preſs onward to the enjoyment of them. At his command we may boldly undertake any ſervice, and need fear no enemies: he aſſigns to each of us our preſent and our future portion, yet in this appointment he takes into the account, that diligence, vigilance, and faithfulneſs, which through his grace we are enabled to exerciſe: and as the induſtrious huſbandman, and intrepid warrior, will generally, ſo the diligent, watchful, and courageous Chriſtian ſhall be always moſt proſperous. Having therefore food and raiment in this world, let us be therewith content: and may our wealth be laid up in the land of promiſe above, whither all the tribes of the redeemed will, in their ſucceſſion, ſhortly arrive, and receive their incorruptible inheritance.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 9. *Out of the portion*, &c.] The inheritance of the tribe of Judah was found to be more, than was neceſſary, or than properly came to their ſhare; and therefore a portion of it was allotted to the tribe of Simeon, taken from the ſouth weſt part of it; and, it ſeems, that without murmuring they renounced their claim to it, at the inſtance of Joſhua, and thoſe, who had been nominated to the office of dividing the land; (*Num.* c. xxxiv. v. 17—29.) The tribe of Dan had their inheritance on the north, and north-weſt of the lot of Judah, and adjoining to that part of the country, of which the Philiſtines kept poſſeſſion. The other tribes here mentioned were ſituated north of Ephraim, and Manaſſeh; and Aſher's lot was moſt northerly of them all, in the neighbourhood of Tyre, and Zidon. There are in ſome places more names inſerted, than anſwer to the ſum total mentioned, and it is ſuppoſed, that ſome of them were names of country villages; and that ſome cities, allotted to one tribe, were ſituated within the borders of another.

15 And

15 And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem: twelve cities with their villages.

16 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Zebulun, according to their families, theſe cities with their villages.

17 *And* the fourth lot came out to Iſſachar, for the children of Iſſachar, according to their families.

18 And their border was toward Jezreel, and Cheſulloth, and Shunem,

19 And Hapharaim, and Shihon, and Anaharath,

20 And Rabbith, and Kiſhion, and Abez,

21 And Remeth, and En-gannim, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez;

22 And the coaſt reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-ſhemeſh, and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan: ſixteen cities with their villages.

23 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Iſſachar, according to their families, the cities and their villages.

24 And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Aſher, according to their families.

25 And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achſhaph,

26 And Alammelech, and Amad, and Miſheal; and reacheth to Carmel weſtward, and to Shihor-libnath,

27 And turneth toward the ſun-riſing to Beth-dagon, and reacheth to Zebulun, and to the valley of Jiphthah-el toward the north ſide of Beth-emek, and Neiel, and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand;

28 And Hebron, and Rehob, and Hammon, and Kanah, *even* unto great Zidon;

29 And *then* the coaſt turneth to Ramah, and to the ſtrong city Tyre, and the coaſt turneth to Hoſah; and the outgoings thereof are at the ſea, from the coaſt to Achzib:

30 Ummah alſo, and Aphek, and Rehob: twenty and two cities with their villages.

31 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Aſher, according to their families, theſe cities with their villages.

32 The ſixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, *even* for the children of Naphtali according to their families.

33 And their coaſt was from Heleph, from Allon to Zaanannim, and Adami, Nekeb, and Jabneel, unto Lakum; and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan:

34 And *then* the coaſt turneth weſtward to Aznoth-tabor, and goeth out from thence to Hukkok, and reacheth to Zebulun on the ſouth ſide, and reacheth to Aſher on the weſt ſide, and to Judah upon Jordan toward the ſun-riſing.

35 And the fenced cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Cinnereth,

36 And Adamah, and Ramah, and Hazor,

37 And Kedeſh, and Edrei, and En-hazor,

38 And Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-ſhemeſh: nineteen cities with their villages.

39 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali, according to their families, the cities and their villages.

40 *And* the ſeventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families.

41 And the coaſt of their inheritance was Zorah, and Eſhtaol, and Ir-ſhemeſh,

42 And Shaalabbin, and Ajalon, and Jethlah,

43 And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron,

44 And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath,

45 And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon,

46 And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho.

47 And the coaſt of the children of Dan went out *too little* for them; therefore the children of Dan went up to fight againſt Leſhem, and took it, and ſmote it with the edge of the ſword, and poſſeſſed it, and dwelt therein, and called Leſhem, Dan, after the name of Dan their father.

48 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, theſe cities with their villages.

49 When they had made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coaſts, the children of Iſrael gave an inheritance to Joſhua the ſon of Nun among them:

50 According to the word of the LORD,

they gave him the city which he aſked, *even* Timnath-ſerah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein.

51 Theſe *are* the inheritances which Eleazar the prieſt, and Joſhua the ſon of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Iſrael, divided for an inheritance by lot, in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. So they made an end of dividing the country.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua reminded to appoint the cities of refuge, v. 1—6. 2d. Their appointment, names, and ſituation, v. 7—9.

THE LORD alſo ſpake unto Joſhua, ſaying,
2 Speak to the children of Iſrael, ſaying, Appoint out for you cities of refuge, whereof I ſpake unto you by the hand of Moſes:

3 That the ſlayer that killeth *any* perſon unawares, *and* unwittingly, may flee thither: and they ſhall be your refuge from the avenger of blood.

4 And when he that doth flee unto one of thoſe cities ſhall ſtand at the entering of the gate of the city, and ſhall declare his cauſe in the ears of the elders of that city; they ſhall take him into the city unto them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them.

5 And if the avenger of blood purſue after him, then they ſhall not deliver the ſlayer up into his hand; becauſe he ſmote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not beforetime.

6 And he ſhall dwell in that city, until he ſtand before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the high prieſt that ſhall be in thoſe days: then ſhall the ſlayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own houſe, unto the city from whence he fled.

7 And they appointed Kedeſh in Galilee in mount Naphtali, and Shechem in mount Ephraim, and Kirjath-arba, (which *is* Hebron) in the mountain of Judah.

8 And on the other ſide Jordan, by Jericho

V. 49, 50.] Joſhua waited until all the tribes were ſettled, before he required any proviſion for himſelf. Probably the Lord had commanded the Iſraelites to give him an inheritance, at the time, when he gave orders about Caleb: accordingly he deſired to have Timnath-Serah, which was not a city of great note, nor ſituated in the beſt of the land: but it lay in the lot of his own tribe, and not far from Shiloh, where the ark of God was placed. Thus he cloſed all his great, and memorable ſervices by an example of moderation, equity, piety, and induſtry, in rebuilding the city aſſigned him, that does great honour to his character.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If the true believer have engaged to thoſe things, which are likely to prove injurious to him, he will not retract, or diſappoint thoſe, who confided in him: but if he have obtained an unintended, and *improper* advantage in any contract, he will recede from it without murmuring, in compliance with the requiſitions of equity and kindneſs, for love ſeeketh not her own, and doth not behave unſeemly; and it will therefore induce thoſe, in whom it richly dwells, to part with their own ſuperfluity, to ſupply what is lacking to their brethren. They are moſt favoured in Providence, who are placed neareſt to the ſanctuary, and have moſt advantages for, and the feweſt hindrances to the ſalvation of their ſouls; though they poſſeſs not worldly affluence, or diſtinctions: and, as far as we have the choice referred to us, we ſhould always decide by this rule. But a ſovereign God diſpenſes his favours as he pleaſes, and one man has his habitation aſſigned him in "the valley of viſion," and another his, "in the very region of the ſhadow of death;" according to the good pleaſure of his will, who deigns not to give any account of his matters, to the preſumptuous objector. Diſintereſtedneſs, and an unaſſuming deportment, ſhed a peculiar luſtre upon eminent characters: and they, who labour moſt to do good to others, will in proportion be indifferent about their own worldly intereſts, and willing to forego all things, rather than preclude themſelves from the ſweet pleaſure of communicating felicity. An inheritance in the Canaan above they muſt, and do covet; but it will be ſoon enough to enter upon that, when they have done all the ſervice to their brethren, of which they are capable; nor can any thing more effectually aſſure them of their title to it, than laying themſelves out properly to bring others to deſire, to ſeek, and to obtain poſſeſſion of it. But Jeſus hath far out done all others in this, and in every other reſpect: "though he were rich, for our ſakes he "became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be "made rich." Nor would he enter upon his inheritance, till by his obedience unto death, he had ſecured the eternal inheritance for all his people! nor will he account his own glory completed, until every ranſomed ſinner is put in poſſeſſion of his heavenly reſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 2—6.] As ſoon as the Iſraelites were ſettled in their promiſed inheritance, they were reminded to ſeparate the cities of refuge; whoſe uſe, and typical meaning have already been explained: (*notes, &c. Numb.* c. xxxv.) When the manſlayer arrived at the city of refuge, he was to undergo a kind of trial, before he was taken under the protection of the elders of the city, who, it ſeems, were allowed to exclude, or apprehend him, if he

eaſtward,

eastward, they assigned Bezer in the wilderness upon the plain out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh.

9 These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them, that whosoever killeth *any* person at unawares might flee thither, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood, until he stood before the congregation.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1st. The Levites requiring their cities, v. 1, 2. 2d. The cities assigned, and divided to them; their names, and situations, v. 3—42. 3d. The performance of the Lord's promises noticed, v. 43—45.

THEN came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun, and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel;

2 And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, The LORD commanded by the hand of Moses, to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle.

3 And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their suburbs.

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were adjudged a wilful murderer. And afterwards he was to stand in judgment before the congregation, or it's magistrates: and if he were then condemned, he was to be delivered to the avenger of blood: (v. 9.) this was calculated to prevent such abuses, as were generally made of sanctuaries, amongst other nations, wherein the most atrocious criminals were screened from justice.

V. 7—9.] All these cities were assigned to the priests and Levites: and they were situated on each side of Jordan, in different parts of the land, in the most convenient places. As this institution was mainly intended for a type of the sinner's refuge from the sword of avenging justice, the signification of the names of these cities, has generally been noticed, with reference to the person, character, offices, and love of Christ. *Kedesh* signifies *holy*, and Jesus is the Holy One of God, and is "made sanctification to us:" *Shechem*, *a shoulder*; and the "government is upon his "shoulder;" *Hebron*, *fellowship*; and through him sinners are admitted to have fellowship with God: *Bezer*, a *strong hold*; and such is he to those, who trust in him: *Ramoth*, *exaltations*; and he is exalted to be a Prince and Saviour: and *Golan*, *exultation*, or *joy*; and in him all believers are justified, and glory, or rejoice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We have cause to be thankful, that we have been preserved from the murderer's sword; nay if we have not ourselves committed that horrid crime: for the violent passions of the human heart, instigated by satan's temptations, naturally terminate therein, if God withdraw his restraining hand. We are also here reminded to be thankful, that we have not been destroyed *unwittingly* by others; and if we have been preserved from the great calamity, of being the unwilling cause of another's death.—We may take occasion from the subject before us, to watch and pray to be preserved from such sins, and calamities; and to be made ready, if without warning, we should be called out of time into eternity. No sanctuary should protect, no favour should on any account be shewn the wilful murderer: no protection, assistance, or kindness can be too great to be extended to the unfortunate manslayer. But it will not be a needless, or vain repetition, if we are again reminded to bless God for that appointed, and consecrated refuge, which he hath prepared in his Son, for our guilty, perishing souls. They, who flee to him, will be secured from all condemnation, yea though they have committed the most atrocious crimes, not even excepting the worst of murders: nor will any protection, instruction, sanctification, fellowship with, or joy in God, be with-held from them. His power and presence will be their strong tower, against all their enemies, nor will the exalted Saviour fail, (in consequence of his own death,) to restore every one of them to their forfeited inheritance; nay to *exalt* them to share his glory, in the presence of his Father, and their Father, of his God, and their God. To him let sinners flee, before the sword of vengeance overtake them; for he is ever near, and will not cast out any of them, who come to him: in him let believers abide, hope, and rejoice: him may we all love, imitate, and obey!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1, 2.] The Levites had waited until all the other tribes were provided for, before they preferred their claim to Joshua, previous to Israel's separation. As they were excluded from any inheritance of land amongst their brethren, they were entitled to the tythes, first fruits, &c, and forty-eight cities with their suburbs for their habitation; and had therefore as good a right to them, as the other Israelites had to their lands. It hath been observed, (*note*, *Numb.* c. xxxv. v. 2—8,) that these cities were intended for the benefit of the land, by the Levites being situated in every part of it, to instruct and edify the people by their doctrine, and example: it may be further remarked that they were dispersed as watchmen, to restrain idolatry, and to provide for the punishment of those, who were notoriously guilty of it: and as it was their interest, as well as duty, to retain the people in the worship of Jehovah alone, this was a very suitable expedient. Numbers probably lived in these cities, besides the priests, and Levites; as their tenants, for the advantage of their instructions, or to carry on trades amongst them; and the subsequent history countenances this supposition. Thus in every way this tribe

4 And

4 And the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites: and the children of Aaron the prieſt, *which were* of the Levites, had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities.

5 And the reſt of the children of Kohath *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half-tribe of Manaſſeh, ten cities.

6 And the children of Gerſhon *had* by lot out of the families of the tribe of Iſſachar, and out of the tribe of Aſher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half-tribe of Manaſſeh in Baſhan, thirteen cities.

7 The children of Merari, by their families, *had* out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad, and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities.

8 And the children of Iſrael gave by lot unto the Levites theſe cities with their ſuburbs, as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moſes.

9 And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah, and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon, theſe cities which are *here* mentioned by name,

10 Which the children of Aaron, *being* of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi, had: (for their's was the firſt lot.)

11 And they gave them the city of Arba, the father of Anak, (which *city is* Hebron,) in the hill-*country* of Judah, with the ſuburbs thereof round about it.

12 But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof, gave they to Caleb the ſon of Jephunneh, for his poſſeſſion.

13 Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the prieſt, Hebron with her ſuburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the ſlayer, and Libnah with her ſuburbs,

14 And Jattir with her ſuburbs, and Eſhtemoa with her ſuburbs,

15 And Holon with her ſuburbs, and Debir with her ſuburbs,

16 And Ain with her ſuburbs, and Juttah with her ſuburbs, *and* Beth-ſhemeſh with her ſuburbs: nine cities out of thoſe two tribes.

17 And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her ſuburbs, Geba with her ſuburbs,

18 Anathoth with her ſuburbs, and Almon with her ſuburbs: four cities.

19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the prieſts, *were* thirteen cities with their ſuburbs.

20 And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites which remained of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim.

21 For they gave them Shechem with her ſuburbs in mount Ephraim, *to be* a city of refuge for the ſlayer; and Gezer with her ſuburbs.

22 And Kibzaim with her ſuburbs, and Beth-horon with her ſuburbs: four cities.

23 And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her ſuburbs, Gibbethon with her ſuburbs,

24 Aijalon with her ſuburbs, Gath-rimmon with her ſuburbs: four cities.

25 And out of the half-tribe of Manaſſeh, Taanach with her ſuburbs, and Gath-rimmon with her ſuburbs: two cities.

26 All the cities *were* ten, with their ſuburbs, for the families of the children of Kohath that remained.

27 And unto the children of Gerſhon, of the families of the Levites, out of the *other* half-tribe of Manaſſeh, *they gave* Golan in Baſhan with her ſuburbs, *to be* a city of refuge

was plentifully provided for, as long as the people adhered to the worſhip, and reſpected the commandments of God.

V. 4. *Thirteen cities.*] The prieſts at this time could be but very few in number, how much ſoever the family of Aaron had increaſed ſince his appointment to the prieſthood: yet all theſe cities were allotted to them, as a patrimony, and in the divine foreknowledge of their future multitudes; for we have reaſon to think that no family in Iſrael increaſed ſo much, in proportion, after their departure from Egypt, as that of Aaron. Their cities alſo fell to them *by lot*, not ſo much in the neighbourhood of Shiloh, where the tabernacle and ark then were; as in that of Jeruſalem, whither they were removed, four hundred years afterwards.

V. 11, 12.] Either the city of Hebron was not included with the territory in the grant made to Caleb: or he receded from his right, that he might ſet a good example to his brethren, and induce them the more chearfully, to contribute to the maintenance of religion.

fuge for the ſlayer; and Beeſhterah with her ſuburbs: two cities.

28 And out of the tribe of Iſſachar, Kiſhon with her ſuburbs, Dabareh with her ſuburbs,

29 Jarmuth with her ſuburbs, En-gannim with her ſuburbs: four cities.

30 And out of the tribe of Aſher, Miſhal with her ſuburbs, Abdon with her ſuburbs,

31 Helkath with her ſuburbs, and Rehob with her ſuburbs: four cities.

32 And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedeſh in Galilee with her ſuburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the ſlayer; and Hammoth-dor with her ſuburbs, and Kartan with her ſuburbs: three cities.

33 All the cities of the Gerſhonites, according to their families, *were* thirteen cities with their ſuburbs.

34 And unto the families of the children of Merari, the reſt of the Levites, out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her ſuburbs, and Kartah with her ſuburbs,

35 Dimnah with her ſuburbs, Nahalal with her ſuburbs: four cities.

36 And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her ſuburbs, and Jahazah with her ſuburbs,

37 Kedemoth with her ſuburbs, and Mephaath with her ſuburbs: four cities.

38 And out of the tribe of Gad, Ramoth in Gilead with her ſuburbs, *to be* a city of refuge for the ſlayer; and Mahanaim with her ſuburbs,

39 Heſhbon with her ſuburbs, Jazer with her ſuburbs: four cities in all.

40 So all the cities for the children of Merari, by their families, which were remaining of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot, twelve cities.

41 All the cities of the Levites, within the poſſeſſion of the children of Iſrael, *were* forty and eight cities with their ſuburbs.

42 Theſe cities were every one with their ſuburbs round about them: thus *were* all theſe cities.

43 And the LORD gave unto Iſrael all the land which he ſware to give unto their fathers: and they poſſeſſed it, and dwelt therein.

44 And the LORD gave them reſt round about, according to all that he ſware unto their fathers: and there ſtood not a man of all their enemies before them; the LORD delivered all theſr enemies into their hand.

45 There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had ſpoken unto the houſe of Iſrael; all came to paſs.

V. 43—45.] This was a very proper concluſion to the hiſtory of the conqueſt and diviſion of the land; and a becoming acknowledgment of the faithfulneſs of God to his promiſes. For wiſe and gracious reaſons, ſome of the Canaanites were permitted to continue amongſt them; (*Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 29, 30;) but at that time they gave them no moleſtation; nor would they ever have made head againſt them, but ſpeedily have been exterminated, had not the people provoked the Lord, to employ them for their chaſtiſement, as we ſhall read in the ſubſequent hiſtory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The maintenance of the miniſtry is the appointment, and command of God, and not a matter of mere choice, or diſcretion; and they, "who labour in the word and doc-"trine" have as good a right to it, as other men have to their eſtates; and on ſome occaſions muſt be allowed without cenſure to aſſert their claim, againſt ſuch as would defraud them: but it ſhould always be with reluctancy, and backwardneſs; and as a matter of neceſſity, not of choice, or a diſpoſition to diſpute about temporal intereſts: and and with a willingneſs to refer themſelves to the arbitration of any impartial perſons. And in ordinary caſes it favours of a more excellent ſpirit, and more accords to the New Teſtament examples, when miniſters chooſe rather to "ſuffer all things," than to take any ſteps, which may impede the ſucceſs of their miniſtry. Yet their willingneſs to give up their right forms no excuſe for, but is an aggravation of their ſin, who deprive them of it. This proviſion for miniſters ought, if poſſible, to be ſo regulated, as to coincide with the grand end of their miniſtry, and to occaſion them as few avocations, temptations, or diſcouragements, as may be: and to afford them every advantage, of acceſs to the people; that they may exhort, reprove, and inſtruct them without falling under their contempt, or dreading their diſpleaſure. And it is well when miniſters, and their people conſider themſelves as *watchers* over each other: when the miniſter, from a recollection, that the people exactly obſerve his deportment, "walks the more "circumſpectly," "avoiding all appearance of evil;" leſt they ſhould be prejudiced or miſled; and leſt his exhortations and inſtructions ſhould loſe their efficacy: and when the people conſider that the miniſters are appointed to watch for their ſouls, as they, "that muſt give account;" and ſtudy ſo to receive their admonitions, and profit by their inſtructions, "that they may do it with joy, and not "with grief:" (*Heb.* c. xiii. v. 17.) But how dreadful is it when they encourage, and embolden one another

CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1ſt. Joſhua diſmiſſing the Reubenites, Gadites, and Manaſſites, with commendation, counſel, prayers, and great booty, v. 1—10. *2d. Their erecting an altar on the banks of Jordan: the other tribes taking umbrage, preparing for war, and ſending ambaſſadors to them, v.* 9—20. *3d. The anſwer of the Reubenites, &c, to the ſatisfaction of their brethren; and the name of their altar, v.* 21—34.

THEN Joſhua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh,

2 And ſaid unto them, Ye have kept all that Moſes the ſervant of the LORD commanded you, and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you:

3 Ye have not left your brethren theſe many days unto this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God.

4 And now the LORD your God hath given reſt unto your brethren, as he promiſed them: therefore now return ye, and get you unto your tents, *and* unto the land of your poſſeſſion, which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD gave you on the other ſide Jordan.

5 But take diligent heed to do the commandment, and the law, which Moſes the ſervant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to ſerve him with all your heart, and with all your ſoul.

6 So Joſhua bleſſed them, and ſent them away: and they went unto their tents.

7 Now to the *one* half of the tribe of Manaſſeh Moſes had given *poſſeſſion* in Baſhan; but unto the *other* half thereof gave Joſhua among their brethren on this ſide Jordan weſt-

in wickedneſs! A particular Providence is concerned in the ſituation of miniſters; who ſhould conſider their poſt, and work, as allotted to them of God, and chearfully continue therein, though they ſeem to have more diſcouragements, and inconveniences, than the reſt of their brethren; and not to remove, till they are ſatisfied in their own minds, after much ſerious conſideration, and prayer, that the Lord orders them to another ſtation, and work. Happy is that land where the true and faithful miniſters of God are to be met with in every diſtrict! The people will never be impoveriſhed by their maintenance; ſo long as they diligently apply themſelves to diſperſe the darkneſs of ignorance and error, and to diffuſe the light of divine truth: to oppoſe the ſpread of immorality, and to promote the practice of univerſal holineſs; and by their doctrine, influence, example, and prayers, to render all within their ſphere more wiſe, holy, and happy. Perſons of eminence ſhould take the lead in every good work, that their examples may excite others: always remembering, that pre-eminence in real uſefulneſs, is the moſt valuable of all diſtinctions.—In due ſeaſon all the promiſes of God will be accompliſhed to his true people: and their believing hope, and patient waiting, and ſelf-denying obedience, will iſſue in joyful ſongs of triumph, and thankful celebrations of his faithfulneſs, love, and power: then will it be univerſally acknowledged that there hath not failed ought of any good thing, which the Lord had ſpoken of, nay that he hath exceeded their largeſt expectations, made them more than conquerors, and brought them to their deſired, and delightful reſt, and inheritance. May none of us at that ſeaſon be found amongſt his enemies, who ſhall be deſtroyed for ever! Let no true believer deſpond, becauſe of delays, tribulations, and temptations; for God hath confirmed his promiſe, and covenant with an oath, that we might have a ſtrong conſolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope ſet before us; let us then beg of him to enable us to confide in him entirely, and obey him unreſervedly, and to wait for him patiently: "for we have need of patience, that after we have done the "will of God, we might receive the promiſe." (*Heb.* c. x. v. 36.)

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 3. *Theſe many days*, &c.] The Reubenites, &c, had at leaſt been abſent from home ſeven years: except as any of them had viſited their families, or been exchanged for others of their brethren. During this long war they had been very obedient to Joſhua, and did not attempt to return, till it was ended, the land divided, and their brethren ſettled; and then Joſhua honourably diſmiſſed them.

V. 5. *With all your heart*, &c.] The ſacred penman doth not record any of Joſhua's inſtructions to them, about their civil government, military diſcipline, or cultivation of their lands. Nothing was deemed worthy of inſertion in the ſacred volume, but thoſe things, which pertained to the maintenance of true godlineſs amongſt them. Perfect obedience to, or juſtification by the holy law of God, as a covenant of works, were no more practicable in the days of Joſhua, than at preſent: yet he exhorts them to that perfection, which the ſpiritual law of God requires. For the ſtandard of our obedience cannot be too complete, (*Matt.* c. v. ver. 48,) our aim cannot be too high: we ſhall be ſure to fall ſhort enough, whatever ſtandard we propoſe unto ourſelves; and the conſciouſneſs of ſuch imperfections will ſubſerve the purpoſes of humiliation; and the feeling of our own inſufficiency, will dictate, and render fervent our prayers for forgiveneſs, and aſſiſtance: whereas, if we previouſly aim at a low meaſure of holineſs, we ſhall become ſatisfied with preſent attainments, and ſupine and formal in our frame of ſpirit, if not buoyed up with ſelf-ſufficiency, and ſpiritual pride.

V. 6, 7. *Joſhua bleſſed them*, &c.] That is, he expreſſed

ward.

ward. And when Joshua sent them away also unto their tents, then he blessed them;

8 And he spake unto them, saying, Return with much riches unto your tents, and with very much cattle, with silver, and with gold, and with brass, and with iron, and with very much raiment: divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren.

9 And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, returned, and departed from the children of Israel out of Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed, according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

10 And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that *are* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, built there an altar by Jordan, a great altar to see to.

11 And the children of Israel heard say, Behold, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, have built an altar over against the land of Canaan, in the borders of Jordan, at the passage of the children of Israel.

12 And when the children of Israel heard *of it*, the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh, to go up to war against them.

13 And the children of Israel sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest;

14 And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince throughout all the tribes of Israel, and each one *was* an head of the house of their fathers among the thousands of Israel.

15 And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead, and they spake with them, saying,

16 Thus saith the whole congregation of the LORD, What trespass *is* this that ye have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that ye have builded you an altar, that ye might rebel this day against the LORD?

17 *Is* the iniquity of Peor too little for us, from which we are not cleansed until this day, (although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD,)

his affectionate good-will to them, by fervent prayers for them, and pronouncing a solemn blessing on them.

V. 8. *Divide*, &c.] (*Numb.* c. xxxi. v. 27. 1 *Sam.* c. xxx. v. 24. *Psalm* lxviii. v. 12.)

V. 10. *Built there*, &c.] The Reubenites, &c, were suspected of intending to sacrifice on this altar: it was therefore doubtless in their own inheritance, east of Jordan; they were not ambitiously disposed to record their own exploits, but to erect a monument that they were the worshippers of Jehovah, and interested in the tabernacle worship, the altar, and all the sacrifices, that were offered upon it. This they devised to ascertain by erecting an altar, exactly in the form of that at Shiloh, but vastly larger. Yet they had done better, if they had previously consulted the Lord, or explained their intention to Joshua, Eleazar, and their brethren. But as they approved themselves upright, we do not find their indiscretion censured.

V. 12.] The command of God was express, that no sacrifices were to be offered, except at the door of the tabernacle: the building of another altar seemed to imply an intention of offering sacrifices, and this might prove one step towards apostacy, and idolatry: which was to be punished with death, (*Deut.* c. xiii,) without respect to affinity, or to numbers. Though these were their brethren, and had been very serviceable to them: yet their regard to the honour of God, and the interests of religion swallowed up, (as it were) all inferior regards; and in this commendable zeal, all the tribes of Israel were prepared to unite their arms against them. But they were too precipitate; and swayed too much by report, and convened at Shiloh with too angry a spirit, as if impatient to be engaged in so horrid a warfare. It was too harsh, even if they had sacrificed upon their altar, to condemn it as idolatry: and even in that case, they were commanded to make diligent search, and to go upon nothing less than an absolute certainty, in waging war against them; (*Deut.* c. xiii. v. 14, 15.) But when they were assembled at Shiloh, probably the wisdom, and authority of Joshua, Eleazar, &c, tempered their zeal, and they previously sent ambassadors to discover the truth, and to recover them to their duty by other methods, that they might not be necessitated to go to war with them. Phinehas was placed at the head of this embassy, whose zeal had before been so signalized: and having obtained an audience of the heads of the Reubenites, &c, they delivered their embassy in very plain terms, and such as appear somewhat rigorous; but which the more aptly denote, how much they were engaged in the cause of God, and of religion.

V. 17. *From which we are not*, &c.] This may be understood of the disgrace of the crime, which still lay upon them; or of the tokens of divine displeasure, which were yet felt amongst them, notwithstanding the plague: or rather, that there were many individuals in the congregation, who had never truly repented of, or recovered them-

18 But

18 But that ye muſt turn away this day from following the LORD? And it will be, *ſeeing* ye rebel to-day againſt the LORD, that to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation of Iſrael.

19 Notwithſtanding, if the land of your poſſeſſion *be* unclean, *then* paſs ye over unto the land of the poſſeſſion of the LORD, wherein the LORD's tabernacle dwelleth, and take poſſeſſion among us: but rebel not againſt the LORD, nor rebel againſt us, in building you an altar beſide the altar, of the LORD our God.

20 Did not Achan the ſon of Zerah commit a treſpaſs in the accurſed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Iſrael? and that man periſhed not alone in his iniquity.

21 Then the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manaſſeh anſwered, and ſaid unto the heads of the thouſands of Iſrael,

22 The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods, he knoweth, and Iſrael he ſhall know, if *it be* in rebellion, or if in tranſgreſſion againſt the LORD, (ſave us not this day,)

23 That we have built us an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or meat-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings thereon, let the LORD himſelf require *it:*

24 And if we have not *rather* done it for fear of *this* thing, ſaying, in time to come your children might ſpeak unto our children, ſaying, What have ye to do with the LORD God of Iſrael?

25 For the LORD hath made Jordan a border between us and you: ye children of Reuben and children of Gad, ye have no part in the LORD: ſo ſhall your children make our children ceaſe from fearing the LORD.

26 Therefore we ſaid, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt-offering, nor for ſacrifice:

ſelves from that wickedneſs, but who yet lay under the guilt of it, and were diſpoſed to renew their provocation, ſhould an occaſion be afforded them. In ſhort, the fire had been ſmothered up, but not totally extinguiſhed; and it was therefore very dangerous to admit of any practice, which might occaſion it's breaking forth again, leſt ſtill wider devaſtation ſhould enſue.

V. 18, 19.] The propoſal here made, diſplayed in a very affecting manner their piety, diſintereſtedneſs, and brotherly love. They had indeed reproved their brethren ſharply, and were prepared to wage war againſt them, with their whole force, if the glory of God, and the intereſts of religion required it: but yet they loved them with ſo generous an affection, that they would rather divide their eſtates with them, than be under the painful neceſſity of ſo doing: if therefore the Reubenites, &c, deemed their inheritance polluted, becauſe they had no altar amongſt them, on which to offer *expiatory* ſacrifices; and had by that conſideration been induced to tranſgreſs the commandment of God, and adopt a meaſure, which might be productive of ſuch fatal conſequences; they would chearfully relinquiſh a part of their inheritances in Canaan, to make room for them, on that ſide Jordan, rather than leave them to perſiſt in ſo ruinous an expedient.

V. 20. *Periſhed not alone*, &c.] The thirty-ſix men, who were ſlain before Ai, and all the family of Achan had periſhed with him in his iniquity: and wrath would have come upon the whole congregation, had he not been puniſhed. If then one man's ſin wrought ſo much indignation, what would be the conſequences of the apoſtacy of two tribes and an half!

V. 22. *The Lord God*, &c.] This anſwer of the Reubenites, &c, is well worthy of admiration. They took the ſuſpicions, reproofs, and even harſhneſs of their brethren in good part, and did not object to the authority of the elders at Shiloh, or adviſe them to look to themſelves, and their own concerns, or in any manner retort upon them: but with the utmoſt ſolemnity, and meekneſs proceeded to explain their intention, and to give their brethren all the ſatisfaction in their power. Their appeal to the Lord, againſt whom they were ſuppoſed to have rebelled, was made with peculiar propriety, and with great reverence. The titles, by which they addreſſed him, "the Lord God "of Gods, the Lord God of Gods, &c," formed a very proper confeſſion of their faith in, as well as an act of worſhip of him, as the Eternal, Almighty God, who was exalted far above, and ſovereign Lord of all creatures however great; and even of thoſe, which other nations worſhipped as their gods: they proteſted, knew, and Iſrael ſhould know, that they were not guilty of thoſe things, with which they were charged: and indeed if they could be proved guilty, they acknowledged, that they did not deſerve, and therefore did not aſk, to be ſpared.

V. 24, 25.] They further declared that their motives in erecting this altar were directly contrary to thoſe, which had been imputed to them. For they were greatly afraid, leſt in proceſs of time the other tribes ſhould not acknowledge them as brethren, nor admit them to the ordinances of the Lord; leſt their poſterity, by reaſon of their diſtance, or ſlackneſs in attendance upon the ſolemn feaſts, ſhould at length be refuſed admiſſion amongſt them, and thus be tempted, and gradually decline to idolatry: and that no other motive had induced them to build the altar in queſtion, after the faſhion of that at Shiloh, but that it might remain to ſucceeding generations a memorial that they were Iſraelites, that they were intereſted in all the ſacrifices offered upon the altar of the Lord, and had a right to join with them in all their public religious ſolemnities.

27 But

27 But *that* it *may be* a witness between us and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the LORD before him with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the LORD.

28 Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should *so* say to us, or to our generations in time to come, that we may say *again*, Behold the pattern of the altar of the LORD, which our fathers made, not for burnt-offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between us and you.

29 God forbid that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn this day from following the LORD, to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices, beside the altar of the LORD our God that *is* before his tabernacle.

30 And when Phinehas the priest, and the princes of the congregation, and heads of the thousands of Israel which *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben and the children of Gad and the children of Manasseh spake, it pleased them.

31 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh, This day we perceive that the LORD *is* among us, because ye have not committed this trespass against the LORD: now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD.

32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes, returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad, out of the land of Gilead, unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought them word again.

33 And the thing pleased the children of Israel; and the children of Israel blessed God, and did not intend to go up against them in battle, to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

34 And the children of Reuben and the children of Gad called the altar *Ed:* for it *shall be* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God.

V. 30.] This answer of the Reubenites entirely dispersed all the suspicions from the minds of the ambassadors; and they were both pleased that their brethren were not guilty, and that they were so piously disposed.

V. 31. *Now ye have*, &c.] Had the Reubenites, &c, been guilty; or had they answered with contempt, and so provoked the other tribes to war against them, they would have occasioned sin, and punishment to the congregation: but their pious, frank, meek, and wise answer had brought the business to an amicable conclusion, and prevented all fatal consequences.

V. 34. *Called the altar*, &c.] Or they inscribed upon the altar "A witness, that the Lord is God;" that we acknowledge, and worship him as such, as well as the Israelites west of Jordan: thus they endeavoured to prevent any future abuse, or misconstruction of this altar; that it might neither occasion superstition, nor be a stumbling-block to their brethren. Thus was this affair happily terminated; and though somewhat of human infirmity is discoverable on both sides; yet the pious reader will thence collect the most pleasing ideas of the general, and zealous regard, which was then paid to the worship, and ordinances of God; and be confirmed in the sentiment, that this was indeed the very best of all the generations of Israel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The work of God, and the welfare of his people are entitled to a preference above our most important personal interests, our sweetest domestic comforts, and our most endeared relative affections: and every engagement, into which we have entered, ought to be discharged with strict punctuality, without the least appearance of prevarication, and, if it can be done, to the complete satisfaction of all the parties concerned. Nay the believer should be so well pleased with serving the cause of the church of Christ on earth, as to be willing to tarry yet longer in this world of warfare, labour, and trouble, and to wait patiently, till the Lord Jesus honourably dismisseth him: (*Phil.* c. i. v. 20—24.) But if numbered amongst his soldiers, we should obey his orders, with chearfulness, and exactness; that when he dismisseth us from our station, we may receive his commendation; of which honour we all ought to be ambitious, and of that only. Whom he approves he will bless, and recompense, and in proportion to the self-denial, hardship, and affliction, which they have endured for his sake: nay the power, number, and malice of our enemies, and the long continuance of our warfare, will eventually increase the riches of our gracious reward; which all our brethren will share with us, by rejoicing in our fulness of joy, as we shall also rejoice in their's. Commendation ought not to be withheld from those, who have behaved well; and gratitude to the instruments consists very well with superior gratitude to the Author of all our mercies, and our best counsels, and fervent prayers are a debt, which we owe *especially* to those, who have been useful to us: and the comfort of others should be regarded equally with our own. The true interest of individuals, and of nations doth not consist in increasing wealth, or greatness, but in loving, cleaving to, and obeying the Lord: and we should aim *very high* in this great concern, or else our actual attainments will be very low.—Whatever calls men from their families for a season, they should return home, as soon as

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains, 1st. Joshua convening the elders of Israel, v. 1—2. 2d. Reminding them of the Lord's kindness, and promises; exhorting them to adhere to his worship, and cautioning them against connexions with the Canaanites, v. 3—12. 3d. Warning them of the consequences of disobedience, v. 13—16.

AND it came to pass, a long time after that the LORD had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua waxed old *and* stricken in age.

2 And Joshua called for all Israel, *and* for their elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers, and said unto them, I am old *and* stricken in age:

3 And ye have seen all that the LORD your God hath done unto all these nations because of you; for the LORD your God *is* he that hath fought for you.

4 Behold, I have divided unto you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward.

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they are able, that they may instruct, and rule over them in the fear of God; and share all their acquisitions with them, and in liberal hospitality, and not in personal indulgence, or excess. We should highly value the ordinances of God ourselves, and desire to perpetuate them to our posterity, that they may inherit the blessings of the communion of the saints; and be preserved from all occasion of, or temptation to ungodliness, or false religion. And when our situation in life, or the choice, which we have inadvertently made for them, or for ourselves, exposes them to peculiar danger, we should devise every prudent means of preventing the fatal effects. And though we ought carefully to take heed that our good be not evil spoken of; yet they, who are truly zealous for the honour of God, and active in promoting true godliness, must not think it strange, if their honest, and proper measures be suspected, or censured by their brethren, who are no less zealous than they, but from concurring circumstances are led to express their zeal in another way. However we should all of us watch against a disposition to rash jndgment, uncandid surmises, or harsh reproofs, and cultivate, and pray for the contrary spirit: but should it be our trial to be rebuked with severity, and loaded with calumny; we should be thankful for the testimony of our consciences to our integrity, and that we are able to appeal to our heart-searching judge, that we are misrepresented, or misunderstood: and if the Lord knoweth our innocence, Israel shall know it in due time; for if our consciences be clear, he will at length clear our character, which we may safely commit to his keeping; (*Psalm* xxxvii. v. 6. We ought therefore cautiously to avoid all recriminations, to speak with mildness, and seriousness, and be ready to offer such explanations of our conduct, and intentions, as may obviate misconstructions, and satisfy the minds of our pious, and candid brethren; and to alter whatever has been wrong, or appears suspicious. But charity hopeth all things, and rejoiceth not in iniquity; and those, who abound therein, will be glad to find themselves mistaken, in the unfavourable opinion of their brethren, which they reluctantly entertained; and will bless God for evidences of their faith and piety. When our boldness in opposing, and our sharpness in reproving, or punishing sin, are the effects of genuine zeal, and love; they will be attended with a disposition to renounce our own interests, that sin may be prevented, God may be glorified, and temptations removed out of the way of our brethren: and we have learned a good lesson, when we are brought to dread sin worse than poverty, or suffering. In all our appeals to the Lord, we ought to have our minds possessed with a solemn reverential awe of his majesty, authority, heart-searchihg knowledge, and perfections; and never to call him to witness about any thing trivial, or doubtful, or in a light, and rash manner.—Happy will it be when professed Christians, shall learn in their differences to copy the example of Israel recorded in this chapter; and to unite zeal, and steady adherance to the cause of truth, with candour, meekness, a readiness to understand each other, to explain, and to be satisfied with the sufficient explanations, and concessions of their brethren. Oh how long will the spirit of acrimony, misrepresentation, uncandid construction, bearing false witness, treating each other with severity, ridicule, and contempt, loading each other with opprobrious epithets, and an obstinate pertinacity in defending every tittle of a system, and carrying every sentiment to the utmost extreme! how long I say shall these things disgrace the very name of religious controversy, and confirm the prejudices of thousands against those precious truths, which have often been contended for in so odious a manner! When will Christians remember, "that by this shall all men know the disciples "of Christ, when they have love one for another!" and when will they recollect, that "if they bite and devour one "another, they are like to be consumed one of another?" And the world, and the god of this world have no higher gratification, than to see the different denominations of professing Christians exposing, reviling, and ridiculing each other! May the Lord increase the number of those, who endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit "in the bond of "peace:" and may increasing grace, and consolation be with all, who love Jesus Christ in sincerity, by whatever name they are distinguished. Amen.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1. *A long time*, &c.] Perhaps about ten years.

V. 2. *For all Israel, and for*, &c.] That is "for all "Israel, even for their elders, &c." Having given this charge to their elders, and to the rulers of thousands, and of hundreds, &c; they would be enabled to communicate the substance of it in their several districts, that all Israel might hear. Probably this was done at Shiloh, on one of their solemn feasts.

5 And the LORD your God, he shall expel them from before you, and drive them from out of your sight; and ye shall possess their land, as the LORD your God hath promised unto you.

6 Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom *to* the right hand or *to* the left:

7 That ye come not among these nations, these that remain among you, neither make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause to swear *by them*, neither serve them, nor bow yourselves unto them:

8 But cleave unto the LORD your God, as ye have done unto this day.

9 For the LORD hath driven out from before you great nations and strong: but *as for* you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day.

10 One man of you shall chase a thousand: for the LORD your God, he *it is* that fighteth for you, as he hath promised you.

11 Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, that ye love the LORD your God.

12 Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, *even* these that remain among you, and shall make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you;

13 Know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive out *any of* these nations from before you; but they shall be snares and traps unto you, and scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you.

14 And behold this day I *am* going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, *and* not one thing hath failed thereof.

15 Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which

V. 6. *Be ye therefore very courageous*, &c.] Whilst the Israelites adhered strictly to the whole law of Moses, they would be kept entirely distinct from the Canaanites, and the surrounding nations, and would be in consequence exposed to their hatred, and opposition. They would also carry on unceasing war against the inhabitants of the land, avowedly aiming at their entire extirpation; which would expose them to their unabating, and most rancorous enmity; much courage would therefore be required in order to a determinate obedience in such circumstances: and Joshua probably had observed that the people were more intent upon the quiet enjoyment of their present possessions, than upon boldly improving their advantages, as Moses had commanded them.

V. 7. *Cause to swear by them*, &c.] The habitual mention of the names of idols, would gradually introduce the custom of swearing by them in common discourse. This would abate their abhorrence of idolatry, and prepare the way for more direct acts of idolatrous worship. The paintings, statues, poems, &c, exquisitely finished by human ingenuity, but replete with references to the detestable heathen mythology, with which our land is stored, tend exceedingly to habituate men's minds to reflect upon the Roman and Grecian idolatry without horror; to banish the language of piety from men's lips, and to subserve the cause of scepticism, infidelity, and ungodliness: (*Note Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 13.).

V. 10. *One man*, &c.] If they continued to cleave unto the Lord, as they had done, he would continue to fight for them. After the Israelites were dispersed in their several possessions, they might not be able to bring such large armies into the field, as they had done, when they were encamped in one body: but that need not discourage them; for one Israelite should chase a thousand Canaanites, so long as they cleaved unto the Lord; as he himself "would fight for them," (*Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 8. *Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 30. 1 *Sam.* c. xiv. v. 6.)

V. 13. *Snares and traps*, &c.] First snares, and traps, and then scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes. If the Israelites entered into any amicable correspondence with the Canaanites, their women would allure them to form connexions, or marriages with them; and by their blandishments would entice them to join in their idolatrous worship: thus they would be taken in satan's snares and traps: and a Canaanite must always be an enemy to an Israelite, under every mask; and they would always watch for their opportunity of avenging themselves upon them: when the Israelites had therefore provoked the Lord to withdraw his protection, they would be the ready instruments of their chastisement; but if that did not bring them to repentance, their cruelties would torment them as a thorn in the eye would do; and even drive them out of the promised land. The subsequent history abundantly illustrates the propriety of these expressions.

V. 14. *Ye know in all your*, &c.] The Israelites were deeply affected with the wonderful performance of God's promises to their fathers; and Joshua, (as he supposed with his parting breath,) declared to them, that the threatenings should be accomplished with equal certainty, and exactness, whenever they transgressed their covenant by apostacy, and idolatry.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Through the deceitfulness of the human heart, we are

the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land, which the LORD your God hath given unto you.

16 When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you.

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. Joshua again convening the elders of Israel, reminding them of the Lord's goodness, engaging them to choose his service by solemn covenant, and recording, and forming a memorial of this transaction, v. 1—28. 2d. His death, and burial; Israel's adherence to the service of the Lord; the burial of Joseph's bones; and the death and burial of Eleazar, v. 29—33.

AND Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers: and they presented themselves before God.

2 And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nahor: and they served other gods.

3 And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.

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never more in danger of forgetting the Lord, than when he hath most favoured us with temporal prosperity. They, who possess influence, by reason of their age, authority, reputation for wisdom, and piety, or on account of eminent services, should employ it all, with unwearied perseverance to their latest breath, in promoting the practice of true godliness. With combined energy, gratitude, duty, interest, and regard to our own best happiness, require us to adhere to our profession, and walk consistent with it: yet we all need to be frequently reminded, exhorted, and warned so to do. So long as men cleave to the Lord, though they have abated somewhat of their fervour, and diligence, there is a good ground of hope, that admonitions will have their proper effect; and the diseases of the soul, like those of the body, should be resisted at first before they have gathered strength. We cannot too frequently be called upon to meditate on the Lord's past, and present kindness to us: and to reflect upon his gracious promises, an awful threatenings: and we should treasure up our experience of his exact performance of his word, to strengthen our expectation of the accomplishment of the whole in due season: and both hope, and fear, and every passion of the soul should be engaged to restrain men from sin, and to keep them close to their duty. It is true wisdom to discern and shun the occasions of, and inlets to sin; and none are more dangerous than ungodly companions: acquaintance, friendship, and marriage with persons of no religion, or of false religion, have generally been found progressive steps towards the professor's apostasy, and the believer's loss of all his life, comfort, and usefulness: and they, who at first are tempters, will eventually prove the scourges, of those, who have listened to their seductions: and either bitter distress in this world, or utter destruction in the world to come, are the unavoidable effects of yielding to such temptations. This all ought "to know for a certainty," that they "may take good heed unto themselves" and not allow the love of any creature, to draw them off from the love of God, and obedience to his laws. Our minds ought to be filled with an abhorrence of every kind of ungodliness equal to that, which the most conscientious persons feel of murder, or adultery; for the guilt of neglecting, and despising the glorious God our Creator, is far greater, than that of injuring our fellow-creatures; though this be far different from the sentiments, and conduct of fallen man. But our inward foes are the most dangerous; and we must oppose and mortify them with unrelenting severity, or they will occasion us much misery: but this warfare will require much courage, and resolution; for if we resolutely adhere to the word of God as our rule, neither turning aside to the right hand, or to the left, we shall certainly be hated, despised, and reproached, if not worse treated by those, whose pride is affronted, or whose consciences are made uneasy, by our holy singularity, and faithful reproofs. But we need not fear them; "for the Lord "our God will fight for us, as he hath promised," and nothing will by any means hurt us: and though useful instruments, and valued friends are removing from us; yet the Lord, ever liveth to protect, uphold, guide, comfort, and bless us. But sinners have indeed cause to tremble at his indignation: for he will as certainly execute this threatenings, as perform his promises; and hypocrites, or apostates will be as severely treated, as open infidels, and profligates. Let us then watch and pray against temptation; let us trust in his faithfulness, love, and power; let us plead his promises, and cleave to his commandments; and then we shall be happy in life, and death, and for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *To Shechem*, &c.] Shechem was nearer to Timnath-Serah, than Shiloh, and Joshua, being old, and infirm, convened the tribes and elders of Israel to that place. Finding his life still prolonged, Joshua was desirous of once more enforcing upon the Israelites the great things of their religion, in the most solemn, and affecting manner possible.

V. 2. *The other side of the flood*, &c.] That is, of the river Euphrates. It is said that "*they* served other gods," which makes it evident that Abraham, (as well as Terah, and Nahor,) had been guilty of idolatry, before he was called to the knowledge of God, when he was above seventy years of age.

4 And

4 And I gave unto Iſaac Jacob and Eſau: and I gave unto Eſau mount Seir, to poſſeſs it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt.

5 I ſent Moſes alſo and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt, according to that which I did among them; and afterward I brought you out.

6 And I brought your fathers out of Egypt: and ye came unto the ſea; and the Egyptians purſued after your fathers with chariots and horſemen unto the Red ſea.

7 And when they cried unto the LORD, he put darkneſs between you and the Egyptians, and brought the ſea upon them, and covered them: and your eyes have ſeen what I have done in Egypt: and ye dwelt in the wilderneſs a long ſeaſon.

8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other ſide Jordan; and they fought with you: and I gave them into your hand, that ye might poſſeſs their land; and I deſtroyed them from before you.

9 Then Balak the ſon of Zippor, king of Moab, aroſe and warred againſt Iſrael, and ſent and called Balaam the ſon of Beor to curſe you:

10 But I would not hearken unto Balaam; therefore he bleſſed you ſtill: ſo I delivered you out of his hand.

11 And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought againſt you, the Amorites, and the Perrizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgaſhites, the Hivites, and the Jebuzites; and I delivered them into your hand.

12 And I ſent the hornet before you, which drave them out from before you, *even* the two kings of the Amorites; *but* not with thy ſword, nor with thy bow.

13 And I have given you a land for which ye did not labour, and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them: of the vineyards and olive-yards which ye planted not do ye eat.

14 Now therefore fear the LORD, and ſerve him in ſincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers ſerved on the other ſide of the flood, and in Egypt; and ſerve ye the LORD.

15 And if it ſeem evil unto you to ſerve the LORD, chooſe ye this day whom ye will ſerve; whether the gods which your fathers ſerved that *were* on the other ſide of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whoſe land ye

V. 7. *Your eyes have ſeen*, &c.] Many of thoſe, who, being under twenty years of age, had witneſſed theſe miracles, were doubtleſs ſtill living; and the elders, judges, and officers, whom Joſhua addreſſed were chiefly of this number.

V. 9. *Warred*, &c.] Balak intended war againſt Iſrael; though he was not permitted to execute his purpoſes.

V. 12. *I ſent the hornet*, &c.] (*Exod.* c. xxiii. v. 28.) Probably theſe inſects ſo infeſted the armies of Sihon, and Og, when preparing for the battle, as to throw them into confuſion, and give the Iſraelites an eaſy victory; which demanded the greater gratitude from them, not having been obtained by their ſword, or bow.

V. 14. *Put away the gods*, &c.] It ſeems that the Iſraelites ſtill retained ſome reliques of their fathers idolatry, which from time to time they were tempted to worſhip. In this very place Jacob had "put away the "ſtrange gods," which were in his family, and buried them under an oak; (*Gen.* c. xxxv. v. 2—4.) But his deſcendants had formed other images, &c, of the ſame ſuppoſed deities, and had not all the days of Moſes, been induced to deſtroy them all, as Joſhua well knew; and therefore he inſiſted upon their putting them all away together, if they meant to be ſincere, and entire in the ſervice of Jehovah.

V. 15. *Chooſe ye this day*, &c.] The Lord has an unalienable right to the worſhip, and obedience of all his rational creatures, which cannot be withheld without contracting the deepeſt guilt, and incurring the ſevereſt vengeance. But it is eſſential to it, that it be performed with a willing mind; for LOVE is the very ſubſtance of it, and the only *genuine principle*, whence all acceptable ſervice of God can ſpring. A reluctant, unwilling worſhip, and obedience can riſe no higher, than hypocriſy. "The Fa-"ther ſeeketh *only* ſuch to worſhip him, who worſhip him "in Spirit, and truth." But the carnal mind of man is "enmity againſt God," and therefore incapable of ſuch a ſpiritual worſhip: hence the neceſſity of being born again: this neceſſity, and the nature of this gracious change is firſt diſcovered unto our minds, and then we are induced to ſeek for it, in the uſe of *appointed means*; and thus become *conſciouſly*, and *experimentally* partakers of it, and are numbered amongſt thoſe, who worſhip God in ſincerity, and from genuine love. But in the viſible church of profeſſed worſhippers, numbers have always reſted in the mere form, in an *unpleaſant taſk*, which they have impoſed upon themſelves, to avoid, as they hope, worſe conſequences: and a great part of the uſefulneſs of preaching conſiſts, in diſcovering the difference betwixt the *form*, and the power of godlineſs; and in ſtirring up the minds of men, from reſting in the former, to ſeek after the latter. The method, which Joſhua adopted, in treating with the Iſraelites was admirably calculated, and evidently intended to produce this effect. Many of them were already ſpiritual worſhippers: a much greater number

dwell: but as for me and my houſe, we will ſerve the LORD.

16 And the people anſwered and ſaid, God forbid that we ſhould forſake the LORD, to ſerve other Gods;

17 For the LORD our God he *it is* that brought us up, and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, from the houſe of bondage, and which did thoſe great ſigns in our ſight, and preſerved us in all the way wherein we went, and among all the people through whom we paſſed:

18 And the LORD drave out from before us all the people, even the Amorites which dwelt in the land: *therefore*, will we alſo ſerve the LORD: for he *is* our God.

19 And Joſhua ſaid unto the people, Ye cannot ſerve the LORD; for he *is* an holy God: he *is* a jealous God; he will not forgive your tranſgreſſions, nor your ſins.

20 If ye forſake the LORD, and ſerve ſtrange Gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and conſume you, after that he hath done you good.

21 And the people ſaid unto Joſhua, Nay; but we will ſerve the LORD.

22 And Joſhua ſaid unto the people, Ye *are* witneſſes againſt yourſelves that ye have choſen you the LORD, to ſerve him. And they ſaid, *We are* witneſſes.

23 Now therefore put away *(ſaid he)* the ſtrange gods which *are* among you, and incline your heart unto the LORD God of Iſrael.

24 And the people ſaid unto Joſhua, The LORD our God will we ſerve, and his voice will we obey.

25 So Joſhua made a covenant with the people that day, and ſet them a ſtatute and an ordinance in Shechem.

26 And Joſhua wrote theſe words in the

might be favourably diſpoſed toward the worſhip, and ſervice of the Lord; but through procraſtination, and worldly avocations were not yet truly engaged in it; and many perhaps had a ſecret diſlike to religion, who would have been aſhamed to have confeſſed it, and would have ſtarted at the propoſal of renouncing the worſhip of God, and openly profeſſing themſelves idolaters. Of this ſtate of their minds he aimed to take the advantage, and to lead them, by this propoſal, to conſider their ways; to reflect upon their own inconſiſtency, formality, or procraſtination; and to engage more deliberately, ſeriouſly, and with full purpoſe of heart in the Lord's ſervice. He thereby intimated that apoſtacy from God to the worſhip of idols would not be more deſtructive to them, than hypocriſy, a ſecret diſlike to God's ſervice, and a lifeleſs profeſſion: that, if the ſervice of God were worth any thing, it was worth every thing: that for his part, he had made up his mind, and had deliberately, and decidedly choſen to ſerve the Lord fully and heartily: that he was determined to uſe all his authority, and influence with his family to prevail with them to follow his example; and that he greatly deſired to perſuade them to make the ſame choice, and to act in the ſame manner.

V. 19. *Ye cannot ſerve the Lord*, &c.] Joſhua did not ſpeak this to deter the people from God's ſervice; but to put them upon their guard againſt objections, which are commonly made to a life of ſtrict godlineſs, as if intolerably difficult, or even impracticable; and to lead them to count their coſt, and to conſider before-hand what they engaged to do.—With great addreſs, and deep acquaintance with the human heart, he ſeized the advantage, which their preſent impreſſions afforded him, to render them abiding, and to increaſe their earneſtneſs.—When a certain degree of inclination towards any object hath once gained poſſeſſion of the heart, it is always increaſed by the proſpect of difficulties in the way; provided they appear ſurmountable, by contrivance, exertion, and perſeverance. This management of Joſhua had a direct tendency to lead the Iſraelites to reflect upon the character and perfections of Jehovah, and upon the nature of his ſervice; to advert to their own unholineſs, and inſufficiency, and to that encouragement, and aſſiſtance, which the word of God propoſed to them; to induce them to eſteem the acceptable ſerving of God, as a prize, worth their utmoſt labour, and earneſtneſs: to render them more diligent, watchful, humble, and dependant in their endeavours, and to prepare them for the croſs, and for the conflict; and to prevent the effect of after-difficulties, diſcouragements, and temptations, by exciting the expectation of them; (*Luke*, c. xiv. v. 25—33.) Such was the tendency of this addreſs, and ſuch by the bleſſing of God, appears to have been it's effect upon many of the Iſraelites, (v. 31.)

V. 20. *If ye forſake*, &c.] The longer, and the more open profeſſion they ſhould make of worſhipping Jehovah, the deeper would be their guilt, and condemnation, if they at laſt apoſtatiſed to idolatry. Of this Joſhua reminded them, not that they ſhould refuſe to avow themſelves the worſhippers of the Lord; but that they might advert to the importance of that engagement, and be upon their guard againſt future temptations.

V. 23. *Incline your heart*, &c.] This expreſſion ſhews how earneſt this venerable ſervant of God was, to lead the people into the interior exerciſes of godlineſs, and to excite them to be ſpiritual, and hearty, as well as entire in their religion.

V. 25. *So Joſhua*, &c.] By this management Joſhua led them on ſolemnly to renew their ratification of their covenant to be the Lord's people, and to adhere to his worſhip, in the moſt intelligent, and deliberate manner; and then formed the whole into a ſtatute, and ordinance, which was promulgated for all Iſrael to hearken to, and obey.

V. 26. *Joſhua wrote*, &c.] This ratification of the covenant was inſcribed in that copy of the law, which was

book of the law of God, and took a great ſtone, and ſet it up there under an oak that *was* by the ſanctuary of the LORD.

27 And Joſhua ſaid unto all the people, Behold, this ſtone ſhall be a witneſs unto us; for it hath heard all the words of the LORD which he ſpake unto us: it ſhall be therefore a witneſs unto you, leſt ye deny your God.

28 So Joſhua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance.

29 And it came to paſs after theſe things, that Joſhua the ſon of Nun, the ſervant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old.

30 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-ſerah, which *is* in mount Ephraim, on the north ſide of the hill of Gaaſh.

31 And Iſrael ſerved the LORD all the days of Joſhua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joſhua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Iſrael.

32 And the bones of Joſeph, which the children of Iſrael brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the ſons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of ſilver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joſeph.

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laid up by the ſides of the ark, as a perpetual memorial of the tranſaction: and it was alſo, probably, tranſcribed into all their other copies of the law.

V. 27. *Behold, this ſtone*, &c.] This great ſtone would teſtify to ſucceeding generations that event, which occaſioned it's being ſet up; and would be a witneſs againſt them, when they afterwards revolted to idolatry. This idea contains a forcible charge of inſenſibility againſt mankind, as if they were more regardleſs of their Maker, than the inanimate creatures, which, by anſwering the end of their creation, ſeem to exclaim againſt the ingratitude, and rebellion of the human ſpecies.—In this affecting manner Joſhua took his leave of Iſrael; went home from this his laſt, and perhaps his beſt ſervice to God, and them, and was ſpeedily taken home to his reſt.

V. 32. *And the bones of Joſeph*, &c.] They had carried Joſeph's bones with them in all their wanderings, and never attempted to bury them, till they were peaceably ſettled in the land. It is remarkable that Joſhua juſt lived as many years, as his renowned anceſtor Joſeph had done: but he was not buried in the ſame place with him, but in his own inheritance, which ſeems to have been the general practice.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is beautiful, and honourable, when zeal for the glory of God, and love to the ſouls of men gather ſtrength, at a time, when the body is ready to drop into the grave: and whilſt life is ſpared, and any meaſure of health afforded, if our hearts glow with love, and zeal, we ſhall deviſe ſome method to ſerve the cauſe of godlineſs, and to fix ſome ſalutary impreſſions upon the minds of thoſe around us: may ſometimes when the body is leaſt capable of executing, the ſoul poſſeſſes moſt vigour for contriving proper methods of doing good. In repeating our exhortations heavenly wiſdom will teach us to vary the manner of reaching the conſcience, and engaging the affections: but we can never with propriety omit the commemoration of the Lord's mercies to us: and by frequent meditation on that ſubject, we ſhall recollect more, and more inſtances of his goodneſs: and whatever in our experience demands our gratitude to God, will alſo furniſh us with cauſe of humiliation, and of encouragement. The largeneſs, and freeneſs of divine mercy are ſo illuſtrated in the ſalvation of the moſt eminent ſaints, mentioned in Scripture, that the chief of ſinners may thence take encouragement to truſt his mercy likewiſe. The inference, to be drawn from every delineation of the divine character, and from the memorial of his wondrous works, and abundant mercies, is this, "now therefore fear "the Lord, and ſerve him in ſincerity, and in truth:" fear his diſpleaſure, ſeek his favour, embrace his mercy, truſt his grace, reverence his authority, wait on him in his ordinances, be thankful for his benefits; and thus learn to love him, and to keep his commandments. But without ſincerity, and truth all profeſſions of repentance, faith, fear, or love are mere hypocriſy, and will avail us nothing. His ſervice muſt be our voluntary choice, and if we were diſpoſed to uſe our reaſon aright, we could not but make choice of it; and bleſſed be God, after all our ſins, we are invited to chooſe his ſervice, and he will not reject us; if we ſeek him in the appointed way, and are decided in preferring his favour, worſhip, and obedience, to the pleaſures of ſin, and to the vanities of the world. But we muſt diligently ſtudy the nature of true religion, and what it will coſt us, expoſe us to, and employ us in, that we may be prepared for the temptations, tribulations, conflicts, and ſelf-denials, to which it will certainly call us; that we may be aware of our own inſufficiency, and ſeek help, and comfort from on high. The Lord our God is jealous, juſt and holy: he will not be trifled with, he cannot be impoſed upon, he abhors a double mind, and will not accept of a divided heart; he hates lukewarmneſs, and will as certainly puniſh the apoſtate, as forgive the humble believer: (*Rev.* c. iii. v. 15, 16:) but our only danger lies in forſaking him; for if we adhere to his ſervice with an upright, and willing mind, none of our miſtakes, imperfections, or enemies can hurt us. We cannot ſerve the Lord without renouncing other maſters, and *inclining our hearts* unto him; nor can we incline our hearts without his grace, which he readily beſtows on every praying ſoul. Depending upon his aſſiſtance, and merciful acceptance, notwithſtanding all our difficulties, and impotency, we may with confidence ſay, "God forbid that we ſhould forſake the "Lord;" and to every objection may anſwer, "nay but "we will ſerve the Lord;" and cloſe all by poſitively

33 And Eleazar the ſon of Aaron died, and they buried him in a hill *that pertained to* Phinehas his ſon, which was given him in mount Ephraim.

averring, "the Lord our God will we ſerve, and his voice "will we obey:" nor need we ſcruple the moſt open and ſolemn ratification of his covenant, by which we avouch him to be our God, and ourſelves to be his people. For though the houſe of God, the Lord's table, and even the very walls and trees, before which we have uttered our ſolemn purpoſes of ſerving him, would obteſt againſt us, if we denied him; and all the good, which he had done us, would become an occaſion of evil to us; yet we may truſt in him to enable us to fulfil our engagements; and be confident that he will put his fear into our hearts, that we ſhall not depart from him. They, who in the plaineſt terms have ſhewn the neceſſity, and the difficulty of ſerving God, and the danger of forſaking him; and who have preſſed others moſt ſtrongly to count their coſt, and to prepare for the croſs, ſhould be the moſt forward to avow their own purpoſe of chooſing, and cleaving to his ſervice: and their deſires, endeavours, and prayers, that the bleſſings of true religion may be the inheritance of their children. Thus we all in our ſeveral ſtations ſhould deliberately determine by the grace of God, to ſerve him ourſelves, and to do the utmoſt in our power, that our houſeholds may ſerve him likewiſe. And though God alone can give grace; yet he greatly approves, and bleſſes ſuch earneſt endeavours to engage men to, and confirm them in his ſervice: and in ſome inſtances the pious labours of one ſingle day may produce the moſt important, and beneficial effects for years, or even for generations to come. After a life thus ſpent, and thus concluded, how comfortably may the believer meet the ſtroke of death, and retire to his reſt in the realms of bliſs! Thus the moſt uſeful men, having ſerved their generation, according to the will of God, one after another fall aſleep, and ſee corruption: but Jeſus, having ſpent, and ended his life on earth, more aſſiduouſly, and effectually, than either Joſhua, or Joſeph, aroſe from the dead, and ſaw no corruption: and not only brings his ranſomed tribes to their reſt, but liveth with them, and reigneth over them, to conſummate, and perpetuate their felicity to all eternity: and wherever their bodies are interred, he will ſhortly raiſe them incorruptible, and transform them into the likeneſs of "his own glorious body, according to the mighty working, "whereby he is able to ſubdue all things unto himſelf."

THE BOOK OF
JUDGES.

This Book was probably penned by the prophet Samuel, and contains the hiſtory of Iſrael from the death of Joſhua, to the time of Eli, for about three hundred years. The judges, from whom it's name is derived, were not a regular ſucceſſion of governors, but occaſional deliverers raiſed up of God, as circumſtances required, to reſcue Iſrael from their oppreſſors, to reform the ſtate of religion, and to adminiſter juſtice to the people: and without aſſuming the pomp of regal authority, they were in fact the immediate vicegerents of Jehovah, the king of Iſrael. The ſtate of God's people doth not appear in this book ſo proſperous, nor their character ſo religious, as might have been expected, from what we have been conſidering in the preceding books: but we may ſuppoſe, that there were multitudes of believers amongſt them; and that the tabernacle ſervice was regularly ſupported, and attended on, (though it be not particularly recorded;) notwithſtanding the lamentable defection, which took place in their national character. The whole narrative however is full of important inſtruction: it illuſtrates the ſcriptural doctrine of the corrupt bias of our fallen nature; and the manner, in which men are drawn aſide into ungodlineſs, or falſe religion, and the fatal effects of ſin upon all our comforts, and proſpects: the juſtice, and holineſs, the power and truth of God, both in performing his threatenings and promiſes, are manifeſted therein; in connexion with his patience, his compaſſion, and mercy: the nature, and advantages of repentance, and obedience, and the felicity of thoſe who truſt in, and ſerve the Lord, are very affectingly diſplayed: and the whole is ſuited to render the teachable, and attentive reader, watchful, and circumſpect; to warn thoſe, "who think they ſtand, to take heed leſt they fall;" and to encourage thoſe, who are fallen, to return to our forgiving God, in the way, which he hath preſcribed.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1st. The conduct, and success of Judah, and Simeon, in their wars with the Canaanites, v. 1—20. *2d. Of Benjamin, v.* 21. *3d. Of Ephraim and Manasseh, v.* 22—29. *4th. Of Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, v.* 30—33. *5th. Of Dan,* 34—36.

NOW after the death of Joshua it came to pass, that the children of Israel asked the LORD, saying, Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?

2 And the LORD said, Judah shall go up: behold I have delivered the land into his hand.

3 And Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites, and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him.

4 And Judah went up; and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men.

5 And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek; and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites.

6 But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes.

7 And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered *their meat* under my tables: as I have done, so God hath requited me. And they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

8 (Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it, and smitten it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire,)

9 And afterwards the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley.

10 And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron, (now the name of Hebron before *was* Kirjath-arba,) and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai.

11 And from thence he went against the inhabitants of Debir: (and the name of Debir before *was* Kirjath-sepher:)

12 And Caleb said, he that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife.

13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it: and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife.

14 And it came to pass, when she came *to him*, that she moved him to ask of her father a field: and she lighted from off *her* ass; and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou?

15 And she said unto him, Give me a blessing: for thou hast given me a south land, give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.

16 And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Who shall go up?* &c.] The Israelites were convinced that the war against the Canaanites was to be continued; but they were in doubt, about the manner in which it was to be conducted, after the death of Joshua, and which tribe was to have the precedency: and in these respects they enquired of the Lord, probably by Urim and Thummim. It would have been well, if they had continued in the same mind; but sloth, cowardice, and unbelief, and perhaps a misjudged lenity prevailed with them, to leave their work unfinished; which created them almost an infinity of trouble, and misery afterwards.

V. 2. *Judah shall go up*, &c.] This numerous and valiant tribe, whence the Messiah was to descend, and which was in all things to have the precedency, was directed to take the lead in this war, and by their example to embolden their brethren, and to mark out to them the path to victory, and prosperity.

V. 7. *Adoni-bezek*, &c.] That is "The Lord of Bezek." This prince had, it seems, been a great warrior, and a severe tyrant over his vanquished enemies: he had had no fewer than seventy of the petty princes of those times, one after another his prisoners: and having disabled them with great disgrace and pain by cutting off their thumbs, and great toes, he forced them to gather their food as dogs under his table. The Israelites, hearing of this, probably by divine direction, retaliated upon him; and his own conscience extorted from him a confession of the justice of God in this punishment.

V. 8. *Had taken it*, &c.] Judah seized upon the greatest part of Jerusalem, though it lay within the lot of Benjamin, and burnt some part of it; but not the whole, for the Benjamites dwelt in part of it immediately after, (21.)

V. 10—15.] (*Notes, Joshua*, c. xv. v. 13—19.) Probably Caleb was commander in this whole expedition.

V. 16. *The children of the Kenite*, &c.] The descendants of Hobab, the son of Jethro, (who it seems acceded to the

palm-trees with the children of Judah into the wilderneſs of Judah, which *lieth* in the ſouth of Arad: and they went and dwelt among the people.

17 And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they ſlew the Canaanites that inhabited Zephath, and utterly deſtroyed it: (and the name of the city was called Hormah:)

18 Alſo Judah took Gaza with the coaſt thereof, and Aſkelon with the coaſt thereof, and Ekron with the coaſt thereof.

19 And the LORD was with Judah, and he drave out *the inhabitants of* the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, becauſe they had chariots of iron.

20 And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moſes ſaid: and he expelled thence the three ſons of Anak.

21 And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebuſites that inhabited Jeruſalem; but the Jebuſites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jeruſalem unto this day.

22 And the houſe of Joſeph, they alſo went up againſt Beth-el: and the LORD *was* with them.

23 And the houſe of Joſeph ſent to deſcry Bethel: (now the name of the city before *was* Luz.)

24 And the ſpies ſaw a man come forth out of the city, and they ſaid unto him, Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city, and we will ſhew thee mercy.

25 And when he ſhewed them the entrance into the city, they ſmote the city with the edge of the ſword: but they let go the man and all his family.

26 And the man went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which *is* the name thereof unto this day.

27 Neither did Manaſſeh drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth-ſhean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns: but the Canaanites would dwell in that land.

28 And it came to paſs when Iſrael was ſtrong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out.

29 Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol: but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries.

31 Neither did Aſher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, nor the inhabitants of Zidon, nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor of Helbah, nor of Aphik, nor of Rehob:

32 But the Aſherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33 Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-ſhemeſh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anah; but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land: nevertheleſs the inhabitants of Beth-ſhemeſh and of Beth-anah became tributaries unto them.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain: for they would not ſuffer them to come down to the valley:

35 But the Amorites would dwell in mount

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invitation given him by Moſes, (*Num.* c. x. v. 29—32;) at their firſt entrance into Canaan, pitched their tents, at or near Jericho, which is ſuppoſed to be meant by the city of Palm-trees: but afterwards they had their portion aſſigned them in the borders of the wilderneſs, where they ſeem to have lived a very quiet, and peaceable life; little interfering in public affairs.

V. 19. *But could not drive out*, &c.] Not becauſe the Lord failed to help them, but becauſe their courage, and faith failed them, at the ſight of the iron chariots; and when they had loſt their confidence in God, they could do nothing: (*Matt.* c. xiv. v. 30, 31. c. xvii. v. 19, 20. *Mark*, c. vi. v. 5, 6.)

V. 26. *The man went out*, &c.] This perſon betrayed his country, not out of faith in God, or love to Iſrael, but out of fear, and to ſave his life: therefore, when he found himſelf at liberty, he would not unite intereſts with the people of God; but retiring to his countrymen, who had ſought ſhelter in ſome of the adjacent regions, he built a city, which he called after his own city, not Bethel, or the Houſe of God; but Luz according to it's old name.

V. 28. *They did not*, &c.] They neglected their opportunity, through ſelf-indulgence, when they had them in their power; and afterwards they found themſelves unable to drive them out: thus their ſin prepared their puniſhment, and their love of preſent eaſe became the cauſe of their perpetual diſquiet.

V. 35. *The houſe of Joſeph*, &c.] In the diſtreſs of the

Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim: yet the hand of the houſe of Joſeph prevailed, ſo that they became tributaries.

36 And the coaſt of the Amorites *was* from the going up to Akrabbim, from the rock, and upward.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. An angel reproving the Iſraelites, and their lamentations, and ſacrifice, v. 1—5. 2d. A reſpect to the death, and burial of Joſhua, v. 6—13. 3d. An abſtract of their rebellions, and diſtreſſes; of the Lord's judgments, and mercies; and of his refuſal to drive out the Canaanites; with the reaſon, why they were permitted to continue in the land, v. 14—23.

AND an angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and ſaid, I made you to go up out of Egypt, and have brought you unto the land which I ſware unto your fathers; and I ſaid, I will never break my covenant with you.

2 And ye ſhall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye ſhall throw down

Danites they came to their aſſiſtance, and enabled them to prevail againſt their enemies; but they none of them puſhed their advantage, ſatisfying themſelves with rendering thoſe tributaries, whom the Lord had commanded them to deſtroy.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No detached efforts, however judicious, and ſpirited, without ſteady and conſtant perſeverance, can effect important changes, rectify abuſes in church, or ſtate, or promote a general revival of true religion. Such attempts may be compared to the raiſing of a large weight to a great height from the earth, in which all the former labour is loſt, if the exertion ceaſes before the object be fully accompliſhed. The caſe is the ſame in the Chriſtians warfare with the world, the fleſh, and the devil: all, that hath apparently been effected, will come to nothing, if he relax his diligence, or revert to carnal ſecurity. Under his command, after his example, and emboldened by his ſucceſs, who was deſcended from Judah, we are called upon to wage this war, and are aſſured, that "the Lord hath delivered our enemies into "our hands." They, who have the precedency in rank, or reputation, ſhould go before others in every good work, without being diſmayed by dangers and difficulties, that they may animate them by their example; and the ſtrongeſt ought not to deſpiſe, but to value the aſſiſtance of the weakeſt; and it becomes the people of God to unite together, and help each other againſt their common enemies: and eſpecially to aſſiſt the whole "church militant here on "earth," with their conſtant, and fervent prayers. We are ſure to have all profitable ſucceſs, when we engage in any enterprize according to the Lord's direction, and in dependance on his help: and whatever labour, conduct, or courage we diſplay, or whatever human aid we employ, to him the whole glory belongs. What a ſlippery place is worldly proſperity! eſpecially when it increaſes pride, inſolence, or cruelty! for a "haughty ſpirit goes before a fall;" and men may often read their crimes in their puniſhment: and at laſt every mouth ſhall be ſtopped, and all ſinners ſhall be conſtrained, to admit the juſtice of God in their extremeſt miſeries. Happy they, who juſtify him in their temporal afflictions, plead guilty before his mercy ſeat, and by repentance and faith ſeek deliverance from the wrath to come. Great things might be atchieved by the profeſſors of the goſpel, if they unitedly endeavoured to promote the common cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs; for then the Lord would be with them, and every mountain would ſink into a plain. But when outward difficulties are viewed by the eye of ſenſe, and the almighty power of God is forgotten, our hearts grow diſcouraged, our expectations feeble, and our attempts timid; and then no wonder that we do not proſper; for according to our faith will be our vigour, zeal, and ſucceſs. But love of eaſe, indulgence, and preſent worldly advantages, both ſpring from, and foſter unbelief. Thus many an awakened ſinner, who ſeemed to have clear eſcaped ſatan's bondage, is entangled again, and overcome, and his laſt ſtate is worſe, than the firſt. Thus many a believer, who begins well, is hindered: he grows negligent, and unwatchful, and afraid of the croſs; his graces languiſh, his luſts revive; ſatan perceives his advantage, and plies him with ſuitable temptations; the world recovers it's hold; he loſes his peace, brings guilt into his conſcience, anguiſh into his heart, diſcredit upon his character, and reproach upon the goſpel; his hands are tied, his mouth is cloſed, and his uſefulneſs ruined: and though, through ſharp rebukes, and ſalutary chaſtiſements, he is ſo recovered, that he doth not finally periſh: yet he may lament through his remaining days, and groan upon his dying bed, to reflect what opportunities of glorifying God, and ſerving his church, he hath irrecoverably loſt: nay perhaps in that ſolemn hour, he will be diſtreſſed with perplexing doubts about the ſtate of his own ſoul. Thus even the very beſt of Chriſtians ſuffer ſome loſs, and fail of living up to the extent of their privileges, and uſefulneſs. Let us then watch, and be ſober, and purſue our victory againſt every inbred foe not content with ſuppoſed delivery from the dominion of ſin, but aiming continually to weaken, and crucify the fleſh with it's affections, and luſts, even unto entire extirpation. For we can have no fellowſhip with the enemies of God within us, or around us, but to our hurt; and therefore our only wiſdom, and intereſt is to declare, and maintain unceaſing war againſt them, even unto the end of our days.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *An angel*, &c.] The whole language of the reproof here given demonſtrates who this angel was; not a prophet, or a created angel; for ſuch meſſengers would not have ſpoken in the firſt perſon, without affixing, "Thus ſaith the Lord:" but the great angel of the covenant, the Word, and Son of God, who ſpake with divine authority, as Jehovah, as HE, who brought them out of Egypt, put them in poſſeſſion of Canaan, entered into covenant with them, gave them com-

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their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice; why have ye done this?

3 Wherefore I alſo ſaid, I will not drive them out from before you; but they ſhall be *as thorns* in your ſides, and their gods ſhall be a ſnare unto you.

4 And it came to paſs, when the angel of the LORD ſpake theſe words unto all the children of Iſrael, that the people lifted up their voice, and wept.

5 And they called the name of that place Bochim: and they ſacrificed there unto the LORD.

6 And when Joſhua had let the people go, the children of Iſrael went every man unto his inheritance to poſſeſs the land.

7 And the people ſerved the LORD all the days of Joſhua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joſhua, who had ſeen all the great works of the LORD that he did for Iſrael.

8 And Joſhua the ſon of Nun, the ſervant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

9 And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north ſide of the hill Gaaſh.

10 And alſo all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there aroſe another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Iſrael.

11 And the children of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the LORD, and ſerved Baalim.

12 And they forſook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that *were* round about them, and bowed themſelves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.

13 And they forſook the LORD, and ſerved Baal and Aſhtaroth.

14 And the anger of the LORD was hot againſt Iſrael, and he delivered them into the hands of ſpoilers that ſpoiled them, and he ſold them into the hands of their enemies round about, ſo that they could not any longer ſtand before their enemies.

15 Whitherſoever they went out, the hand of the LORD was againſt them for evil, as the LORD had ſaid, and as the LORD had ſworn unto them: and they were greatly diſtreſſed.

16 Nevertheleſs, the LORD raiſed up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of thoſe that ſpoiled them.

17 And yet they would not hearken unto their judges, but they went a whoring after other gods, and bowed themſelves unto them: they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in, obeying the commandments of the LORD; *but* they did not ſo.

18 And when the LORD raiſed them up judges, then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge: (for it repented the LORD becauſe of their groanings, by reaſon of them that oppreſſed them, and vexed them.)

19 And it came to paſs, when the judge was dead, *that* they returned, and corrupted *themſelves* more than their fathers, in follow-

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mandments, and now called them to account for their diſobedience. Probably this divine perſon made his firſt appearance, and declared the cauſe of his coming at Gilgal: (*Joſhua*, c. iv, v. 4, 5;) from thence he went, and appeared amongſt them at Shiloh, where they were aſſembled at ſome of their ſolemn feaſts. For it is probably from their ſacrifice, that they were at Shiloh, which was called Bochim, or the weepers; becauſe of their weeping. But though the people ſhewed ſigns of deep humiliation, the conſequent hiſtory evinces, that a general reformation did not take place.

V. 6—10.] This part of the hiſtory ſeems to be repeated, in order to ſhew the occaſion that there was of the ſevere reproof, which had been given them. Whilſt Joſhua lived the people had ſerved the Lord with conſiderable diligence; but after his death, and that of the elders, they relapſed into idolatry. The place, where Joſhua was buried, is here called Timnath-heres, inſtead of Timnath-ſerah: the word *heres* ſignifies the ſun, and it hath been aſſerted, that it was ſo called, becauſe of ſome memorial there erected of the Lord's miraculouſly retarding the courſe of the ſun, at his requeſt.

V. 11—13. *Baalim*, *Aſhtaroth*.] Both theſe words are plural, the one maſculine, and the other feminine; and they ſeem to be uſed generally for all the gods, and goddeſſes, which were worſhipped by their heathen neighbours.

V. 14. *He ſold them*, &c.] As the judge was uſed to ſell the criminal, or the creditor the debtor, for a ſlave, that the injured party might be reimburſed by their price: ſo the Lord recovered, as it were, that glory, by puniſhing the Iſraelites, of which they had robbed him by their ſins; and made the very Canaanites the inſtruments of his righteous indignation.

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ing other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them: they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.

20 And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;

21 I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died;

22 That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD, to walk therein, as their fathers did keep *it*, or not.

23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua.

V. 23. *Neither delivered he*, &c.] The Lord foresaw the future conduct of the Israelites; and therefore so ordered it in his Providence, that a remnant of the Canaanites should be spared; that by them their proneness to idolatry might both be manifested, and chastised.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The goodness of God to man, his faithful engagements to those, who trust in him, and the beneficial tendency of all his precepts combine to enhance the evil of every transgression: and frequently men will gratify their craving lusts, though their own reason and conscience testify, that they are acting a foolish, and ungrateful part; for, as no good reason can be given for disobedience, it is much easier to convince the judgment that sinful pursuits are wrong, than to dispose the heart to renounce them. But if men cannot stand before the rebukes of God's word, and the convictions of their own conscience; how will they be able to stand before the tribunal of the holy, heart-searching Judge? who now in the endeared character of a Saviour, and in the mild accents of love, warns and persuades them, but in vain, to repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. "Whom he loves, he rebukes, and "chastens," and with increasing severity, until they become zealous, and repent: and all temporal afflictions are in their tendency *castigatory*, and warn men to forsake sin, and seek forgiveness, before it be too late: but the eternal punishment of the world to come will be entirely penal, the final vengeance of God upon his incurable enemies. It is pleasing to see men weep for their sins: but though such relentings attend that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of; yet they also frequently wear off, and leave the heart unchanged, and sin unsubdued. Our tears, and prayers, and amendment cannot expiate sin; that can only be effected by the sacrifice of Christ. And faith in him may be professed, and the memorials of his dying love attended upon, with great apparent affection, yet without renovation of heart, and newness of life. Over many such supposed converts we have to mourn, and to regret, "that their goodness is as a morning "cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away;" (*Hosea*, c. vi. v. 4.) The worship of God in it's own nature is joy, praise, and thanksgiving, and our crimes alone render weeping needful: yet considering what we are, and what we have done, it is much to be wished, that our religious assemblies were more frequently called Bochim, "the place "of the weepers;" "for blessed are they that mourn, for "they shall be comforted."—Were we duly attentive to the word of God we might foresee many of those events, which take place in his Providence. We might especially foretel severe afflictions to those godly persons, who associate, and connect themselves with the openly profane; and to those, who relax their diligence in mortifying, and striving against sin, and in watching against temptation. Alas! that shew of religion, which there is in times of general reformation, often arises from temporary affections, and personal regards: when the influence, and example of some respected, or beloved person cease, when there is no longer any fear of grieving, or being rebuked by him, and when the emotion of the passions hath had time to subside, men's unmortified lusts again recover the ascendancy: and many fair appearances die away. We have need therefore to examine how matters stand with ourselves, and to pray without ceasing, "that we may be rooted and grounded in love, and "that Christ may indeed dwell in our hearts by faith." Believing parents should be very diligent in instructing their children, and very earnest in praying, that they may inherit their faith, and grace: and the speedy disappearance of religion, after it hath been very flourishing, must ever be ascribed in great measure to their negligence in this respect: and very often the ignorance and ungodliness of children are a disgrace to the parent's memory. But the carnal mind of man is enmity against God, and the tendency of human nature is to apostacy, and the vilest lust, or the meanest worldly object, will be preferred to his favour, and the pleasure of his service, by those, who have the benefit of his written word and preached gospel; unless by a continual exertion of Almighty power, his grace is communicated to, and his image is renewed upon their hearts. This is the cause of all human misery, in time, and to eternity: when men rob God of his glory, he will sell them for their sin, and satisfy his justice in their punishment: and how can they but be wretched, against whom are the oath, and the hand of the immutable, and Almighty God! Their heaviest distresses on earth, unless timely repentance intervene, are only the forerunners of eternal misery. The vilest of the profane are more likely to prosper, for a time, than apostate professors: nay backsliding believers are more sure to experience affliction in this world, than any other persons. Yet the Lord hath long-patience, and manifests great compassion to his people; he is ready to forgive, and to relieve; he raises up instruments to effect their deliverance, and over-rules their chastisements for their good: and upon the whole of his dealings with them, it will appear manifest, that they are not saved for the sake of their own righteousness, but for the sake of his great name; that it is of his "mercies, that they are "not consumed" and that he saves them from, and notwithstanding, their manifold transgressions. The more the human heart is proved, the worse it is manifested to be;

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. The nations left in the land, v. 1—4. 2d. Israel's apostacy, God's displeasure, their oppression by the king of Mesopotamia, their deliverance by Othniel, and subsequent rest, v. 5—11. 3d. Their relapse into sin, their bondage to the king of Moab, and deliverance by Ehud, v. 12—30. 4th. Shamgar protecting Israel from the Philistines, &c. v. 31.

NOW these *are* the nations which the LORD left to prove Israel by them; (*even* as many *of Israel* as had not known all the wars of Canaan;

2 Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof;)

3 *Namely*, five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baal-hermon unto the entering in of Hamath.

4 And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

5 And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and the Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites:

6 And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves;

8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years.

9 And when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer of the children of Israel, who delivered them, *even* Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

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whilst "we cease not from our doings," we can only be stubborn, and rebellious: for his own glory the Lord tries men, as silver is tried, and whilst he distinguishes betwixt those, who choose, and those, who forsake his ways; he will secure to himself all the praise of all that is good in his people. Too late his enemies will curse their folly for neglecting those things, which were commanded them: and the reflection that their opportunity is lost for ever will complete their misery. Let us then without delay obey the gospel call, declare war against every sin, and follow after holiness, unto the end of our days, that we may have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord, and Saviour Jesus Christ.

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 2. *Might know to teach them war*, &c.] As the Israelites were surrounded by many warlike nations; and as they were a type of the church *militant* here on earth, they were not to be enervated by sloth, and luxury, but inured to hardship, and conflict: this the Lord was pleased to effect by the remains of the devoted nations, whom they spared, when they ought to have destroyed them, and they were in consequence engaged in continual contests with them. They had moreover tasted the sweets of victory, without feeling the evils of war, in their first conquest of the land; but they proved ungrateful for the mercy, and left their work unfinished; and were therefore made to feel the evils of war, without the advantages of victory, in their future conflicts.

V. 4. *To know whether*, &c.] Trials, and temptations discover whether sin, or grace have dominion in the heart; and are therefore employed of God to detect the secret hypocrisy of the false professor, and to manifest, exercise, and strengthen the graces of the true believer: and this discovery is very comfortable to the upright, of salutary tendency to those, who deceive themselves, edifying to the church, and honourable to God, and true religion.

V. 5. *Dwelt among*, &c.] Instead of attempting to extirpate the inhabitants of the land, the Israelites endeavoured to live amicably with them; this induced them to intermarry with them, and then to conform to their idolatrous worship; until numbers of them had utterly apostatized from God, in that very land, wherein by his tabernacle he dwelt in the midst of them.

V. 7. *The groves.*] Those idols, which were worshipped under the shade of thick trees, (*Deut.* c. xvi. v. 21.)

V. 8. *King of Mesopotamia*, &c.] As this prince reigned beyond the Euphrates, his oppressing the Israelites, who lived at so great a distance, appeared the more evidently to be the effect of God's displeasure.

V. 9. *Cried unto*, &c.] In their prosperity they forgot the Lord: but in their distress they found that their idols, and idolatrous allies, could not help them; and then they remembered the wonderful works of the Lord, and began to pray unto him, though not until they had smarted under the rod for the space of eight years: and he being rich in mercy, was pleased to hear their prayer, notwithstanding their heinous provocations, and stirred up the spirit of Othniel to effect their deliverance: and probably there was a considerable reformation for some time afterwards. Nor should the method, in which this deliverance was accomplished, pass unnoticed. Doubtless Othniel had lamented over the degeneracy, and misery of his brethren: but he attempted nothing, until "the Spirit of the Lord "came upon him:" then he began "with judging Israel," that is, with attempting to reform abuses, and revive re-

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10 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Iſrael, and went out to war: and the LORD delivered Chuſhan-riſhathaim king of Meſopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed againſt Chuſhan-riſhathaim.

11 And the land had reſt forty years: and Othniel the ſon of Kenaz died.

12 And the children of Iſrael did evil again in the ſight of the LORD: and the LORD ſtrengthened Eglon the king of Moab againſt Iſrael, becauſe they had done evil in the ſight of the LORD.

13 And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and ſmote Iſrael, and poſſeſſed the city of palm-trees.

14 So the children of Iſrael ſerved Eglon the king of Moab eighteen years.

15 But when the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD, the LORD raiſed them up a deliverer, Ehud the ſon of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Iſrael ſent a preſent unto Eglon the king of Moab.

16 But Ehud made him a dagger (which had two edges) of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh.

17 And he brought the preſent unto Eglon king of Moab: and Eglon *was* a very fat man.

18 And when he had made an end to offer the preſent, he ſent away the people that bare the preſent.

19 But he himſelf turned again from the quarries that *were* by Gilgal, and ſaid, I have a ſecret errand unto thee, O king: who ſaid, keep ſilence. And all that ſtood by him went out from him.

20 And Ehud came unto him; and he was ſitting in a ſummer-parlour, which he had for himſelf alone: and Ehud ſaid, I have a meſſage from God unto thee. And he aroſe out of *his* ſeat.

21 And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thruſt it into his belly.

22 And the haft alſo went in after the blade; and the fat cloſed upon the blade, ſo that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly: and the dirt came out.

23 Then Ehud went forth through the

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ligion; and then he went forth to war, and prevailed over their foreign enemies; for the Lord delivered them into his hands.

V. 11. *Forty years*, &c.] According to a ſcheme of chronology ſhortly to be mentioned, I would compute theſe years from the death of Joſhua, to that of Othniel; though it be impoſſible to aſcertain, how long it was before he was raiſed up to be their Judge. But if we would keep within the Scripture bounds, we muſt place the years of Iſrael's oppreſſions, under thoſe aſſigned to ſome of their judges; and if we date theſe from Joſhua's death, a very ſimple, (though not certain) method will guide us through this obſcure period of the hiſtory.

V. 12. *Strengthened*, &c.] The Lord had formed Eglon of a ſtout and valiant ſpirit, had raiſed him to conſiderable power, and proſperity as a prince, and afforded him ſucceſs in his enterprize againſt the Iſraelites.

V. 14. *Eighteen years.*] Their guilt was more aggravated, and their ſpirits were more ſtubborn; and therefore it was the longer before they began to cry unto the Lord; and it was his pleaſure, that their chaſtiſement ſhould be more ſevere, and of longer continuance.

V. 15. *A man left-handed*, &c.] Some have ſuppoſed, that Ehud could uſe both hands alike well: but if he were unable to uſe his right hand, Eglon would be the leſs apt to ſuſpect him, and he would be no leſs ſuitable an inſtrument for the Lord to work by: (1 *Car.* c. i. v. 29, 30.) The Iſraelites had by him ſent their tribute, under the name of a preſent; and the Lord, who raiſed him up to deliver Iſrael, doubtleſs directed him to take this opportunity of executing his vengeance on the tyrant. Ehud was the deputy of the King of Iſrael, and acted by commiſſion from him: Eglon had uſurped the Lord's throne, and became his rival, and was ordered to be thus put to death. But Ehud's conduct cannot poſſibly be drawn into precedent, or authoriſe the aſſaſſination of kings, however tyrannical, or perſecuting; without any man were called to act by the ſame *evident* commiſſion from the God of heaven. The law of being ſubject to principalities and powers in all things lawful is the rule of our conduct.

V. 19. *The quarries*, &c.] Or graven images, probably the idols of Moab, which were ſet up in contempt of the God of Iſrael.

I have a ſecret errand, &c.] Ehud had ingratiated himſelf with Eglon by the preſent: and he had no ſuſpicion of one, whom he ſuppoſed to be unarmed: and it is likely, he expected ſome information concerning ſtate affairs, or the ſecret combination of his countrymen: but he was ſtrangely infatuated to truſt himſelf alone with an Iſraelite.

V. 20. *From God*, &c.] The word here uſed is common to the true God, and the ſuppoſed deities of the Gentiles. Eglon therefore expecting ſome oracle from God, roſe up in reverence, and afforded Ehud the opportunity of effecting his purpoſe. A ſecret errand, a meſſage from God he had indeed with him, but it was of a far different nature, than Eglon expected.

V. 22.] Thus would this powerful oppreſſor be found

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porch, and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them.

24 When he was gone out his servants came; and when they saw that behold the doors of the parlour *were* locked, they said, Surely he covereth his feet in *his* summer-chamber.

25 And they tarried till they were ashamed; and behold he opened not the doors of the parlour: therefore they took a key and opened *them*; and behold, their lord *was* fallen down dead on the earth.

26 And Ehud escaped while they tarried, and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped unto Seirath.

27 And it came to pass when he was come, that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them.

28 And he said unto them, Follow after me; for the LORD hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand. And they went down after him, and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab, and suffered not a man to pass over.

29 And they slew of Moab at that time about ten thousand men, all lusty, and all men of valour; and there escaped not a man.

30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.

31 And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad; and he also delivered Israel.

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weltering in his own blood, and excrements, in the most disgraceful manner, in that very place, where he had so often indulged his pride, sloth, and luxury. As he fell without any noise, and died without being enabled to cry for help, Ehud had a full opportunity of escaping: and he departed with that circumspection, and deliberation, which sprang from confidence in God, and a consciousness of having done his duty.

V. 29. *Ten thousand*, &c.] So small an army of valiant soldiers served to curb the whole kingdom of Israel, when once it was subjected: but they were easily reinforced from beyond Jordan. Therefore Ehud took possession of the fords, not only that none might escape, but that no more might come to their assistance. And when their prince was dead, they were too much intimidated to make any effectual assistance. Probably Eglon had fixed his residence west of Jordan, near the place where Jericho had stood.

V. 30. *Fourscore years.*] They had rest, until eighty years, from the close of the aforementioned forty years, were expired. Yet the deliverance from the Philistines seems to coincide with this part of the history. Shamgar, probably being employed in agriculture, when the Philistines invaded the land, was supernaturally animated to attack them, and miraculously assisted, in making this havock amongst them with an ox goad, or plough-share; for so some translate it: this broke their force, and spirits for a considerable time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Temptations, and trials detect the wickedness of the hearts of sinners; and manifest, exercise, and strengthen the graces of believers: who, being called to be soldiers, must learn and practice war all their days, and in their conflict with satan, sin, and this evil world must be inured to hardships, watchfulness, and self-denial, for their future and eternal good. *In* this evil world they are constrained to live, but they are not *of* it, and are forbidden to conform to it: this restriction marks the difference betwixt them, and mere professors in every age; for the friendship of the world is more fatal than it's enmity: the latter can only kill the body; but the former murders many a precious soul. When the heart is not established by grace, the descent from the most plausible profession is natural, and almost imperceptible. Civility to ungodly people; in which to be sure there can be no harm, by an easy step introduces them to more intimate connexions: some concessions must in this case be made, and they must be a little conformable to such kind friends, or relatives; and it is not easy to draw the line: one compliance prepares for another, until a man's profession ends in apostacy. But if any true believers thus backslide from God, they shall surely, and speedily be corrected, and know by experience that the friendship of the wicked, and the gain of transgression will not profit them in the day of trouble here: how then can they profit the sinner in the day of wrath hereafter? Those afflictions, however severe, and tedious, which bring the Lord to our remembrance, and excite a spirit of humble earnest prayer, are very precious blessings. And as he is ready to forgive, and plenteous in mercy to all them, that call upon him; as he will not upbraid the penitent with his sins, nor fail to appear for his relief, how wonderful is it, that men, groaning under their burdens, are so long ere they cry unto him for help? For if we would get out of trouble effectually, we must begin with repentance, and seeking forgiveness of our sins; and then in due time deliverance, rest, and inward peace, and comfort will ensue. But, alas! how inveterate is man's propensity to be ungrateful to the Lord! And how readily do we relapse into our former offences! And the secret history of every one of us, even if we are kept from open scandals, or visible declensions, greatly tallies with the history of Israel: Oh, foolish people, and unwise, do we thus requite the Lord, that bought us! This renders repeated chastisements absolutely necessary; for so perverse are we, that the more indulgently we are treated by our heavenly Father,

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. Israel relapsing into sin, and oppressed by the Canaanites, v. 1—3. 2d. Deborah judging Israel, and consulting with Barak for their deliverance, v. 4—9. 3d. Barak destroying the army of the Canaanites, v. 10—17. 4th. Sisera, their commander, slain by Jael the Kenite, v. 18—22. 5th. The destruction of Jabin king of Canaan, v. 23—24.

AND the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD when Ehud was dead.

2 And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor; the captain of whose host *was* Sisera, which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles.

3 And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron: and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel.

4 And Deborah, a propheteſs, the wife of Lapidoth, she judged Israel at that time.

5 And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Beth-el in mount Ephraim: and the children of Israel came up to her for judgment.

6 And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded, *saying*, Go, and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun?

7 And I will draw unto thee to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand.

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the more disobedient we generally prove. Yet after our most aggravated provocations, and in our deepest distresses, if we again cry unto him, he will deliver us; and the meanest instrument, or the most unlikely method shall be effectual, if he appoints and blesses them: but unless the grace of God soften our hearts, repeated judgments, mercies, and convictions concur to render them more stout, and callous: luxury, sloth, and pride fatten men for destruction: the Lord delights to abase those, who exalt themselves against him, and oppress his people, and to disgrace to the depth of infamy, as well as to cast into the depth of misery, those, who have been the haughty, and the terrible of the earth. What message from God, but a message of vengeance can a proud rebel expect? And such a message is evidently contained in the word of God: and though *we* are not now commissioned, or allowed to be the executioners of it: yet his ministers must boldly declare it, without fearing the frown, or respecting the persons of sinners. Blessed be God, they have another message to deliver, a message of mercy, and free salvation; and that of vengeance only belongs to those, who neglect, and refuse the gracious proposal.—With reverent attention let us hear this message, in humble faith, let us seek for, and accept of this great salvation; let us beg of God to give us repentance, and enable us to bring forth fruits meet for repentance: let us put ourselves under his protection, and conduct: let us enlist under the Redeemer's banner, put on his armour, and declare determined war against his, and our enemies. He hath begun our triumphs by his victory over the powers of darkness upon the cross; and over the King of terrors by his resurrection: the trumpet of his gospel calls us to follow after him; obeying that summons, the day will be ours, and we shall conquer, triumph and reign with him in glory for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 2. *In Harosheth*, &c.] Jabin king of Hazor had formerly confederated against Israel, and Joshua had slain him, and burned his city, (*Josh.* c. xi.). In process of time the Canaanites had rebuilt it, and another Jabin, probably descended from him, reigned there with great power. Hazor lay in the northern part of the land, and probably Harosheth in the neighbourhood. The remains of the nations of Canaan having in great numbers resorted thither to assist, and be protected by Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, in whom he placed great confidence, it was called "Harosheth of the Gentiles," or nations. The offending Israelites were grievously oppressed by these enemies for twenty years, before they heartily set about reformation, or united in prayers to the Lord for deliverance. Though Deborah, in consequence of her extraordinary call to judge Israel, could not *personally* undertake those military expeditions, which generally distinguished these deliverers, she might use her authority to repress iniquity, to reform religion, and to execute impartial justice to the people. She is called the wife of Lapidoth; but the termination is feminine, and seldom used for the names of men; hence it hath been questioned whether the passage be aright translated. Some suppose it to be the name of the town, to which she belonged; and others refer it, according to the signification of the original word, either to her occupation, as employed in making lamps; or to the inspiration of the Almighty, with which she was favoured. As we read no more of her husband, and as it is otherwise sufficiently demonstrable "that marriage is "honourable amongst all men," it is of no consequence to determine, whether she were, or were not married.

V. 5. *Under the palm-tree*, &c.] That is, in some lowly habitation, shaded by a large palm-tree, more suited to the sanctity of a propheteſs, than the dignity of a judge.

V. 6. *Barak*, &c.] It is not certain whether Barak had previously been employed by Deborah or not. But by direction from God, he was at this time, singled out by her, commanded whither to go, and what troops to raise, and assured of both opportunity to attack, and assistance to subdue the enemies of Israel.

8 And Barak ſaid unto her, If thou wilt go with me, then I will go; but if thou wilt not go with me, *then* I will not go.

9 And ſhe ſaid, I will ſurely go with thee: notwithſtanding the journey that thou takeſt ſhall not be for thine honour; for the LORD ſhall ſell Siſera into the hand of a woman. And Deborah aroſe, and went with Barak to Kedeſh.

10 And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedeſh: and he went up with ten thouſand men at his feet: and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber the Kenite, *which was* of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moſes, had ſevered himſelf from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which *is* by Kedeſh.

12 And they ſhewed Siſera, that Barak the ſon of Abinoam was gone up to mount Tabor.

13 And Siſera gathered together all his chariots, *even* nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that *were* with him, from Haroſheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kiſhon.

14 And Deborah ſaid unto Barak, Up; for this *is* the day in which the LORD hath delivered Siſera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thouſand men after him.

15 And the LORD diſcomfited Siſera, and all *his* chariots, and all *his* hoſt with the edge of the ſword, before Barak: ſo that Siſera lighted down off *his* chariot, and fled away on *his* feet.

16 But Barak purſued after the chariots, and after the hoſt, unto Haroſheth of the Gentiles: and all the hoſt of Siſera fell upon the edge of the ſword; *and* there was not a man left.

17 Howbeit Siſera fled away on his feet to the tent of Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite: for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the houſe of Heber the Kenite.

18 And Jael went out to meet Siſera, and ſaid unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not, and when he had turned in unto her into the tent, ſhe covered him with a mantle.

19 And he ſaid unto her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink; for I am thirſty: and ſhe opened a bottle of milk, and gave him drink, and covered him.

20 Again he ſaid unto her, Stand in the

V. 8. *If thou*, &c.] Barak wiſhed to have the benefit of Deborah's preſence, counſel, and prayers, as the judge of Iſrael, and the propheteſs of the Lord: but his faith ſeems to have been weak, and his conduct culpably timorous. It is wonderful that in all theſe events we read nothing of the high prieſt with Urim, and Thummim, of the prieſts with their trumpets, or of the Levites: we muſt conclude that the people greatly diſregarded the divine appointment; and that the prieſts, &c, grievouſly neglected their duty.

V. 9. *Into the hand*, &c.] Deborah probably meant that the honour of the victory would be given to her, inſtead of Barak; but the Spirit of God predicted the death of Siſera by Jael.

V. 11. *From the Kenites*, &c.] The other Kenites dwelt upon the borders of the wilderneſs of Judah; but Heber had removed with his family to the northern part of the land, where he dwelt in tents, and found convenient paſturage for his flocks.

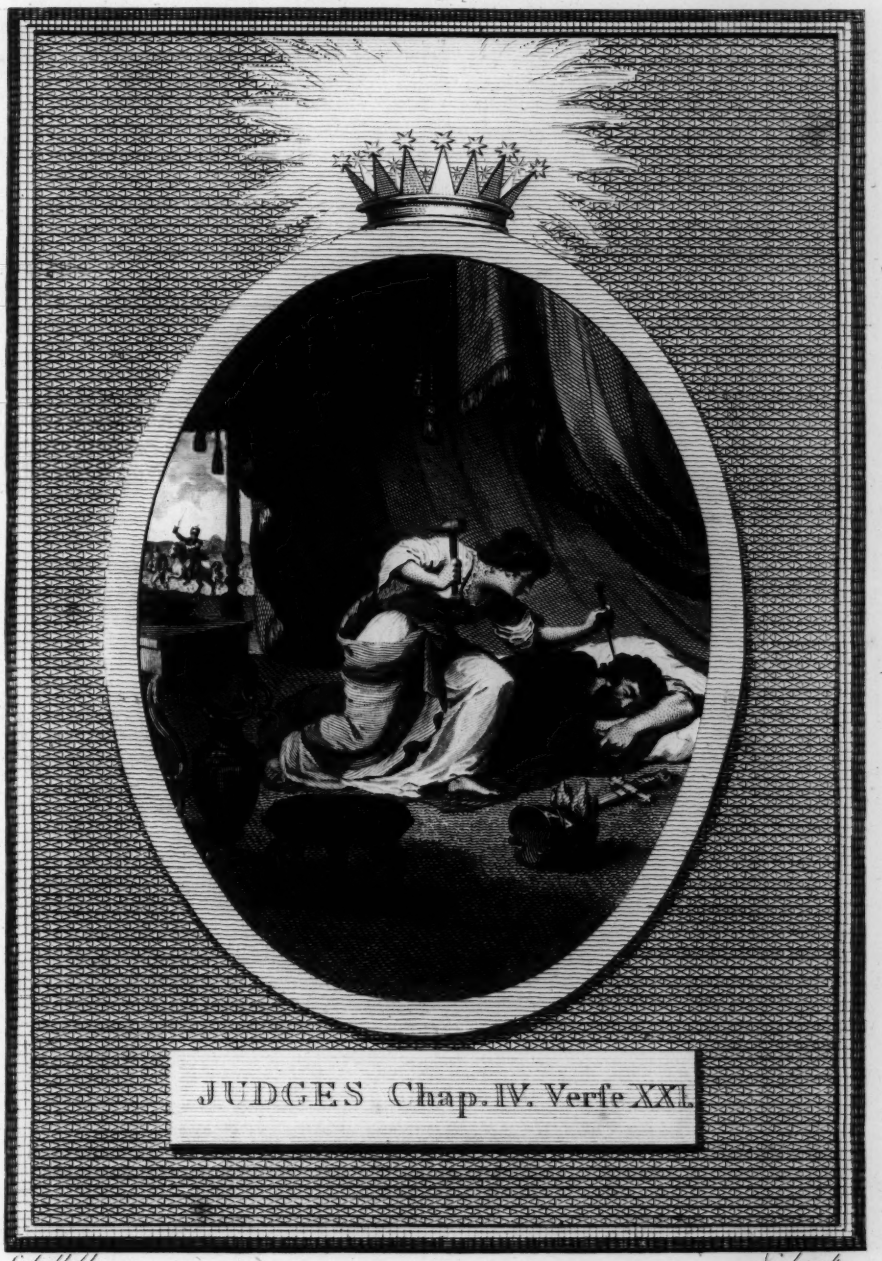
V. 14. *From mount Tabor*, &c.] Barak ſeems to have ſecured his army by the advantage of the ground, until a more favourable opportunity preſented itſelf of attacking the enemy; but Deborah aſſured him, that the very day was come, that "the Lord was gone forth before him," and would deliver Siſera into his hand. Thus encouraged he ventured down with his army of ten thouſand foot ſoldiers into the plain, where the iron chariots had their utmoſt advantage; and ſo the victory became the more illuſtrious.

V. 15. *And the Lord*, &c.] Doubtleſs Barak, and his army diſplayed both conduct, and bravery in this battle; yet the victory is wholly aſcribed to the Lord, who both gave them conduct and courage, and rendered them effectual. It is to be lamented that this pious, and *rational* language of the Scriptures ſhould be ſo much, amongſt Chriſtians, laid aſide, for a phraſeology, which borders upon heatheniſm, or even atheiſm; by aſcribing all events to ſecond cauſes, and excluding the mention of the firſt great Cauſe of all things.

V. 17. *On his feet*, &c.] Siſera quitted his chariot, and fled away on foot, that he might eſcape notice; and for the ſame purpoſe he took refuge in the obſcure tent of Heber: from whoſe peaceable family, not being Iſraelites, he apprehended no danger.

V. 18. *Turn in, my lord*, &c.] Probably Jael really intended kindneſs to Siſera, when ſhe invited him into the tent, and ſhewed him all the hoſpitality, which it afforded; but by a divine impulſe ſhe was afterwards led to conſider him as the determined enemy of the Lord, and his people, and to avail herſelf of that opportunity to deſtroy him.

V. 20.] It is obſervable, that Jael did not promiſe Siſera, that ſhe would deny his being there: ſhe would give him ſhelter, and refreſhment, but not utter a falſehood to oblige him. It is a ſad deviation from ſincerity, and godly



JUDGES Chap. IV. Verſe XXI.

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door of the tent: and it ſhall be, when any man doth come and enquire of thee, and ſay, Is there any man here? that thou ſhalt ſay, No.

21 Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went ſoftly unto him, and ſmote the nail into his temples, and faſtened it into the ground: (for he was faſt aſleep, and weary:) ſo he died.

22 And behold as Barak purſued Siſera, Jael came out to meet him, and ſaid unto him, Come, and I will ſhew thee the man whom thou ſeekeſt. And when he came into her *tent*, behold Siſera lay dead, and the nail *was* in his temples.

23 So God ſubdued on that day Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Iſrael.

24 And the hand of the children of Iſrael proſpered, and prevailed againſt Jabin the king of Canaan, until they had deſtroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

CHAP. V.

Contains an hymn of praiſe for the late victory; in which 1ſt. This deliverance is compared with former mercies, v. 1—5. 2d. The previous ſin, and miſery of the people, are declared, v. 6—8. 3d. Connected with the praiſes of the Lord; commendations are beſtowed on ſome, and cenſures paſſed on others of the Iſraelites, v. 9—23. 4th. Jael's conduct is extolled, v. 24—27. 5th. The diſappointed expectation of Siſera's mother is recorded, v. 28—30. 6th. A prayer is added againſt the enemies, and for the people of God, v. 31.

THEN ſang Deborah and Barak the ſon of Abinoam on that day, ſaying,

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ſimplicity, which is become cuſtomary amongſt us; I mean, the inſtructing and requiring ſervants to prevaricate, (to word it no more harſhly,) in order that their maſters may be preſerved from the inconvenience of unwelcome viſitants. Surely ſome more manly, candid, and Chriſtian method might be ſubſtituted of giving an impertinent intruder to underſtand, that he was not welcome; and to intimate to *friends*, that their company would be more ſeaſonable at another time. I have been informed, that on ſuch occaſions the French ſend word that they *are not viſible*; which is certainly nearer the truth, than to order a ſervant to ſay, that they are "*not at home.*" And it ſhould be conſidered, whether they who require their ſervants to diſregard the truth for *their* pleaſure, will not teach them an evil leſſon againſt themſelves, and habituate them to uſe falſehood for their own pleaſure alſo.

V. 21.] When Jael ſaw Siſera faſt aſleep, and was ſatisfied, that ſhe was required to deſtroy him; her faith overcame all reluctancy, and every feminine fear, and with the hammer, and the nail of the tent, which ſhe was accuſtomed to handle, ſhe ſpeedily, and effectually accompliſhed her purpoſe.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Reformations are often ſpeedily ſtopped, when the reformer is removed; and notwithſtanding the painful effects of ſin, which men repeatedly experience, they will venture upon it, and provoke the Lord to puniſh them with increaſing ſeverity; (*Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 18. 24. 28:) and tempters commonly prove inſtruments of correction, or vengeance. But the Lord's thoughts, and ways are not as ours: when they, who have moſt frequently, and grievouſly rebelled, begin to pray unto him, he is ready to hear, and help them. Nay he often regards the mere cry of diſtreſs, and relieves men from temporal miſery, ſaying, "ſin no "more, leſt a worſe thing come unto thee." He ſelects his inſtruments in that manner, as ſhall moſt mortify the pride, and expoſe the weakneſs of his haughty oppoſers: when repentance, and reformation have prepared the way, the chief difficulty is removed, and deliverance is ſecured to his people: yet unbelief weakens men's hands, and being diſhonourable to God, will eventually diſcredit thoſe, who indulge it. The counſel, and prayers of perſons eminent for faith, and piety, are highly to be valued; but our confiden cemuſt be placed, not in them, but in the preſence, and protection of the Almighty. Whether it pleaſe him to ſave by many, or by few, he hath all hearts in his hands, and ſoon gathers willing, and ſuitable inſtruments for his work: and a variety of incidents, which originate from the voluntary conduct of men acting from ſecular motives, appear by the event to form a part of the ſecret counſel of God, in order to effect his own purpoſes. And as courage, and faith are his gifts, we may expect, that he will ſo diſpenſe them, as ſhall conduce to his own glory; and to ſhew the ſtrongeſt, that they need to be encouraged, and on ſome occaſions are ſurpaſſed, by their weaker brethren. How wretched are they, who have the Lord for their enemy! Their numbers, or power can make no reſiſtance; and in vain ſhall they attempt to flee away and eſcape: ſoon will they be aſhamed of their preſent confidence, and glorying; in vain they may court the friendſhip of the Lord's deſpiſed people; or ſeek refuge in privacy, and obſcurity: ſooner, or later they muſt all periſh, perhaps ſuddenly; and how dreadful to be hurried from the commiſſion of daring crimes into the preſence of their angry Judge! Every natural inclination muſt be counteracted, when the will of God to the contrary is made known; and all our connexions with his enemies muſt be broken off, if we would have the Lord for our God, and his people for our people. It is true, that we are to love, pray for, and be kind to our worſt enemies: yet there are ſome of his foes, to whom we muſt not bid God ſpeed, nor entertain them in our houſes, (2 *John*, v. 10, 11.) However we ſhould to the uttermoſt perſevere in our endeavours to reclaim them; and direct our moſt implacable reſentment againſt our own luſts, aiming at nothing leſs than their utter deſtruction.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1. *Then ſang Deborah*, &c.] (*Notes, Exod.* c. xv. ver. 1. *Deut.* c. xxxi. v. 19.) By this me-

2 Praiſe ye the LORD for the avenging of Iſrael, when the people willingly offered themſelves.

3 Hear, O ye kings: give hear, O ye princes; I, *even* I will ſing unto the LORD; I will ſing *praiſe* to the LORD God of Iſrael.

4 LORD, when thou wenteſt out of Seir, when thou marchedſt out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds alſo dropped water.

5 The mountains melted from before the LORD, *even* that Sinai from before the LORD God of Iſrael.

6 In the days of Shamgar the ſon of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways.

7 *The inhabitants of* the villages ceaſed, they ceaſed in Iſrael, until that I Deborah aroſe, that I aroſe a mother in Iſrael.

8 They choſe new gods; then *was* war in the gates: was there a ſhield or ſpear ſeen among forty thouſand in Iſrael?

9 My heart *is* toward the governors of Iſrael, that offered themſelves willingly among the people. Bleſs ye the LORD.

10 Speak, ye that ride on white aſſes, ye that ſit in judgment, and walk by the way.

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thod of celebrating the wonderful works of God, the affections of love, and gratitude would be the more excited and more deeply fixed in the hearts of believers, and the events commemorated would attract more general notice, become more exactly known, and be much longer remembered, than in any proſe narration; and multitudes would become acquainted with them, who had not the opportunity of reading the records of them.—Probably this ſong of praiſe was ſung by Deborah, and Barak, &c, the whole army, and vaſt multitudes of the Iſraelites, as ſoon after the victory, as poſſible.

V. 2. *Praiſe ye the Lord*, &c.] Whatever Deborah, or Barak, or the army had done in obtaining this victory, the Lord muſt have all the praiſe: the will, the power, and the ſucceſs were all from him: and they were eſpecially required to praiſe the Lord for avenging them upon their oppreſſors; as they had brought their miſeries upon them by their own crimes.

V. 3. *O ye kings*, &c.] The kings of the ſurrounding nations were contriving the ruin of the Iſraelites: the kings of the earth have generally in all ages been ſeeking their own glory; or calling upon the people to praiſe their idol gods. This ſong was likely to be heard or read by many of them, through ſucceſſive generations; and the propheteſs therefore calls on them to hear what God had wrought for Iſrael, and againſt their enemies, and to take warning not to meddle to their hurt: ſhe reminds them, that praiſe, and glory belong to the Lord, and not to them, or their idols; and that it would be dangerous for them to rival him, who poureth contempt upon proud, and ambitious princes; and that it was their true wiſdom, honour, and intereſt to ſeek his favour, to become his ſervants, and to uſe their authority in advancing his worſhip, and promoting his glory; as ſhe publicly avowed, that ſhe did, and would do.

V. 4, 5.] (*Note Deut.* c. xxxiii. v. 2. *Pſalm* lxviii. v. 7—9. *Iſaiah*, c. lxiv. v. 1—3. *Hab.* c. iii. v. 3.) The extraordinary diſplays of the divine Majeſty, which their fathers had witneſſed at mount Sinai, are here deſcribed in very poetical language, and compared with the preſent interpoſition of the Lord for Iſrael. The preſence of God had thrown all nature, as it were, into convulſions: the thunderings, and lightnings were attended by impetuous ſhowers of rain, and mount Sinai was in ſuch agitation, that it ſeemed to be melted from before the Lord.

V. 6. *In the days of Shamgar*, &c.] Shamgar probably lived towards the cloſe of the eighty years reſt beforementioned, (c. iii. v. 30.) But the Iſraelites, growing more wicked, found their difficulties increaſe, and nothing was done effectually for their relief, till Jael completed Balak's victory by the ſlaughter of Siſera. This ſeems to be the meaning of the paſſage, which may be rendered "from the days of Shamgar,—to the days of Jael." During this time the land was ſo infeſted by invaders, and haraſſed by oppreſſion, that they could not travel in ſafety on the highways; the villages were deſerted, and the fields left uncultivated, whilſt the inhabitants ſought refuge in the fenced cities, where they were in danger of periſhing by famine.

V. 7. *A mother in Iſrael.*] Deborah employed her authority, for the people's real good, with that tender, and diſintereſted aſſiduity, which a mother ſhews to her beloved children. Kings ſhould be fathers of their people, employing all their time, and abilities to render them happy: Deborah was a mother to Iſrael in reality; and eſpecially as diligently promoting the cauſe of godlineſs, and the ſalvation of their ſouls: (*Iſaiah* c. xlix. v. 23.)

V. 8. *They choſe new gods*, &c.] Joſhua had engaged the people ſolemnly to chooſe the Lord for their God, and to ſerve him only: but they grew weary of his holy ſervice, and "choſe new gods," with new names, and newly come up. But under all theſe images ſatan was virtually worſhipped, who permitted his deluded votaries to indulge their ſenſual luſts, in order to allure them to his ſervice: though they ſoon paid dear for their gratifications; when they were ſubdued, diſarmed and oppreſſed by thoſe enemies, over whom they had formerly triumphed, and whom they ought to have extirpated.

V. 9. *My heart*, &c.] There were governors over every tribe, and in every diſtrict, who ſucceeded in their authority to the captains over thouſands, &c, of whom we have before read: ſome of theſe willingly offered their aſſiſtance to Deborah in promoting reformation, and to Barak in attacking the Canaanites: to theſe the propheteſs ſpake with peculiar affection, and reſpect, and for them ſhe bleſſed the Lord: (2 *Cor.* c. viii. v. 1, 2. 16.)

V. 10. *Speak, ye that ride*, &c It ſeems that riding upon *white* aſſes was a diſtinction appropriated to ma-

11 *They that are delivered* from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water; there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, *even* the righteous acts *towards the inhabitants* of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

12 Awake, awake, Deborah; awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam.

13 Then he made him that remaineth have dominion over the nobles among the people: the LORD made me have dominion over the mighty.

14 Out of Ephraim *was there* a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people; out of Machir came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.

15 And the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley. For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great thoughts of heart.

16 Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben *there were* great searchings of heart.

17 Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches.

18 Zebulun and Naphtali *were* a people *that* jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field.

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gistrates, and to the chief persons in Israel: which was a proof not only of their poverty, but of their remaining simplicity, in that they had not yet learned to multiply horses, and chariots, in conformity to their heathen neighbours. These persons were here called upon in their several districts, and whilst in safety they travelled from place to place, to administer justice, or upon their own concerns, to teach the people by their example to celebrate the praises of the Lord, for his late mercies vouchsafed unto them.

V. 11. *From the noise*, &c.] The people could not go out of the gates of the city to draw water, without being exposed to the arrows of their oppressors, who watched that opportunity to murder them; so that in some cases they must either perish by thirst, or seek to quench it at the peril of their lives. Thus, in times of persecution, God's ordinances, those wells of salvation, whence are drawn the waters of life, cannot be approached, but at the hazard of the lives of those, who attend upon them: nay at all times satan with his temptations will endeavour to deter the believer from drawing near to the throne of grace. "The righteous acts of the Lord" were to be rehearsed by them: his justice in the destruction of their enemies, and in the miseries which they had endured for their sins; and his faithfulness in delivering them, and in enabling them to return to their habitations, and employments in peace, and safety.

V. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah*, &c.] The governors, and the people having been reminded to praise the Lord, Deborah here called upon her own soul, or by way of response instructed the people to call upon her, to shake off drowsiness, and be in earnest in this most reasonable, and delightful employment; "for he that will set the hearts "of other men on fire with the love of Christ, must "himself burn with love."—Barak also was excited to prosecute his advantage; and as he had destroyed the whole army of Sisera in the field of battle; to gather all the unarmed multitude as his captives, to lead them in triumph, and complete their destruction.

V. 13. *Him, that remaineth*, &c.] Multitudes of the Israelites had been slain, and driven into other countries: yet the Lord had made the remnant of them, under the government of a woman, to have dominion over their strongest enemies.

V. 14. *Out of Ephraim*, &c.] Probably the Amalekites were coming to the assistance of Jabin, but some of the tribe of Ephraim, opposed, and prevailed against them: but Benjamin moved first, and the Ephraimites assisted them. The governors of Machir, or of Manasseh came to the assistance of Barak, and formed useful commanders: and the Zebulunites were so in earnest, that even their students came to join the army, and to serve the common cause, as there was occasion.

V. 15.] Both the princes, and people of Issachar attended upon Deborah, either to abide with her, or to accompany Barak, when he was sent down into the valley with his small number of foot-soldiers poorly armed, (v. 8,) to meet the army, and chariots of Sisera. But Reuben kept at a distance as disaffected to the common cause; which gave great concern, excited much resentment, and occasioned many thoughts in the minds of his brethren, about the cause of such an alienation. But he made the care of his flocks the pretence for tarrying at home on this conjuncture.

V. 17. *Gilead*, &c.] The tribe of Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh inhabited mount Gilead: and Machir before-mentioned was that half of Manasseh, which dwelt west of Jordan. And it is probable that all the Israelites, who dwelt east of Jordan abode at home, and refused their concurrence. The tribes of Dan, and Asher did the same; the one being occupied in merchandise, or fishery, and the other, as some think, in repairing the breaches, and stopping the incursions, which the sea had made upon their inheritance.

V. 18. *Zebulun, and Naphtali*, &c.] From these two tribes Barak had raised his army, and they had boldly ventured their lives, in meeting the enemy, with their iron chariots, in the open field of battle. But some of the others were ready to follow the blow, though not present in the first engagement.

19 The kings came *and* fought; then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo: they took no gain of money.

20 They fought from heaven; the ſtars in their courſes fought againſt Siſera.

21 The river of Kiſhon ſwept them away, that ancient river, the river Kiſhon. O my ſoul, thou haſt trodden down ſtrength.

22 Then were the horſe-hoofs broken by the means of the pranſings, the pranſings of their mighty ones.

23 Curſe ye Meroz, (ſaid the angel of the LORD,) curſe ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; becauſe they came not to the help of the LORD, to the help of the LORD againſt the mighty.

24 Bleſſed above women ſhall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be; bleſſed ſhall ſhe be above women in the tent.

25 He aſked water, *and* ſhe gave *him* milk; ſhe brought forth butter in a lordly diſh.

26 She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer: and with the hammer ſhe ſmote Siſera; ſhe ſmote off his head, when ſhe had pierced and ſtricken through his temples.

27 At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell; where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

28 The mother of Siſera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot ſo long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots?

29 Her wiſe ladies anſwered her, yea, ſhe returned anſwer to herſelf,

30 Have they not ſped? have they *not* divided the prey; to every man a damſel *or* two? to Siſera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers

V. 19. *The kings*, &c.] The other kings of Canaan confederated with Jabin out of hatred againſt Iſrael, without receiving any recompenſe for their aſſiſtance.

V. 20. *The ſtars*, &c.] The angels are called "morning ſtars," (*Job*, c. xxxviii. v. 7.) And their aſſiſtance as the Lord's armies may be here meant: or in poetical language a violent tempeſt, raiſed at that time, which greatly facilitated the deſtruction of the Canaanites, may be aſcribed to the influences of the ſtars in their courſes; who, thus without any ſuch miraculous alteration in the appearance of the heavens, as took place in the days of Joſhua, fought effectually for Iſrael againſt their enemies.

V. 21. *The river of Kiſhon*, &c.] The ſtream of this rivulet ſeems to have been ſo ſwelled by the rains, which had fallen at this time, that numbers of the Canaanites attempting to croſs it, were ſwept away by it.

O my ſoul, &c.] Deborah, by exciting Barak, and the Iſraelites againſt their powerful enemies, and by her ſtrong faith, and fervent prayers, had trodden down their ſtrength in the very duſt.

V. 23. *Curſe ye Meroz*, &c.] Meroz was probably ſome city near to the field of battle, and the inhabitants were more inexcuſeable in not affording their aſſiſtance, than thoſe, who lived more remote: and perhaps their refuſal evidently aroſe from a ſecret favour born the Canaanites. The Lord did not want their help againſt the mightieſt of his enemies; but their conduct ſhewed their unbelief, and degeneracy, and expoſed them to this terrible curſe. Deborah did not curſe them out of perſonal reſentment, but the angel of the Lord commanded her to pronounce it upon them, that Angel of the Lord, who was the captain of the Lord's hoſt: (*Joſhua*, c. v. ver. 14.) Perhaps Meroz had before been a flouriſhing city, but in conſequence of this curſe, it decayed, till it became ſo obſcure, that it's ſituation is at preſent unknown. We have no authority, and ought to have no inclination to pronounce curſes upon any perſon: but we cannot remain neuter, in the conteſt betwixt the Lord, and his enemies; and if we do not *actively* endeavour to promote his cauſe in this wicked world, according to our ability, we ſhall with them fall under the curſe, that *he* hath pronounced againſt the workers of iniquity.

V. 24. *Bleſſed*, &c.] The inhabitants of Meroz, though Iſraelites, feared the power, and valued the friendſhip of the Canaanites, more than they dreaded the power, and deſired the favour of God; and therefore were joined with the accurſed Canaanites: Jael, though not an Iſraelite, out of faith, and love to the cauſe of God, preferred the friendſhip of his oppreſſed people to that of their enemies, and was joined with them in the bleſſing, yea had a ſpecial, and ſuperior bleſſing. And indeed "in the tent," ſhe jeoparded her life as much as the ſoldiers did "in "the high places of the field."

V. 26. *She ſmote off his head*, &c.] When ſhe had driven the nail through his head, ſhe probably cut it off with his own ſword. When he felt the anguiſh of the nail penetrating his head, perhaps he ſtruggled to ariſe, but fell down again, and bowed, and died at her feet, finding death, where he had ſought life, and a terrible enemy, where he expected a kind friend.

V. 28. *The mother of Siſera*, &c.] In a mere human compoſition we ſhould ſay, that this was finely imagined; but in an inſpired poem we muſt ſuppoſe that it was actually the caſe. With impatient expectations the mother of Siſera looked for his return, and wondered what ſo long delayed him; not in the leaſt fearing his ſucceſs in ſo unequal a conteſt, as this appeared to her.

V. 29. *Her wiſe ladies*, &c.] This is ſpoken ironically: her ladies, in *their great wiſdom* ſuggeſted that Siſera only waited to divide the immenſe ſpoil, which he had taken; and ſhe *as wiſely* pleaſed her vain mind with the ſoothing imagination.

V. 30. *A damſel or two*, &c.] What a picture doth this give of an ungodly and ſenſual heart! How ſhameful are

colours

colours of needle-work on both sides, *meet* for the necks of *them that take* the spoil?

31 So let all thine enemies perish, O LORD: but *let* them that love him *be* as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years.

these wishes of an aged mother for a beloved son! That a woman of honour, and virtue, as we say, could delight her fancy, with conceiving the Israelitish virgins divided amongst the conquerors, as their property, to be exposed to their unbridled domineering lust! And that nothing more excellent could be conceived by her trifling mind, than to see her son, and his attendants, and concubines arrayed in fine garments, wrought by the skill, and industry of their vanquished enemies! But she is left to enjoy her imaginary triumph, and meet her bitter disappointment; whilst the hymn of praise concludes with wishing similar destruction to all the enemies of the Lord, and prosperity to those, who love him: that their characters may be honourable, their endeavours successful, their course increasingly useful; and their path shining more and more; till they resemble the noon day, when the sun by his full strength hath dispelled those mists, and clouds which his rising drew up, and which at first obscured his way; but afterwards increase his splendour.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

No time ought to be lost in returning thanks to the Lord for his mercies; for our praises are most acceptable, pleasant, and profitable, when they flow from a full heart, before the tide of affection hath begun to subside. And we should not be backward to celebrate the praises of the Lord, and declare our obligations to him, before his most determined enemies, or in the presence of the mightiest, and haughtiest of the princes of the earth. Let them be reminded that the Lord is above them, and against them, whilst they seek their own glory, and oppose his cause: let them be warned to rejoice with trembling in their dangerous pre-eminence: let them lower their diadems to the crown of the King of kings: let them be taught to embrace his salvation, and become his servants, or they will ere long perish like Jabin, and Sisera; (*Psalm* lxxxiii. v. 9, 10.) And those princes, who desire to serve the Lord, must learn to trust in him, and not in chariots, and horses; to use their authority in advancing truth, and righteousness, and to account his worship to be *their* most honourable, and delightsome privilege, and employment.—Every recent mercy calls upon us to renew our gratitude for former benefits. The works of the Lord can only worthily be compared with each other; and all combine in proclaiming, that nothing is too hard for his power, or too large for his love to his people. Our praises in prosperity will be heightened, and purified by the remembrance of preceding troubles, and by the humiliation for those sins, which occasioned them: for nothing but sin gives birth to misery, personal, or public, temporal, or eternal. When men rebel against the Lord, he withdraws his protection, and sets his face against them: then their feebleſt foes prevail; and his curse infuses bitterness into all their comforts, nor can any thing but repentance stop the speedy progress of advancing judgments. But when faithful, and zealous persons are raised up, as magistrates, or ministers, to attempt reformation; when others willingly offer themselves to concur therein, and when the people are suitably influenced by such endeavours; the affairs of nations, and churches begin to wear a more favourable aspect. And when in our personal afflictions we are brought to humble ourselves before God, to repent, to pray, and seek forgiveness of our sins, deliverance and comfort are not far off. And happy are they, who are thus "chastened of the Lord, that they should not "be condemned with the world:" for the prosperity of the wicked increases their pride, insolence, presumption, and sensuality, till they suddenly perish, and that without remedy. Whilst we can go abroad, or rest at home in security, whilst we can follow our employments, and attend on the ordinances of God, without any to make us afraid: let us join to our thanksgivings for such distinguishing mercies, our sympathising prayers, for those, who are groaning under the calamities of war, oppression, and persecution. But as a craving appetite will urge men to venture their lives for it's gratification, did we aright thirst for the blessings of salvation; neither the persecutor's rage, nor the tempter's assaults could keep us from the house of God, or the throne of grace. Whilst we rehearse the righteous, faithful, and merciful acts of the Lord, from whom cometh every good gift; we should bear true respect, and affection, and give deserved commendation to those, who have been his willing messengers of kindness to us; and should recompense them with our fervent prayers for his blessing upon them: and though He needs no human help, yet is he pleased to employ, and accept of their services, who in their several stations, improve their talents to advance his cause. Nay he *requires* every man so to do, and will call those to a severe account, who neglect, or shift his service. And the higher any man is advanced in his Providence, the more forward ought he to be in promoting the public good, and in stirring up others, by his example, influence, and authority to do the same: not deeming the high praises of God unbecoming the bench, the senate, or the throne; or unseasonable in the most ordinary conversation with strangers, or with the nobles of the earth. And, they, who call others to this heavenly work, should first call upon themselves to be lively, and to abound therein. They, who would do good, must shake off sloth, and renounce indulgence; and learn to be active and endure hardship: at some times they may be called to jeopardy their lives in the high places of the field; at all times to sacrifice many personal interests for the public good, and in so doing to incur the reproach and censure of a mis-judging world. Most men will therefore excuse themselves from such services; and whilst they are averse to the cross, and disaffected to the cause of God, they will find apologies enough for their conduct, from the variety of their secular engagements, and avocations. But, they, who temporise in a matter which admits not of neutrality; and refuse their active support to the cause of God, are numbered amongst his enemies; and whilst they grieve, and discourage the hearts of others, they bring the heavy wrath of God upon themselves. Indeed the power, and pre-eminence at present seem to be on their side; and the servants of God are poor, despised, and afflicted: but the tables will soon be turned; and the feebleſt believer shall tread down the strength of,

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1ſt. Iſrael again apoſtatizing, oppreſſed by the Midianites, and reproved by a prophet, v. 1—10. *2d. Gideon appointed by the angel of the Lord to deliver them, his appointment confirmed by a ſign, and his building an altar, v.* 11—24. *3d. Commanded to deſtroy the altar of Baal, &c, and to ſacrifice to the Lord; and his obedience, v.* 25—27. *4th. The reſentment of his citizens, and his father's plea for him, v.* 28—32. *5th. His raiſing troops, and his being encouraged by a two-fold ſign, v.* 34—40.

AND the children of Iſrael did evil in the ſight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian ſeven years.

2 And the hand of Midian prevailed againſt Iſrael: *and* becauſe of the Midianites the children of Iſrael made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and ſtrong holds.

3 And *ſo* it was, when Iſrael had ſown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the eaſt, even they came up againſt them;

4 And they encamped againſt them, and deſtroyed the increaſe of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza; and left no ſuſtenance for Iſrael, neither ſheep, nor ox, nor aſs.

5 For they came up with their cattle, and their tents, and they came as graſhoppers for multitude; *for* both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to deſtroy it.

6 And Iſrael was greatly impoveriſhed becauſe of the Midianites; and the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD.

7 And it came to paſs, when the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD becauſe of the Midianites,

8 That the LORD ſent a prophet unto the children of Iſrael, which ſaid unto them, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the houſe of bondage;

9 And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all that oppreſſed you, and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land:

10 And I ſaid unto you, I *am* the LORD your God; fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whoſe land ye dwell: but ye have not obeyed my voice.

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and exerciſe dominion over the mightieſt of the wicked. When God ariſes to judgment, and to help all the meek upon earth, and to avenge the cauſe of his people; the whole creation will wage war againſt his enemies: the ſtars in their courſes, the elements melting with fervent heat, and all the angels in heaven ſhall concur in their deſtruction: whilſt all the hoſts of God, ſhall ſing with triumphant acclamations, "So let all thine enemies periſh, O Lord:" and they, who love the Lord, ſhall then ſhine as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father. What will then become of the hopes of the ſenſual, the vain, the covetous, and the ambitious? The objects of their nobleſt wiſhes were degrading, and many of their deſires were baſe, and brutiſh: yet will not even theſe wiſhes, and deſires be gratified; and eternal diſappointment, and black deſpair will complete their final miſery. Where will then be their boaſted wiſdom; where their high-ſounding titles, and glittering diſtinctions? All, all vaniſhed, and gone for ever. But the righteous may wait that cloſing ſolemn ſcene with joyful expectation: may conſider death and judgment as the coming of their beloved to complete their felicity: and though willing to wait his time, yet longing to behold his face, they may well ſay, "Why is his chariot ſo long in "coming? Why tarry the wheels of his chariots?" But though they meet delays, they ſhall not ſuffer diſappointment; for yet a little ſpace, and he will come, and receive them to his glorious, and eternal reſt.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *The dens*, &c.] Theſe caverns were well known to the Iſraelites, when this hiſtory was publiſhed; but it was proper that the original, and uſe of them ſhould be remembered; both for their humiliation, and to excite their gratitude. The Midianites and Amalekites came againſt them, rather in the form of free-booters, than as a diſciplined army of troops under experienced commanders: yet the courage of the Iſraelites was ſo ſunk, that they did not dare to make reſiſtance, but daſtardly concealed themſelves under ground from their ravages: (*Lev.* c. xxvi. v. 17. 36, 37.)

V. 4. *Unto Gaza*, &c.] The country of Midian was beyond the moſt eaſtern borders of the land, and Gaza was near the Mediterranean ſea on the weſt. So that they went quite acroſs the country, and occupied, and deſolated the whole.

V. 7. *When they cried*, &c.] After having long ſmarted under their affliction, they cried unto the Lord to deliver them from it; but do not ſeem to have been humbled for their ſins, (*Iſaiah*, c. i. v. 15, 16.) Therefore he ſent a prophet to call them to repentance, before he raiſed up a judge to deliver them from their enemies. The meſſage of this prophet was very plain, and convincing, and probably he delivered it from city to city throughout the land; and it ſeems to have had conſiderable effect, as it prepared the way for their deliverance.

11 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press, to hide *it* from the Midianites.

12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valour.

13 And Gideon said unto him, O my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where *be* all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.

14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?

15 And he said unto him, O my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house.

16 And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

17 And he said unto him, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me.

18 Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee, and bring forth my present, and set *it* before thee. And he said, I will tarry until thou come again.

19 And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought *it* out unto him under the oak, and presented *it*.

20 And the angel of God said unto him, Take the flesh and the unleavened cakes, and lay *them* upon this rock, and pour out the broth. And he did so.

V. 11. *By the wine-press, to hide*, &c.] The Israelites contrived to conceal in this manner a scanty portion of their harvest, just sufficient to keep them from starving. In the wine-press Gideon beat out the wheat with a staff, unsuspected: for either the vintage was not ripe; or they had lately had no use for their wine-presses, being glad to get a morsel of bread, and to do without wine.

V. 12. *Thou mighty man of valour.*] Perhaps Gideon, at his work, was meditating on the miserable estate of Israel, and conceiving bold designs against their invaders, which yet he saw no possibility of accomplishing.

V. 13. *If the Lord*, &c.] The angel had said "The "Lord is with *thee:*" but Gideon's mind was occupied about his people, and he therefore answered, "If the Lord "be with *us*," &c, as not conceiving that the Lord could be with *him*, when there was no evidence of his special presence with Israel. But though he formed a proper judgment, when he concluded that they could not have been so distressed, if the almighty Lord, who had brought them out of Egypt, had not forsaken them: yet he did not suitably advert to those crimes, which had provoked him so to do.

V. 14. *And the Lord looked*, &c.] We here learn who this angel was: even the Lord, Jehovah, the only begotten son of God, who hath in all ages declared the Father to mankind. These repeated evidences continually remind the attentive reader, that the Scriptures are calculated to lead us to conceive of the one living, and true God, as subsisting in distinct persons. We read of Jehovah, who sent, and of Jehovah, who was sent, and though *in that respect* he appeared "in the form of a servant," yet he spake as Lord of all. And we shall hereafter perceive this to be equally the case in respect of the Holy Ghost. The Lord looked upon Gideon with some peculiar expression of Majesty, or of favour, giving energy to his words.

In this thy might, and, &c.] Either to execute the bold designs, which he was revolving in his mind: or rather in that strength of faith which he then possessed. If he believed that nothing was wanting to deliver them from the Midianites, but the presence of God, who redeemed them from Egypt, let him go in this confidence, and he shall find that same power exerted to render him successful: "Have "not I sent thee," saith the divine speaker.

V. 15. *My family is poor*, &c.] Manasseh was not one of the leading tribes in Israel: the thousand, (for so the word signifies,) to which his fathers house belonged, was poor in that tribe; and he was the meanest person in the family in his own humble opinion of himself, and unfit to undertake such a service, though he could not help wishing for Israel's deliverance.

V. 16. *As one man.*] With great facility, and to their entire destruction.

V. 17. *That thou talkest*, &c.] Gideon seems to have desired to be satisfied, that the person, that spake to him, was the same, who at the bush commissioned Moses to deliver Israel out of Egypt, and who had given him sensible tokens of his divine power, and authority.

V. 19. *A kid*, &c.] (*See Gen.* c. xviii. v. 5.) This preparation would serve either for an hospitable meal, or for a sacred oblation: the quantity was *vastly* more than was necessary for one person at one time: and it shews that even in his poverty, Gideon was ready to use hospitality without grudging, according to the custom of those times.

V. 20, 21.] This command seems to have been intended as a trial of his faith and obedience; wherein the Lord gave him the sign, which he required: with the staff which he held in his hand, he touched the flesh, &c, and by fire miraculously kindled the whole was consumed, as a sacrifice, and not as an entertainment; for he was God, and not man.

21 Then the angel of the LORD put forth the end of the ſtaff that *was* in his hand, and touched the fleſh, and the unleavened cakes; and there roſe up fire out of the rock, and conſumed the fleſh and the unleavened cakes. Then the angel of the LORD departed out of his ſight.

22 And when Gideon perceived that he *was* an angel of the LORD, Gideon ſaid, Alas, O Lord God! for becauſe I have ſeen an angel of the LORD face to face.

23 And the LORD ſaid unto him, Peace *be* unto thee; fear not: thou ſhalt not die.

24 Then Gideon built an altar there unto the LORD, and called it Jehovah-ſhalom: unto this day it *is* yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 And it came to paſs the ſame night, that the LORD ſaid unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the ſecond bullock of ſeven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that *is* by it;

26 And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the ſecond bullock, and offer a burnt-ſacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou ſhalt cut down.

27 Then Gideon took ten men of his ſervants, and did as the LORD had ſaid unto him: and *ſo* it was, becauſe he feared his father's houſhold, and the men of the city, that he could not do *it* by day, that he did *it* by night.

28 And when the men of the city aroſe early in the morning, behold the altar of Baal was caſt down, and the grove was cut down that *was* by it, and the ſecond bullock was offered upon the altar *that was* built.

29 And they ſaid one to another, Who hath done this thing? And when they enquired and aſked, they ſaid, Gideon the ſon of Joaſh hath done this thing.

30 Then the men of the city ſaid unto Joaſh, Bring out thy ſon, that he may die: becauſe he hath caſt down the altar of Baal, and becauſe he hath cut down the grove that *was* by it.

31 And Joaſh ſaid unto all that ſtood againſt him, Will ye plead for Baal? will ye ſave him? he that will plead for him, let him be put to death whilſt *it is yet* morning: if he *be* a god, let him plead for himſelf, becauſe *one* hath caſt down his altar.

32 Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, ſaying, Let Baal plead againſt him, becauſe he hath thrown down his altar.

V. 22. *I have ſeen*, &c.] The ſight of a created angel, though it might have ſurpriſed, would not have thus terrified Gideon: but it was a current opinion, that the viſion of the divine glory was fatal: and, except as ſeen in Jeſus Chriſt, it would be ſo: (*Exod.* c. xxxiii. v. 20—22.)

V. 23. *The Lord ſaid*, &c.] Either at a ſecond appearance, or by an audible voice, or in a viſion, as afterwards, (v. 25.)

V. 24. *An altar*, &c.] Not for ſacrifice, but for a memorial of the Lord's pacific appearance to him. Jehovah-Shallom ſignifies "the Lord our peace," or the Lord ſhall ſend peace.

V. 25. *Even the ſecond*, &c.] It is controverted whether Gideon was to ſacrifice one bullock, or two; and, what is meant by "the ſecond bullock." But he underſtood the Lord's meaning very well, and it doth not much concern us. It is alſo generally ſuppoſed, that this bullock, or theſe bullocks were intended as a ſacrifice to Baal, and fattened for that purpoſe. Before he offered them, he was commanded to break down the altar of Baal, "which his father "had;" and whereupon he and his citizens joined in ſacrifice. So devoted were they to their idolatry, even when ſeverely ſmarting for it! We may ſuppoſe that Gideon had expreſſed his diſapprobation of their conduct, but in vain; they had not regarded the prophet of the Lord, and would not regard him. By throwing down this altar, and cutting down the grove, which ſhaded it, he declared open war againſt Iſrael's idolatry, before he attacked their enemies. After this he was ordered to build an altar, and to offer ſacrifices to Jehovah; intimating that their ſin could only be pardoned through that atonement, which was therein typified. And though he was not a prieſt, or Levite, and ordinarily they were confined to the altar at Shiloh; yet the Lord would diſpenſe with his own *ritual* inſtitutions, and accept his ſacrifice.

V. 27. *Becauſe he feared*, &c.] His father's large family, was grievouſly infected with this idolatry; which the more magnifies the mercy of God in preſerving Gideon, and in ſelecting him to be Iſrael's deliverer. But there were ſome even there, who were otherwiſe diſpoſed, and willing to help in this perilous attempt.

V. 28, 29.] When they aroſe betimes, perhaps to pay their morning devotions to Baal, and ſaw what was done, they ſuſpected Gideon, and were ſpeedily aſſured that he had done it; and nothing but his blood could ſatisfy the perſecuting rage of theſe infatuated idolaters!

V. 31. *Will ye plead*, &c.] Joaſh, though a ring-leader in their idolatry, was unwilling to have his ſon puniſhed; and probably was convinced of the ſin, and folly of worſhipping Baal. However he concluded, that if Baal were a God, he could avenge his own cauſe; and if not, they who pleaded for him deſerved to die. On this occaſion he

33 Then

33 Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, were gathered together, and went over, and pitched in the valley of Jezreel.

34 But the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered after him.

35 And he sent Messengers throughout all Manasseh; who also was gathered after him: and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

36 And Gideon said unto God, If thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said,

37 Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; *and* if the dew be on the fleece only, and *it be* dry upon all the earth *beside*, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said.

38 And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowlfull of water.

39 And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: Let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.

40 And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground.

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gave his son a new name, and called him Jerubbaal; as if he had said, let Baal plead against him, if he be able; and by this name Gideon bade defiance to the power of their idol, and protested against his stupid worshippers. He was also called Jerub-besheth, which signifies, "let shame "plead;" for what the people called Baal, or their Lord, was indeed their shame.

V. 34. *Abiezer*, &c.] It seems a very great reformation took place on this occasion; for that city furnished him his first attendants, when he prepared to attack the Midianites.

V. 36—40.] The view of the vast multitudes of the enemy discouraged Gideon; who for the confirmation of his own faith, and that of his troops, desired this miraculous sign of the Lord's presence, as the seal of his commission. But as it is the nature of wool to suck in the moisture, when there is any in the air; so the first token did not quite satisfy him: and, yet conscious of his unbelief, he asked the reversal of the sign with an humble deprecation of the Lord's displeasure; and he obtained it. According to this miracle, the nation of Israel was moistened by the dew of heavenly blessings, when the whole earth beside remained dry: and now that the nations of the earth enjoy the blessings of redemption, the Jews remain like the dry fleece.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The tendency of fallen nature to apostacy from God, is so strong, that no means can of themselves prevent it's effect; and when divine grace is withheld, man as naturally does evil, as the stone gravitates to the centre. These Scriptures were intended to teach us this humiliating truth, that all the glory of every thing good in man may be given to the Lord; that the sinner may depend entirely upon his gracious assistance; that we may all be reminded, that in our flesh dwelleth no good thing; and that ministers may remember, that without the special blessing of God, even Paul might plant in vain. The Lord hath so constituted the world, that fear, shame, and misery are the natural effects of sin, and will infallibly follow the commission of it; though impenitent sinners endeavour to shift them off, and *for a time* succeed. But conscious guilt appalls the heart, and reduces men to the most degrading expedients for self-preservation. And when plenty is abused in sensuality, it is a merciful chastisement to be pinched with want, and reminded that we have provoked the Lord. The pressure of affliction will extort even from nature a cry of distress, and a prayer for relief. If the Lord regard these prayers, he will convince such persons of their sinfulness, and lead them to repentance: and no relief from suffering will eventually be a mercy, which is not accompanied by deliverance from the guilt, and power of sin. When ministers have declared the perfections, and authority of God; the relations in which we stand to him, and the favours which each hath received from him; the reasonableness of his precepts, the advantages of his service, the evil of sin, and the number of men's transgressions: the matter must be left to conscience, which, when allowed to speak, will testify their need of repentance and forgiveness, and that they ought to turn from all their wicked ways, and obey the voice of God: yet many feel that these things are right, who yet proceed in their ungodliness. But the Lord will reserve to himself a remnant in the worst of times, to whom he will manifest his gracious presence; and they are never more likely to be thus favoured, than when struggling with outward difficulties, employed in honest labour, and meditating upon heavenly things. Talents suited for peculiar services, for a time may be buried in obscurity, but in due season the Lord will take the candle from under the bushel, and place it upon a candlestick, to give light to all around. That time must be waited for by those, whose hearts glow with desires of usefulness, which at present they have no opportunity of executing. We are more disposed to muse upon our troubles, than upon our transgressions; and when we do not directly experience the same deliverances, which have been afforded to others, we are apt to think that the Lord's hand is shortened, or that he hath forgotten to be gracious: not considering that he worketh every thing in it's appointed season, according to the determinations of his unfathomable wisdom, and as best answers the purposes of his own glory. But before honour is humility; and the delays, and disappointments, whereby the Lord humbles those, whom he de-

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. Gideon's army made trial of by divine direction, and reduced to three hundred men, v. 1—8. *2d. Gideon himſelf encouraged by hearing the dream of a Midianite, v.* 9—15. *3d. The method, in which he aſſaulted, and routed the enemy, v.* 16—22. *4th. The Iſraelites intercepting their flight, and deſtroying them, with two of their princes, v.* 23—25.

THEN Jerubbaal, (who *is* Gideon,) and all the people that *were* with him, roſe up early, and pitched beſide the well of Harod: ſo that the hoſt of the Midianites were on the north ſide of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley.

2 And the LORD ſaid unto Gideon, The people that *are* with thee *are* too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, leſt Iſrael vaunt themſelves againſt me, ſaying, Mine own hand hath ſaved me.

3 Now therefore, go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, ſaying, Whoſoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him return, and depart early from mount Gilead: and there returned of the people twenty and two thouſand, and there remained ten thouſand.

4 And the LORD ſaid unto Gideon, The people *are* yet *too* many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it ſhall be, *that* of whom I ſay unto thee, This ſhall go with thee, the ſame ſhall go with thee; and of whomſoever I ſay unto thee, This ſhall not go with thee, the ſame ſhall not go.

5 So he brought down the people unto the water: and the LORD ſaid unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him ſhalt thou ſet by himſelf; likewiſe every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

lighteth to honour, often diſcourage their hearts, and induce diſtruſt, and reluctancy to duty; ſo imperfect, and defiled with ſin are our beſt graces! yet he generally employs thoſe, who are moſt ſenſible of their own unworthineſs, and inſufficiency; teaching them to exerciſe the courage of faith, and to grow ſtrong, by ſimply expecting help from God; and graciouſly aſſuring them, that he employs them, and will be with them. When the Lord favours his ſervants with glimpſes of his glory, and taſtes of his love, they long for the continuance of his gracious preſence: and when the ſenſe of his pardoning love hath baniſhed the fear of wrath; they will riſe ſuperior to their diſcouragements, will praiſe him for his mercies, and be ready to ſay, "here I am, ſend "me." (*Iſaiah*, c. vi. v. 8;) though the ſervice be dangerous, and difficult, and requires much ſelf-denial. In attempting reformation, (which is the firſt ſtep towards recovering proſperity,) no man muſt be known according to the fleſh: nay when the commands of God are concerned, even parental authority loſes it's obligation; and though the method of procedure ſhould be directed in wiſdom, yet we muſt not be counſelled by natural affection, or the fear of man. If we do any thing *effectual* againſt the cauſe of ſatan, his ſervants will certainly be enraged, eſpecially they, that are zealous for a falſe religion: but the Lord hath all hearts in his hands, and can eaſily intimidate the enemies of his people, or convert them into friends, and helpers: and perſecution muſt always appear unreaſonable, and odious to a reflecting mind. Let Baal, if he be a god, plead his own cauſe: and Jehovah allows not his ſervants to uſe ſuch carnal weapons. Wicked men are frequently moſt furious, when their deſtruction is juſt at hand: for when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifteth up a ſtandard againſt him. Yet even they, who have the Spirit of God, and by the trumpet of the goſpel call others to the conflict, cannot always keep out diſquieting fears, in circumſtances of peculiar danger, and difficulty. In this

ſtruggle againſt involuntary unbelief, the Lord himſelf, the author, and finiſher of his people's faith, is their refuge: to him will they make application, and he will help them; and when they are encouraged, they will be enabled to ſympathiſe with, and to ſtrengthen their brethren. Yet the ſame inward enemy will again and again aſſail them; and conſcious that their fears diſhonour the power, faithfulneſs, and love of God, they will deprecate his diſpleaſure, whilſt they beſeech him to ſtrengthen their faith; and he will both pardon and condeſcend to their deſires, whilſt they endeavour to truſt in him, but cannot do the thing, that they would. What cauſe have we ſinners of the Gentiles to bleſs the Lord, that the dew of heavenly bleſſings, which was once confined to Iſrael, now deſcends upon the inhabitants of the earth, without that limitation! yet ſtill the means of grace are diſpenſed in different meaſures according to the purpoſes of God; and even in the ſame congregations one man's ſoul is like Gideon's moiſtened fleece, another like the dry ground. Let us then continually pray for the divine bleſſing on the ordinances of God to ourſelves, and others: not forgetting the Jewiſh nation, which hath been ſo long a dry fleece, whilſt the earth around hath engroſſed the bleſſing.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 3. *Whoſoever is fearful*, &c.] Gideon either forgot the law, to this purpoſe, (*Deut.* c. xx. v. 8;) or thought it might be diſpenſed with on this occaſion. But the Lord ſaw the pride of the people's hearts, and their diſpoſition to overlook him in the whole tranſaction: many of them were through unbelief afraid of the enemy; yet if they had prevailed, they would have aſcribed the victory to their own courage, and conduct. The people had flocked together at firſt very readily, but the ſight of the innumerable hoſt of the Midianites made ſuch of them tremble, as were deſtitute of faith, and diſquieted by a guilty conſcience. They were bid to depart from

6 And the number of them that lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the reſt of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

7 And the LORD ſaid unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I ſave you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand: and let all the *other* people go every man unto his place.

8 So the people took victuals in their hand, and their trumpets: and he ſent all *the reſt of* Iſrael every man unto his tent, and retained thoſe three hundred men. And the hoſt of Midian was beneath him in the valley.

9 And it came to paſs the ſame night, that the LORD ſaid unto him, Ariſe, get thee down unto the hoſt; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy ſervant down to the hoſt.

11 And thou ſhalt hear what they ſay, and afterward ſhall thine hands be ſtrengthened to go down unto the hoſt. Then went he down with Phurah his ſervant unto the outſide of the armed men that *were* in the hoſt.

12 And the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and all the children of the eaſt, lay along in the valley like graſhoppers for multitude; and their camels *were* without number, as the ſand by the ſea-ſide for multitude.

13 And when Gideon was come, behold, *there was* a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and ſaid, Behold, I dreamed a dream; and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the hoſt of Midian, and came unto a tent, and ſmote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.

14 And his fellow anſwered and ſaid, This *is* nothing elſe ſave the ſword of Gideon the ſon of Joaſh, a man of Iſrael: *for* into his hand hath God delivered Midian and all the hoſt.

15 And it was *ſo*, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worſhipped, and returned into the hoſt of Iſrael, and ſaid, Ariſe, for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the hoſt of Midian.

16 And he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers.

17 And he ſaid unto them, Look on me, and do likewiſe: and, behold, when I come to the outſide of the camp, it ſhall be, *that* as I do, ſo ſhall ye do.

18 When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that *are* with me, then blow ye the trumpets alſo on every ſide of all the camp, and ſay, *The ſword* of the LORD, and of Gideon.

19 So Gideon, and the hundred men that *were* with him, came unto the outſide of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch; and they had but newly ſet the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that *were* in their hands.

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mount Gilead, ſome mountain of that name weſt of Jordan, of leſs note than mount Gilead, which lay eaſt of that river.

V. 6. *Of them that lapped*, &c.] Perhaps the army was led to the water, under the idea, that they were going directly to attack the enemy. It ſeems to have been cuſtomary for them to drink as the cattle do, by putting their mouths down to the water, and drawing it in: but they, who only took a little into their hands, and ſucked it up, (as dogs are remarked to lap a little water haſtily,) might be ſuppoſed to be leſs enſlaved to their appetite, more able to endure hardſhip, and more eager to engage.

V. 8. *Victuals*, &c.] This ſmall company ſeems to have retained nothing, but preſent neceſſary proviſions, and perhaps all the trumpets, which belonged to the whole army, without any other arms.

V. 13, 14.] This dream ſeemed to have little coherency, or ſignificancy in it: but the interpretation given of it, evidently proved the whole to be from the Lord; and at the ſame time diſcovered that the name of Gideon had filled the hearts of the Midianites with terror. The ſmall unarmed company which Gideon headed, had the Midianites known about them, would have appeared as contemptible to them as the barley cake, and no more likely to deſtroy their army, than that would have been to overturn a tent. Gideon therefore took this as a ſure pledge of ſucceſs, and without delay worſhipped, and praiſed God for it, and returned with confidence to his three hundred men, who were "the hoſt of the Lord," by whom he intended to deliver Iſrael.

V. 16—22.] This ſmall number of men thus divided would be able to encompaſs the whole camp of the Midianites: concealing their lamps in their pitchers, they would paſs unobſerved to their appointed ſtations: then in the dead of the night, when moſt of the enemy were faſt aſleep, all at once breaking their pitchers one againſt another, with as much noiſe as they could, and blowing the trumpets, and ſhouting "The ſword of the Lord, and of

20 And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the lamps in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands to blow *withal:* and they cried, The ſword of the LORD, and of Gideon.

21 And they ſtood every man in his place round about the camp: and all the hoſt ran, and cried, and fled.

22 And the three hundred blew the trumpets, and the LORD ſet every man's ſword againſt his fellow, even throughout all the hoſt: and the hoſt fled to Beth-ſhittah in Zererath, *and* to the border of Abel-meholah unto Tabbath.

23 And the men of Iſrael gathered themſelves together out of Naphtali, and out of Aſher, and out of all Manaſſeh, and purſued after the Midianites.

24 And Gideon ſent meſſengers throughout all mount Ephraim, ſaying, Come down againſt the Midianites and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah, and Jordan. Then all the men of Ephraim gathered themſelves together, and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan.

25 And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb; and they ſlew Oreb upon the rock Oreb, and Zeeb they ſlew at the wine-preſs of Zeeb, and purſued Midian, and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other ſide Jordan.

" Gideon," they would occaſion a great alarm: and when their enemies were awaked out of ſleep, and heard the continued ſound of ſo many trumpets, and ſaw the whole camp ſurrounded with lights, they would in their confuſion naturally conclude themſelves ſurpriſed by a large army: and perceiving the lamps and trumpeters ſtill keeping their ſtations, they would be led to ſuſpect that the enemy was even now in the camp; and thus in the dark would become jealous of one another: and when ſome had by miſtake been ſlain by their comrades, the diſtraction, and terror, and ſuſpicion would become more general; until every one was engaged in battle with his fellow ſoldier. Thus we may eaſily conceive of the ſucceſs of this ſtratagem: but the power of God had previouſly prepared the diſmayed hearts of the Midianites to receive ſuch an impreſſion, and he ſet every man's ſword againſt his fellow: nay the obedience of faith alone could have induced ſo defenceleſs a company, to venture upon ſuch an expedient.

24. *Gideon ſent*, &c.] As ſoon as the ſtratagem began to take effect, he diſpatched meſſengers to the neighbouring places; from whence thoſe, who had been diſmiſſed contrary to their inclinations, and many others were ſoon collected; and whilſt ſome occupied the fords of Jordan to prevent the eſcape of any Midianites, others purſued, and ſlew the fugitives.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Activity, and prudence very properly accompany dependance upon God for aſſiſtance, and ſucceſs in our lawful undertakings: but the Lord ſeeth not, as man ſeeth; and being acquainted with the ſecrets of every heart, he varieth his conduct with a wiſe regard to a multitude of circumſtances, which are imperceptible by all others. And when he ſees men inclined to overlook him, and through unbelief to ſhrink from perilous ſervices, or through pride " to vaunt themſelves againſt him," he will ſet them aſide, and do his work by other inſtruments. Many profeſs themſelves followers of Chriſt, helpers to his ſervants, and prepared to fight under his banner, whilſt perſecution, and tribulation are at a diſtance: but without true faith, and a good conſcience, the heart will fail in the immediate proſpect of danger; and ſome pretence will be found, for deſerting the cauſe, and eſcaping the croſs. But though a religious ſociety may be diminiſhed in numbers, and in external proſperity, by their apoſtacy; yet they will be gainers in purity, and may conſequently expect an increaſing bleſſing from the Lord. Many who have real faith, and grace, are unfit for ſome ſpecial ſervices, and unable to bear ſome peculiar trials, from which therefore the Lord will exempt them; and to which he will appoint thoſe, to whom he hath given ſuperior hardineſs, boldneſs, and firmneſs of ſpirit: and very trivial incidents will ſometimes make diſcovery of men's capacities, and diſpoſitions; and ſhew who are, and who are not to be depended on in arduous undertakings. But whilſt the Lord purſues his purpoſes of diſplaying his own glory, he will try to the uttermoſt the faith and courage of the ſtrongeſt believer: and even when they are acting by his orders, and have the ſecurity of his promiſe to ſupport them, appearances may be ſo very ſtrong againſt them, that they cannot keep out the miſgivings, and ſtruggles of unbelief: this the Lord perceiveth, and in the moſt ſeaſonable hour, by ſome " token for " good," he will make their faith victorious, and eſtabliſh their hearts in confidence. Dreams generally ſavour of men's waking thoughts, deſires, fears, or diſpoſitions, and frequently diſcover the ſin, that dwelleth in us: often may we be humbled on recollecting our ſleeping imaginations, or made thankful that they were not realities; and be reminded to pray againſt terrifying, or polluting dreams. And ſometimes they may afford us a ſalutary hint, which being according to the truth, and precept of God's word, may be made uſeful, without exactly aſcertaining how it was brought to our mind: and if we can get any benefit from the dreams of others, we ſhould readily embrace, and thank the Lord for it. In the diſcovery of the diſpoſition of thoſe, with whom we are concerned, faith may frequently diſcern the ſecret operation of God, and both take encouragement, and point it out to others. The feebleſt, and moſt improbable methods, when appointed of God, and uſed in faith, produce the moſt deciſive conſequences. The light of divine truth, and grace in his miniſters, who are frail, ſinful men, and ſeldom *adorned* with the embelliſhments of worldly wiſdom, large capacities, or great elo-

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. Gideon prudently pacifying the anger of the Ephraimites, v. 1—3. *2d. Pursuing the Midianites, and taking their kings; and chastising the insolence of the men of Succoth, and Penuel, v.* 4—17. *3d. Slaying the kings of Midian; refusing the kingly government of Israel, requesting the ear-rings of the slaughtered enemies, and making an ephod, with its evil effects, v.* 18—27. *4th. The continuance of Israel's rest, the number of Gideon's children, his death, and Israel's ingratitude to the Lord, and to him, v.* 28—35.

AND the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply.

2 And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? *is* not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer?

3 God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him when he had said that.

4 And Gideon came to Jordan *and* passed over, he, and the three hundred men that *were* with him, faint, yet pursuing *them.*

5 And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they *be* faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian.

6 And the princes of Succoth said, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?

quence; but are comparable to mean earthen pitchers; (2 *Cor.* c. iv. v. 7:) accompanied by the trumpet of the gospel, preached by them in their several stations, is the power of God to the salvation of his people, and to the subversion of the kingdom of sin, and satan. Nor should they shrink from danger, or fear death: the earthen pitcher must be broken, and frequently the light of their testimony, and example shines brightest after their decease; especially when they have been honoured by being called to lay down their lives in so good a cause. That same light, and sound of heavenly truth, which saves the Israel of God, confounds, and dismays his enemies: and if *threatened* vengeance so appals the sinner's alarmed conscience in this world: what will be the effect of the archangel's trumpet, the voice of the Judge, and the shout of the redeemed, at the great day of account? and of that full blaze of light, which will then manifest all hearts, display every character, and shew every impenitent sinner his deserved and inevitable doom? In this world the wicked are often left, under the power of their own delusions, and the fury of their mad passions, to avenge the cause of God upon each other: and a period is approaching when we may expect that the persecuting foes of Christianity will destroy one another, whilst the host of Israel shall look on, and have nothing to do but to blow the gospel trumpet, and read the meaning of such singular events in the light of the Scripture prophecies: and in the world to come the wicked, by mutual enmity, upbraidings, and contempt, will increase their own, and each other's miseries. What then have the people of God to fear but unbelief and sin? What have they to do, but to believe the word of God, to trust his power and promise, to obey his orders, to wait his time, and to help one another, as occasions are afforded, and circumstances require? For they, who are incapable of one service, may be useful in another. Their victory is sure, and will soon be complete, over their most numerous, and powerful opponents.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—3. *The men of Ephraim,* &c.] Gideon was of the tribe of Manasseh, and the Ephraimites were perhaps jealous of him for taking the lead in this business. They were probably averse to take any part in the perilous, and arduous attempt of delivering Israel: but it served as a pretence for their unreasonable anger, that they had not been called upon to assist, though Gideon acted expressly by divine command. But with a presence of mind, a prudence, meekness, and modesty, which did honour to his character, he threw a vail over his own atchievements, and spoke well of theirs, and thus prevented the fatal effects of their anger. He represented his own victory by the three hundred men, who were chiefly of Abi-ezer, as inferior to their taking the princes of Midian: though the former might be called the vintage, and the other the gleaning: and intimated, that the whole glory belonged neither to them, nor him, but to the Lord. This seems to be introduced by anticipation; for the Ephraimites did not bring the heads of Oreb, and Zeeb to Gideon, until he had passed over Jordan; (c. vii. v. 25.)

V. 4. *He, and the three hundred,* &c.] Gideon, and his three hundred chosen men, passed over Jordan alone in pursuit of the two kings of Midian, who with fifteen thousand men had got over before the fords were taken: though they were deserted by some, and chided by others, and abused by others of the Israelites; and though the remaining Midianites so far exceeded them in number; yet in the courage, self-denial, and patience of faith, they pursued them, faint, and hungry, as they were, with long watching, fasting, and fatigue.

V. 6. *Are the hands,* &c.] The services of Gideon, and his men were very great, their necessity very urgent, and their request very moderate: the behaviour therefore of the men of Succoth, and Penuel was extremely insolent and base, and proved them disaffected to Israel, and the God of

7 And Gibeon ſaid, Therefore when the LORD hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand, then I will tear your fleſh with the thorns of the wilderneſs, and with briers.

8 And he went up thence to Penuel, and ſpake unto them likewiſe; and the men of Penuel anſwered him as the men of Succoth had anſwered *him*.

9 And he ſpake alſo unto the men of Penuel, ſaying, When I come again in peace, I will break down this tower.

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* in Karkor, and their hoſts with them, about fifteen thouſand *men*, all that were left of all the hoſts of the children of the eaſt: for there fell an hundred and twenty thouſand men that drew ſword.

11 And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwelt in tents, on the eaſt of Nobah and Jogbehah, and ſmote the hoſt: for the hoſt was ſecure.

12 And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he purſued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and diſcomfited all the hoſt.

13 And Gideon the ſon of Joaſh returned from battle before the ſun *was up*,

14 And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him: and he deſcribed unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, *even* threeſcore and ſeventeen men.

15 And he came unto the men of Succoth, and ſaid, Behold, Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me, ſaying, *Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we ſhould give bread unto thy men *that are* weary?

16 And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderneſs, and briers, and with them he taught the men of Succoth.

17 And he beat down the tower of Penuel, and ſlew the men of the city.

18 Then ſaid he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men *were they* whom ye ſlew at Tabor? And they anſwered, As thou *art*, ſo *were* they; each one reſembled the children of a king.

19 And he ſaid, They *were* my brethren, *even* the ſons of my mother: *as* the LORD liveth, if ye had ſaved them alive, I would not ſlay you.

20 And he ſaid unto Jether his firſt-born, Up, *and* ſlay them: but the youth drew not his ſword; for he feared, becauſe he *was* yet a youth.

21 Then Zebah and Zalmunna ſaid, Riſe thou, and fall upon us: for as the man *is*, *ſo is* his ſtrength. And Gideon aroſe, and ſlew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that *were* on their camel's necks.

Iſrael. They deſpiſed Gideon's feeble army, depreciated his former ſucceſs, attempted to weaken his confidence of completing the delivery; and would not afford him the leaſt aſſiſtance in his patriotic, and pious undertaking.

V. 7. *I will tear*, &c.] Gideon deferred his indignation; and intimated to them, that if the kings of Midian eſcaped, they might; but if the Lord enabled him to deſtroy them, it would be plain that he had appointed him judge of Iſrael, and in that character he would puniſh their ill behaviour, and teach them better. It is not agreed in what manner he uſed theſe briars and thorns in tearing the fleſh of the men of Succoth; but though he put them to pain, it is not probable that he ſlew them.

V. 9. *This tower.*] They probably boaſted of, and confided in their tower to ſecure them both from the Midianites, and from Gideon: he therefore deſtroyed it; and as ſome at leaſt of the men of Penuel were ſtill more culpable, than thoſe of Succoth, he put them to death, (v. 17.).

V. 14. *He deſcribed*, &c.] By this young man's information Gideon was enabled to diſtinguiſh betwixt the guilty, and the innocent, and ſo to inflict puniſhment upon the offenders only.

V. 18, 19.] In the troubles of Iſrael theſe kings of Midian had ſlain the brethren of Gideon: and therefore he determined on this occaſion to act as the avenger of blood upon them. As they were not of the devoted nations of Canaan, he might otherwiſe have ſpared them, and he declared that he would. It ſeems that Gideon, though little in his own eyes, was a man of a very majeſtic appearance: and that his brethren much reſembled him: and perhaps this excited the jealouſy of the Midianitiſh kings againſt them, who ſlew them for their own ſecurity, though it eventually proved their deſtruction.

V. 20, 21.] Gideon deſired to inure his ſon to execute vengeance on the enemies of God, and Iſrael; but the youth was timorous, and declined the ſervice; and the kings themſelves intreated, that they might be ſlain, (if they muſt die,) by the hand of Gideon; who being in his full ſtrength, and of great reputation, was more fit for ſuch a ſervice; for their death would be both ignominious, and lingering, if afeeble, timid youth were their execu-

22 Then

22 Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon, Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also: for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian.

23 And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you: the LORD shall rule over you.

24 And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you, that ye would give me every man the ear-rings of his prey: (for they had golden ear-rings, because they *were* Ishmaelites.)

25 And they answered, We will willingly give *them*. And they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the ear-rings of his prey.

26 And the weight of the golden ear-rings that he requested was a thousand and seven hundred *shekels* of gold, beside ornaments, and and collars, and purple raiment that *was* on the kings of Midian, and beside the chains that *were* about their camel's necks.

27 And Gideon made an ephod thereof, and put it in his city, *even* in Ophrah: and all Israel went thither a whoring after it: which thing became a snare unto Gideon, and to his house.

28 Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted up their heads no more: and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon.

29 And Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house.

30 And Gideon had threescore and ten sons of his body begotten: for he had many wives.

31 And his concubine that *was* in Shechem, she also bare him a son, whose name he called Abimelech.

32 And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age, and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again, and went a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god.

34 And the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side:

35 Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal, *namely*, Gideon, according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel.

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tioner. The ornaments from the camels necks, being in the shape of the moon, were probably used in some idolatrous, or superstitious manner.

V. 22, 23.] Gideon was willing to fight for, administer justice to, and reform religion amongst them; but only as the Lord's deputy, and whilst he pleased. He would not accept of the perpetual government from them, nor the hereditary succession to his children; let the Lord the king of Israel, appoint whom he pleased.

V. 24. *Ishmaelites.*] (*Note Gen.* c. xxxvii. v. 28.)

V. 27. *An ephod*, &c.] A very rich garment, like that worn by the high priest. Whether Gideon formed this at first only as a memorial of his victory; or whether he intended to inquire of the Lord by it, (c. xvii. v. 5. c. xviii. v. 5:) It afterwards became an occasion of idolatrous worship. Probably other requisites were added, and so sacrifices were offered upon the altar before erected, (c. vi. v. 26.) instead of that at Shiloh; which gratified the people's humour, and ease: and perhaps Gideon and his family were pleased with worshipping at home, instead of going to the tabernacle: this became to them at least an inlet to forbidden worship; to the people of idolatry. So that after the death of Gideon, they proceeded to renounce Jehovah entirely, and to worship Baal as their God, under the name of Baal-berith, or the Lord of the covenant; having generally covenanted to be his people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is one vanity incident to human affairs, that for every right work a man is envied by his neighbour; (*Eccl.* c. iv. v. 4.) They who will not attempt, or venture any thing in the cause of God, will be the most ready to censure, and quarrel with such, as are of a more zealous, and enterprizing spirit: the charge of pride, and ambition, will be brought against the most unexceptionable undertakings; and when censure is silenced in one respect by the event, it will assume another form; and they, who were most reluctant to difficult services, will be the most exasperated to be excluded from the credit of them. But only by pride cometh such contention; and it is the wisdom of Christians to turn away wrath by a soft answer; and their most noble victory is the conquest of their own spirits, (*Prov.* c. xvi. v. 32:) In those things, which pertain to the truth, will, and glory of God, they should be unmoved as the sturdy oak; but in the little concerns of their own interest or reputation, they should resemble the pliant willow, which yields to every gust. And if by throwing a shade over what the Lord hath done by them, and making honourable mention of what he hath hath done by others, by giving obliging language in return for rough words, and commendations in lieu of bitter chidings, envy may be avoided, anger abated, and contention prevented; the common cause will be more advantaged, than by the most successful controversy,

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. Abimelech's ſubtlety, cruelty, and ſucceſsful uſurpation, by the help of the men of Shechem, v. 1—6. *2d. Jotham's parable, and denunciation of vengeance on him, and them, v.* 7—21. *3d. Abimelech reigning, until contention, ariſing betwixt him, and the Shechemites, iſſued in their common deſtruction, v.* 22—57.

AND Abimelech the ſon of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the houſe of his mother's father, ſaying,

2 Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem, Whether *is* better for you, either that all the ſons of Jerubbaal, (*which are* threeſcore and ten perſons) reign over you, or that one reign over you? remember alſo that I *am* your bone and your fleſh.

3 And his mother's brethren ſpake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all theſe words: and their hearts inclined to

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which always takes Chriſtians off from their ſpiritual warfare. The active ſervants of God will always meet with more dangerous oppoſition from degenerate profeſſors, than from open enemies: but they muſt not regard the unreaſonable behaviour of thoſe, who are Iſraelites in name, but Midianites in heart, or who vainly wiſh to obſerve a neutrality. Through manifold tribulations, they muſt carry on their warfare, and purſue the enemies of their own ſouls, and of the cauſe of God, though ready to faint through inward conflicts, and outward hardſhips. And they ſhall be enabled thus to perſevere: for the leſs men help, and the more they hinder them, the more effectually will the Lord aſſiſt, and the more remarkably will he proſper them. It behoves magiſtrates to diſtinguiſh betwixt the guilty, and the innocent, and to puniſh thoſe, who injure their brethren; yet with temper, and to teach them, or others to behave better in future: miniſters muſt warn and ſeverely rebuke thoſe, who diſcourage the hearts of their fellow ſervants; in due ſeaſon the Lord himſelf will appear againſt, and execute vengeance upon thoſe, who have oppoſed his people in their obedience to his commands: In the mean time we muſt defer our anger, and go on with our work, not attempting to avenge ourſelves. Whatever earthly object men glory in, it will be torn from them; and ſinners are never ſo expoſed to danger, as when they deem themſelves moſt ſecure: (1 *Theſ.* c. v. v. 3.) Sins long forgotten by man, muſt be accounted for to God; and ſinful methods of ſelf-preſervation will only haſten, and aggravate the tranſgreſſor's deſtruction; eſpecially when innocent blood hath been ſhed. The execution of atrocious criminals, and the ſhedding of the blood of God's enemies, are in many reſpects honourable ſervices; (*Pſalm* c. lxxxiii. v. 11:) yet we may well be thankful, if we are employed in ſaving men's lives, rather than in deſtroying them. What a miſerable conſolation in death is derived from the hope of ſuffering leſs pain, and dying with leſs diſgrace, than ſome others do! yet many are more anxious upon theſe accounts, than concerning the future judgment, and it's eternal conſequences!—No honour is to be ſought, or ſo much as accepted, but that, which cometh from God, and conſiſteth with his ſole authority and glory: nor may we ſeek for our children thoſe things, which we may not deſire for ourſelves. Whatever deputies are employed, and whoever hath the external precedency in God's church; he is the only real Judge, defender, and ruler of his people. How ſoon will thoſe ornaments which feed the luſt of the eye, and form the pride of life; as well as the indulgences of the fleſh, become the ſhame of thoſe, who were fond of them? The characters of mere men have a ſad, and wonderful mixture in them; nor may we follow them, farther than they follow Chriſt: things ſanctioned by venerable names, and clothed with fair pretexts, are often found by the light of God's word to be vile abominations; and are proved by experience to be dangerous, and fatal ſnares, to thoſe eſpecially, who over-venerate their fellow worms. Small deviations from our rule, are a dangerous precedent, and open the way for more flagrant enormities: and even in marriage, when once the original inſtitution is diſregarded, the ſenſual heart of man, like an humoured child, will bear no contradiction, nor be confined by any limitations. But the Lord pardons, and accepts the true believer, notwithſtanding his infirmities, and after an uſeful life brings him to a quiet end: but conſcious of our own ingratitude to God, and obſerving that of mankind in general; we may learn to be patient under the unſuitable returns, that we meet with for our poor ſervices, and to reſolve after the divine example, "not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *To Abimelech*, &c.] Gideon, and his family had miſled the people, through the ephod at Ophrah: Iſrael had grievouſly offended in joining themſelves to Baal-berith; and the Lord manifeſted his diſpleaſure, not by delivering them up to foreign invaders, but by giving them up to their own vile paſſions. By Abimelech, the ſon of a concubine, Gideon's flouriſhing family was all at once deſtroyed; and after a time Abimelech, and his aſſiſtants in this baſe wickedneſs, executed vengeance on each other. Gideon had refuſed the proffered kingdom for himſelf, and his ſons; yet Abimelech's name, which ſignifies "my father the king," carried royalty in it: the concubines, whoſe children did not inherit, would naturally ſet up an intereſt oppoſite to the reſt of the family: and Abimelech's mother being of Shechem, a principal city of Ephraim, he conceived the idea of obtaining the kingdom, by her means. In order to ſucceed in this ambitious project, he accuſed his brethren, of intending to ſeize upon the government, and poſſeſs it with joint authority; and pleaded that it would be better to be governed by one prince, than ſo many petty tyrants; and that if they, who were ſo nearly related to him, would raiſe him to the throne, he would be peculiarly attentive to their intereſts: and in

follow

follow Abimelech; for they said, He *is* our brother.

4 And they gave him threescore and ten *pieces* of silver out of the house of Baal-berith; wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him.

5 And he went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal, *being* threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding, yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself.

6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went and made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

7 And when they told *it* to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of mount Gerizzim, and lifted up his voice, and cried, and said unto them, Hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you.

8 The trees went forth *on a time* to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign thou over us.

9 But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees:

10 And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

11 But the fig-tree said unto them, Should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, and go to be promoted over the trees?

12 Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

13 And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?

14 Then said all the trees unto the bramble, Come thou, *and* reign over us.

15 And the bramble said unto the trees, If in truth ye anoint me king over you, *then*

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this manner he acquired the government, without either merit, or capacity for such an honour.

V. 4. *Out of the house*, &c.] The Israelites had presented this money as an oblation to their new god; and the men of Shechem borrowed it of him to supply their upstart king. It doth not appear of what value these pieces of silver were; but they sufficed for Abimelech's present purpose; and he thus became a pensioner of Baal, and seemed to engage to employ his authority to promote his worship; as if he was determined to shew himself as unlike as possible to his father, who had destroyed the altar of Baal, &c. With this supply he hired a set of men, fit for any villainy, and with their assistance barbarously murdered all the numerous family of Gideon, except one son, who escaped him: and by such infamous measures, and persons, was this base born, but baser spirited man made king of Israel; and it seems the whole nation tamely allowed him to possess the title of their king.

V. 7. *Mount Gerizzim*, &c.] This mountain lay near to Shechem, and from thence Jotham spake to the Shechemites, (who are supposed to have been assembled on some public occasion,) that at least many of them would hear him, and report what he said to the rest; and he solemnly called upon them "to hearken to him, that God might "hearken unto them:" for if they did not repent of their ungrateful treatment of his father's family, and desist from their malicious intentions against him, the only remaining son thereof, they could not expect, that God would hear their cry, when anguish, and distress came upon them.

V. 8—15.] A parable is a descriptive picture, which shews the similitude of an event, or action, in lively colours; and conveys to the mind, ere it is aware, the perception of some important truth, to which it was previously inattentive, or against which it was prejudiced: thereby those things are placed in their proper light, which before were misapprehended; and those are made evident, which before seemed doubtful: the subject is stripped of such things, as do not properly belong to it; and the trouble of a long chain of arguments being spared, the cause is brought to a compendious decision; and reason, and conscience are induced to pass sentence, before self love is consulted, and a man is for a moment as it were *imposed upon*, in *order to his being profitably undeceived*; he is made judge in his own cause before he is aware, and decides against himself, without ever intending it. The truth of a parable lies in the instruction contained in it; and the feigned circumstances being known to be such, are no ways inconsistent with veracity, but greatly subserve the cause of truth; conveying it in an unsuspected, and agreeable manner to the mind: and they have been much used by wise men in all ages, as the most advantageous method of teaching mankind the salutary lessons of justice, and prudence; and were sanctioned by the perpetual use, which Jesus Christ made of them. In this parable of Jotham, the folly, and ingratitude of the Shechemites, in making the basest of Gideon's sons their king, and in murdering the others; the presumption, and arrogance of Abimelech, in pretending to such an honour, and the consequences of so unreasonable a procedure, are represented with great ingenuity, and simplicity. The olive-tree, the fig-tree, and the vine had excellency, and usefulness, if the trees had indeed wanted a king: thus Gideon, and his other sons were worthy of, and entitled to Israel's consideration, if there had been any occasion for them to set a king over them; but they had humbly, and wisely preferred the comforts, and duties of private life, to the cares, burdens, and perils of the kingdom. But Abimelech, the son of a slave, and a concubine, a mean, and worthless person, useless, and troublesome as a bramble, had

come

come *and* put your truſt in my ſhadow; and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

16 Now therefore if ye have done truly and ſincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his houſe, and have done unto him according to the deſerving of his hands:

17 (For my father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian;

18 And ye are riſen up againſt my father's houſe this day, and have ſlain his ſons, threeſcore and ten perſons, upon one ſtone, and have made Abimelech, the ſon of his maidſervant, king over the men of Shechem, becauſe he *is* your brother:)

19 If ye then have dealt truly and ſincerely with Jerubbaal and with his houſe this day, *then* rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him alſo rejoice in you;

20 But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the houſe of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the houſe of Millo, and devour Abimelech.

21 And Jotham ran away, and fled, and went to Beer, and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

22 When Abimelech had reigned three years over Iſrael,

23 Then God ſent an evil ſpirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherouſly with Abimelech:

24 That the cruelty *done* to the threeſcore and ten ſons of Jerubbaal might come, and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother which ſlew them; and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in the killing of his brethren.

25 And the men of Shechem ſet liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains, and they robbed all that came along that way by them: and it was told Abimelech.

26 And Gaal the ſon of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem: and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him.

27 And they went out into the fields, and gathered their vineyards, and trode *the grapes*, and made merry, and went into the houſe of their god, and did eat and drink, and curſed Abimelech.

28 And Gaal, the ſon of Ebed ſaid, Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we ſhould ſerve him? *Is* not *he* the ſon of Jerubbaal? and Zebul his officer? Serve the men of Hamor the father of Shechem; for why ſhould we ſerve him?

29 And would to God this people were under my hand! then would I remove Abime-

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by inſinuation induced them to offer him the kingdom, and had without heſitation accepted of it, and fooliſhly promiſed them vaſt advantages from his protection, and terrible conſequences from their offending of him: though indeed he was fit for nothing elſe, but a fire brand, to ſet them all at variance to their common deſtruction; as the bramble being ſet on fire, may communicate the flame to the loftieſt cedars, and conſume them along with itſelf in the common conflagration.—The oil from the olive tree was the chief ingredient of the ointment, wherewith the prieſts were anointed, it was uſed for the lamps in the ſanctuary, and formed a part of the meat-offering; whereby God was honoured: beſides it's uſefulneſs to man. The wine was uſed in drink-offerings, which were acceptable to God, when properly preſented. Theſe uſeful trees better repreſented what a king ought to be, than the ſtately cedars; for piety to God, and uſefulneſs to man, are more eſſential to the character of a good prince, than external pomp, and majeſty.

V. 20. *The houſe of Millo*, &c.] This ſeems to have been the name of their ſenate houſe, or town hall: and by the houſe of Millo are meant, all the chief perſons of Shechem, who had combined to make Abimelech king, (v. 6;) who are alſo intended by the cedars, which the fire from the bramble would devour.

V. 23. *God ſent an evil ſpirit*, &c.] God gave permiſſion to an evil ſpirit to ſow contention betwixt them, by ſtirring up the pride, envy, malice, and other vile paſſions of their hearts, that they might execute his deſerved vengeance upon each other.

V. 25. *Set liers in wait*, &c.] Being enraged againſt Abimelech, who was abſent from the city, and expected back again, they employed ſome aſſaſſins to lay wait for him, and kill him: who miſſing of him robbed the travellers, and thus helped to increaſe the miſery of the people.

V. 26—29. *Gaal, the ſon of Ebed*, &c.] The word Ebed ſignifies a ſlave, and ſuch his father ſeems to have been, and one of the remnant of the Canaanites, who falſely boaſted his deſcent from Hamor, the father of Shechem, from whom the city was called: yet the Iſraelitiſh inhabitants baſely made him the head of their conſpiracy againſt Abimelech. Under this imagined protector they gathered

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lech. And he said to Abimelech, Increase thine army, and come out.

30 And when Zebul the ruler of the city heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled.

31 And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily, saying, Behold, Gaal the son of Ebed, and his brethren, be come to Shechem; and, behold, they fortify the city against thee.

32 Now therefore up by night, thou and the people that *is* with thee, and lie in wait in the field:

33 And it shall be, *that* in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city: and, behold, *when* he and the people that *is* with him come out against thee, then mayest thou do to them as thou shalt find occasion.

34 And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that *were* with him, by night, and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies.

35 And Gaal the son of Ebed went out, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and Abimelech rose up, and the people that *were* with him, from lying in wait.

36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, Behold, there come people down from the top of the mountains. And Zebul said unto him, Thou seest the shadow of the mountains as *if they were* men.

37 And Gaal spake again, and said, See, there come people down by the middle of the land, and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim.

38 Then said Zebul unto him, Where *is* now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who *is* Abimelech, that we should serve him? *Is* not this the people that thou hast despised? go out, I pray now, and fight with them.

39 And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech.

40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him; and many were overthrown *and* wounded, *even* unto the entering of the gate.

41 And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah: and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem.

42 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people went out into the field; and they told Abimelech.

43 And he took the people, and divided them into three companies, and laid wait in the field, and looked, and behold, the people *were* come forth out of the city; and he rose up against them, and smote them.

44 And Abimelech, and the company that *was* with him, rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city: and the two *other* companies ran upon all *the people* that *were* in the fields, and slew them.

45 And Abimelech fought against the city all that day; and he took the city, and slew the people that *was* therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt.

46 And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard *that*, they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith.

47 And it was told Abimelech, that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together.

48 And Abimelech gat him up to mount Zalmon, he and all the people that *were* with

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in their harvest, and vintage, and kept a feast to the honour of Baal-berith, and in their revellings cursed Abimelech in his name. Had they forsaken their idolatry, when they deserted the usurper, it had been well. On this occasion Gaal, heated perhaps with wine, expressed his disdain that Abimelech should reign over him, and so honourable, and ancient a city, as Shechem: in which he reviled him as the son of Jerub-baal, who destroyed the worship of Baal; and it could not therefore be right that Baal's worshippers should submit to him, but rather that they should avenge Baal's cause upon him: he also spoke slightingly of Zebul, who was left governor of the city, and who was hereby much offended: he invited them to restore the authority, in his person, to the descendants of Hamor, promised what great things he would do against Abimelech; and challenged him, as if he had been present, to decide the contest by a battle: the expression translated, "would to God," is only an earnest wish that it might be so.

V. 36. *Thou seest*, &c.] Zebul, who had not yet declared against Gaal, spake this either in derision, or to carry on the deception, till Abimelech surprised them at unawares.

V. 41—45. *Thrust out Gaal*, &c.] As his conduct, and success had not answered the people's expectations, they were willing to be rid of him and his company: and on the morrow, they went forth to fight with Abimelech, who by means of Ambushments smote them, took the city, slew the inhabitants, and utterly desolated the whole.

V. 46—49.] The inhabitants of a part of the city, called the tower of Shechem, took refuge in the temple of Baal-berith, hoping that Abimelech would respect the sacred-

him; and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it, and laid *it* on his ſhoulder, and ſaid unto the people that *were* with him, What ye have ſeen me do, make haſte, *and* do as I *have done*.

49 And all the people likewiſe cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech, and put *them* to the hold, and ſet the hold on fire upon them: ſo that all the men of the tower of Shechem died alſo, about a thouſand men and women.

50 Then went Abimelech to Thebez, and encamped againſt Thebez, and took it.

51 But there was a ſtrong tower within the city, and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city, and ſhut *it* to them, and gat them up to the top of the tower.

52 And Abimelech came unto the tower, and fought againſt it, and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire.

53 And a certain woman caſt a piece of a millſtone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his ſkull.

54 Then he called haſtily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and ſaid unto him, Draw thy ſword, and ſlay me, that men ſay not of me, A woman ſlew him. And his young man thruſt him through, and he died.

55 And when the men of Iſrael ſaw that Abimelech was dead, they departed every man unto his place.

56 Thus God rendered the wickedneſs of Abimelech which he did unto his father, in ſlaying his ſeventy brethren.

57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem did God render upon their heads: and upon them came the curſe of Jotham the ſon of Jerubbaal.

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neſs of the place; but in deep revenge, he contrived to burn the temple, and the whole company of them.

V. 50. *To Thebez*, &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been a city, which confederated againſt Abimelech, and to which perhaps ſome Shechemites had fled: but this blood-thirſty tyrant, having taken the city, thought to have burned the inhabitants with the tower, as he had done at Shechem; in which he anſwered the character of the bramble, which may ſet fire to that, which is nobler, and better than itſelf: but his meaſure of iniquity was accompliſhed, he had been the executioner of vengeance upon others, and he muſt ſuffer deſerved vengeance himſelf: in his rage therefore coming too near the tower, he was mortally wounded by a piece of millſtone from the hand of a woman; and being acquainted with this circumſtance, in a vain attempt to avoid the diſgrace of ſuch a death, he ordered his armour bearer to ſlay him, who obeyed his command; and the world, and Iſrael were rid of a vile murderer, uſurper, and tyrant, who came in with ſubtlety, ruled in cruelty, and died in infamy. In this whole hiſtory the wickedneſs, and madneſs of man; the degeneracy, and dreadful apoſtacy of Iſrael; the terrible effects of ambition, revenge, and headſtrong luſts; and the wiſdom, and juſtice of God, in over-ruling the whole for the purpoſes of his own glory, are very much illuſtrated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If parents could foreſee what their children would do, and what they would ſuffer, their joy in them would be often turned into grievous lamentations: we may then be thankful, that we cannot ſee into futurity; we are reminded to commit thoſe, whom we moſt love, into the hands of the Lord, and to attend to our preſent duty, caſting our care upon him reſpecting ourſelves, and them; and to be willing to leave this world, when he pleaſes; for if we lived, we might behold ſuch afflictions, as would break our hearts. Above all we ſhould fear, and watch againſt ſin; for our miſconduct may produce the moſt fatal effects upon our families, and upon ſociety, after we are laid in our graves. No judgment is more terrible to individuals, than being given up to their own luſts; and nothing more dreadful to communities, than to be governed by wicked princes. Able, upright men, who know the duty, and difficulty of exalted ſtations, will be diffident of themſelves, and reluctant to quit the ſecurity, ſweetneſs, and uſefulneſs of private life, for the toils, and dangers of pre-eminence. But men of ſordid, and ſelfiſh minds, deſtitute of the fear of God, and benevolence to man, are capable of a vaſt, and daring ambition; can form crafty projects to accompliſh their deſigns; by inſinuation will draw over ſuch perſons to their intereſts, as are of their own temper, and character; and as they heſitate not at the commiſſion of the moſt horrid crimes, they will often for a ſeaſon, ſeem to have been proſpered in their wickedneſs. Slanders, lies, flatteries, promiſes, bribery, perjuries, nay even murders of the moſt atrocious kind, are the weapons, which they uſe, as occaſion requires, and as ambition, or ſuſpicion ſuggeſt. If by any vile means money can be procured, (and ſatan will help out ſuch faithful ſervants in their emergencies;) they will with it hire thoſe, who for a paltry ſum, are ready for any villany; and will wade through rivers of blood, if neceſſary, to authority, and pre-eminence; their neareſt relatives are not ſafe, if they ſtand in their way; the foundations of all government civil, and eccleſiaſtical muſt be ſubverted to make way for them, and diſtractions, and public troubles, are the element, in which they delight. Such Abimelechs every age produces; and it is ſurpriſing how they impoſe upon thouſands to concur in their baſe deſigns. — But when men are avowed infidels, profligates, and debauchees, what can be expected from them, when not reſtrained by human laws? And their wickedneſs is equalled by the folly of thoſe, who, intruſt power into their hands. But by ſuch ſcourges of

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1st. Tola's government, and death, v. 1, 2. 2d. Jair's government, family, and death, v. 3—5. 3d. Israel's apostacy, and misery, v. 6—9. 4th. Their cry to the Lord, his distressing answer, their persevering submission, and reformation; his compassion, and the dawning of their deliverance, v. 10—18.

AND after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel, Tola, the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in mount Ephraim.

2 And he judged Israel twenty and three years, and died, and was buried in Shamir.

3 And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite, and judged Israel twenty and two years.

4 And he had thirty sons that rode on thirty ass-colts, and they had thirty cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead.

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the human race, and such infatuated counsels, the righteous God chastises his offending people, and executes vengeance on his enemies, as he seeth good: and he will preserve, in the most imminent dangers, those, whom he intends to use for the good of others. He seldom proceeds to extremities against wicked men, without giving them warning: and they, who will not hearken to his call to repent; to the voice of the oppressed, who demand justice, or that of the afflicted, who supplicate relief, will one day cry unto the Lord in extreme anguish, and he will not regard them. All the works of the creation, in their several ways honour their Creator, and subserve the comfort, and benefit of man; who is thereby made the more inexcuseable in neglecting and rebelling against his bounteous Benefactor. In departing from God men are necessitated to trust in creatures, which can do no other but disappoint and ruin them: and one man of moderate talents may soon do more mischief, than many very wise, and excellent persons can do good by the most persevering exertions. But though the wicked may flourish for a time, yet they shall be rooted out at the last: in answer to the cries of the oppressed, God will give them up to their own mad passions; their suspicion, envy, malice, and revenge, shall be kindled against each other; and the weapons with which they destroyed those, who obstructed their iniquitous designs, will at length destroy themselves. The history of mankind impartially related would greatly resemble that of this chapter. The records of the most splendid events present to our view a contest for power amongst ambitious men, carried on by treachery, flattery, mutual insult, contempt, revenge, and cruelty; in which multitudes miserably perished, who were no ways concerned in the cause, or the event of the quarrel. Such scenes, though subjects of panegyric, amongst ungodly poets, orators, and historians, are chiefly useful in illustrating the Scripture doctrine of the deceitfulness, and desperate wickedness of the human heart, the force of men's ungovernable lusts, and the effects of satan's influence: that we may see as in a glass what we should be, if left to ourselves, and learn thankfulness for being preserved from such enormities; for an obscure situation, by which we are less exposed to the danger of falling victims to the ambition, and jealousy of others; and for the gospel of Jesus Christ, whose kingdom is in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.—But it is most lamentable, when such outrages are committed by the professors of the gospel, and disgrace the religion of Jesus in the eyes of multitudes, who cannot, or will not distinguish betwixt Christianity, and those persons, who have no more than the name of Christians: wo be to the world because of such offences; and wo be to them, by whom such offences come!—We should further note that boasting issues generally in shame: that dangers, which are despised at a distance, terrify the more when they approach: that the courage, which wine inspires, is of short continuance: that a mean spirit, and a proud heart harbour the most implacable resentments; whilst the truly generous, and humble are slow to anger, and ready to forgive: that every sinful refuge from danger accelerates or ensures destruction: that more ingenuity, and diligence have hitherto been employed in destroying, than in saving men's lives: that men's sins are often punished in kind, and their cruelty is retorted upon themselves, and by the meanest, and least dreaded instruments: and that the most successful wickedness speedily issues in lasting misery, and disgrace. Vain and foolish is the concern, and worthless are the expedients of dying sinners to preserve their reputation from dishonour, when everlasting contempt, as well as misery, are inevitably reserved for them in a future state. And God will record their crimes, and punishment in this world, notwithstanding all their endeavours to the contrary, as far as is necessary for the instruction of others, and for his own glory: and how can they expect fidelity, or mercy from men, who have been traitors to God, and cruel deceivers of their brethren? But how strong must be man's propensity to wickedness, when such general, and horrible idolatry, and unrighteousness prevailed even in Israel, after all the Lord had done for them, and notwithstanding all the advantages, which they enjoyed. Lord thou hast given us thy word of truth, and righteousness, O pour out upon us thy Spirit of purity, peace, and love, and write thy holy law in our hearts we beseech thee; else all our outward mercies will but enhance our guilt, and increase our condemnation!

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1. *After Abimelech*, &c.] After the death of this usurper, the Lord raised up Tola, to judge Israel. We read not that he waged any war: but he restored peace, and the regular administration of justice, after the late distractions; and he reformed the state of religion amongst them; and was thus as great a blessing, as those judges, who performed more memorable exploits. His name signifies a worm, and he was no worse fitted for being the Lord's instrument for good to his people, if his opinion of himself accorded to so humble a name. Though of the tribe of Issachar, he came to live in mount Ephraim, that he might be in the centre of Israel, and near the tabernacle.

V. 3. *Jair*, &c.] He was a descendant of Jair, of

5 And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.

6 And the children of Iſrael did evil again in the ſight of the LORD, and ſerved Baalim, and Aſhtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philiſtines, and forſook the LORD, and ſerved not him.

7 And the anger of the LORD was hot againſt Iſrael, and he ſold them into the hands of the Philiſtines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon.

8 And that year they vexed and oppreſſed the children of Iſrael: eighteen years, all the children of Iſrael that *were* on the other ſide Jordan, in the land of the Amorites, which *is* in Gilead.

9 Moreover the children of Ammon paſſed over Jordan to fight alſo againſt Judah, and againſt Benjamin, and againſt the houſe of of Ephraim; ſo that Iſrael was ſore diſtreſſed.

10 And the children of Iſrael cried unto the LORD, ſaying, We have ſinned againſt thee, both becauſe we have forſaken our God, and alſo ſerved Baalim.

11 And the LORD ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, *Did* not *I deliver you* from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philiſtines?

12 The Zidonians alſo, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites did oppreſs you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand.

13 Yet ye have forſaken me, and ſerved other gods: wherefore I will deliver you no more.

14 Go and cry unto the gods which ye have choſen: let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation.

15 And the children of Iſrael ſaid unto the LORD, We have ſinned, do thou unto us whatſoever ſeemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day.

16 And they put away the ſtrange gods from among them, and ſerved the LORD: and his ſoul was grieved for the miſery of Iſrael.

17 Then the children of Ammon were gathered together, and encamped in Gilead: and the children of Iſrael aſſembled themſelves together, and encamped in Mizpeh.

18 And the people *and* princes of Gilead ſaid one to another, What man *is he* that will begin to fight againſt the children of Ammon? he ſhall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

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whom we have read before, and his numerous ſons inherited ſome of the cities, which then fell to his lot (*Num.* c. xxxii. v. 40, 41;) and aſſiſted him as magiſtrates, riding from place to place, to adminiſter juſtice. We may reckon ſome of theſe years as the beſt times of Iſrael under their judges. For did princes rule over their own people in equity, and the fear of God, without moleſting other nations; and did the people live under them in godlineſs, and honeſty, hiſtorians would have but little to record. Yet we muſt take the eighteen years of Iſrael's apoſtacy from the latter part of Jair's government; during which the people ſeem gradually to have corrupted themſelves, and fallen under oppreſſion; and when Jair could not reſtrain them from idolatry, he was no no longer able to defend them from their enemies.

V. 6—9.] The Iſraelites having caſt off the worſhip of Jehovah, and multiplied their idols, were delivered into the hands of the Philiſtines on the weſt, and the Ammonites on the eaſt; who betwixt them cruſhed the people for eighteen years, but moſt terribly towards the cloſe of them.

V. 13. *Wherefore*, &c.] This is ſpoken after the manner of man, and ſhews their deſervings, the demands of God's juſtice, and the conſequence of impenitence: but ſuch threatenings always imply a reſerve of mercy for the penitent.

V. 15. *Do thou*, &c.] The foregoing meſſage was ſent by a prophet, or was delivered by the High Prieſt, when the congregation were aſſembled before the Lord: but the people with one conſent ſubmitted themſelves to the juſtice of God, yet hoping in his mercy; they left themſelves in his hands, craved deliverance from their enemies, and were the more earneſt in reformation. (2 *Sam.* c. xxiv. v. 14.)

V. 16. *His ſoul was*, &c.] Compaſſion as effectually moved the Lord to relieve his oppreſſed people; as a man is urged to aſſiſt a wretched fellow-creature, when he cannot otherwiſe help ſharing his diſtreſs: or as a father is diſpoſed to aſſiſt his ſuffering child.

V. 18. *What man*, &c.] The Lord did not as uſual, on this occaſion, expreſsly appoint them a deliverer; but he ſecretly directed, and openly confirmed their choice of one for themſelves.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The removal of deſperate ſinners by a righteous God often makes way for reformation, and public tranquillity, and proves a great mercy to thoſe, who ſurvive. Man's carnal heart is prone to prefer the bondage of ſin, and ſatan, to the ſervice of God: but their preſent indulgence enſures future miſery; for every expectation of advantage from ſin, the world, and the friendſhip of wicked men,

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. Some account of Jephthah, his election to be commander against the Ammonites, and his acceptance of that office, v. 1—11. *2d. His embassies to the king of Ammon about peace, v.* 12—28. *3d. His rash vow, v.* 29—31. *4th. His success against the Ammonites, v.* 32, 33. *5th. Met by his only daughter, his distress, her submission, and his performance of his vow, v.* 34—40.

NOW Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour, and he *was* the son of an harlot: and Gilead begat Jephthah.

2 And Gilead's wife bare him sons; and his wife's sons grew up, and they thrust out Jephthah, and said unto him, Thou shalt not inherit in our father's house; for thou *art* the son of a strange woman.

3 Then Jephthah fled from his brethren, and dwelt in the land of Tob: and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah, and went out with him.

4 And it came to pass in process of time, that the children of Ammon made war against Israel.

5 And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel, the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob:

6 And they said unto Jephthah, Come and be our captain, that we may fight with the children of Ammon.

7 And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead, Did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house? and why are ye come unto me now when ye are in distress?

will ensure a distressing disappointment. God is able to multiply men's punishments, according to the number of their iniquities, and idols. But there is hope, when, under temporal afflictions, sinners cry unto the Lord for help, and lament their ungodliness, as well as their more scandalous transgressions. Yet the Lord might justly leave those, who have forsaken him, to their wretched choice; he might upbraid them with former mercies, and their base returns; he might send them to their beloved idols, and lusts; he might mock at their calamity, and absolutely refuse to help them. This will be the desperate condition of the wicked in another world; but here mercy can never be sought in vain: yet, for the deeper humiliation of those, who are but superficially convinced; and to quicken those, who are not duly in earnest; the Lord will *seem* to shut up his loving kindness in displeasure; he will upbraid them with their former sins, and pursue them with his awful threatenings, and almost bring to conclude that their case is desperate. Nevertheless he will keep them from desperation: and when their prayers are rendered more fervent, their confessions more ingenuous, their self-examination more diligent, their dependance more entire on divine mercy, and their forsaking of sin more unreserved, we may be sure, that comfort, and deliverance are at hand. (*Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 18—20.) Let then the trembling sinner, and the almost despairing backslider cease from inquiring about God's secret purposes, or expecting to extract hope from former experiences: let them not indulge despondency, or yield to heartless indolence: let them cast themselves upon the mercy of God our Saviour, patiently submit to his severest chastisement, humble themselves more, and more under his hand; seek deliverance upon any terms from the powers of darkness; separate themselves as much as possible from sin, and all occasions of it; use all the means of grace diligently, and wait the Lord's time; and they shall certainly rejoice in his mercy. (*Isai.* c. lv. v. 7, 8. *Matt.* c. xv. ver. 21—28.) And let all those, who think they stand, take heed lest they fall; and the Lord help us to cleave to him with full purpose of heart.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1. *The son of an harlot*, &c.] It seems that Jephthah was the son of a woman of bad character; "a strange woman," either a foreigner, or an Israelite, who from the infamy of her conduct, was thus called; (*Prov.* c. v. ver. 3. c. vi. v. 24.) The law of Moses forbad that the offspring of such connexions should enter into the congregation of the Lord; and the filling of any office in church, or state seem especially to be intended in that law; (*Deut.* c. xxiii. v. 2.) But the princes of Gilead, considering him as a man of approved courage, and conduct, either did not recollect that law, or thought that it might on this emergency be dispensed with; especially as Jephthah had already, as is probable, begun to fight against the Ammonites, and was on that account entitled to the command; (c. x. v. 18.) And the Lord was pleased to confirm their choice of him; that they, who had made themselves vile by their sins, might be delivered from their enemies by one, who lay under so disgraceful a stigma: and that Jephthah himself might be kept from being exalted above measure; when he considered himself as marked in the law of God with the same brand as the Ammonites, whom he had conquered.

V. 2. *Gilead*, &c.] This Gilead seems to have been a descendant of him, from whom the country derived it's name. Jephthah, as the son of an harlot, had no right to any share in the inheritance; but he had not deserved to be turned destitute, as if he had been a vagabond, or a malefactor. His brethren were probably some of the elders of Gilead; for he attributed his ill usage to their hatred, (v. 7;) being of an enterprizing spirit, perhaps they suspected him of ambitious designs.

V. 3. *Vain men*, &c.] A number of men of broken fortunes, and unsettled dispositions joined themselves to him, (1 *Sam.* c. xxii. v. 2:) it appears not that they attempted any thing improper: but made reprisals on those nations, who oppressed Israel. In which way of life they learned hardiness, boldness, and military skill; and Jeph-

8 And the elders of Gilead ſaid unto Jephthah, Therefore we turn again to thee now, that thou mayeſt go with us, and fight againſt the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead.

9 And Jephthah ſaid unto the elders of Gilead, If ye bring me home again to fight againſt the children of Ammon, and the LORD deliver them before me, ſhall I be your head?

10 And the elders of Gilead ſaid unto Jephthah, the LORD be witneſs between us, if we do not ſo according to thy words.

11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and captain over them: and Jephthah uttered all his words before the LORD in Mizpeh.

12 And Jephthah ſent meſſengers unto the king of the children of Ammon, ſaying, What haſt thou to do with me, that thou art come againſt me to fight in my land?

13 And the king of the children of Ammon anſwered unto the meſſengers of Jephthah, becauſe Iſrael took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan: now therefore reſtore thoſe *lands* again peaceably.

14 And Jephthah ſent meſſengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon,

15 And ſaid unto him, Thus ſaith Jephthah, Iſrael took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon:

16 But when Iſrael came up from Egypt, and walked through the wilderneſs unto the Red ſea, and came to Kadeſh;

17 Then Iſrael ſent meſſengers unto the king of Edom, ſaying, Let me, I pray thee, paſs through thy land: but the king of Edom would not hearken *thereto*. And in like manner they ſent unto the king of Moab; but he would not *conſent:* and Iſrael abode in Kadeſh.

18 Then they went along through the wilderneſs, and compaſſed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab, and came by the eaſt ſide of the land of Moab, and pitched on the other ſide of Arnon, but came not within the border of Moab: for Arnon *was* the border of Moab.

19 And Iſrael ſent meſſengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heſhbon; and Iſrael ſaid unto him, Let us paſs, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place.

20 But Sihon truſted not Iſrael to paſs through his coaſt: but Sihon gathered all his people together, and pitched in Jahaz, and fought againſt Iſrael.

21 And the LORD God of Iſrael delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Iſrael, and they ſmote them: ſo Iſrael poſſeſſed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country.

22 And they poſſeſſed all the coaſts of the Amorites, from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and from the wilderneſs even unto Jordan.

23 So now, the LORD God of Iſrael hath diſpoſſeſſed the Amorites from before his people Iſrael, and ſhouldſt thou poſſeſs it?

24 Wilt not thou poſſeſs that which Chemoſh thy god giveth thee to poſſeſs? So

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thah thus acquired that reputation, which made way for his advancement: and being a godly man, we may ſuppoſe that he alſo inſtructed his followers in true religion.

V. 8. *Therefore we turn*, &c.] The elders acknowledged, that they had uſed him ill, and deſired to appoint him their captain, that they might make him ſome amends for their former injuſtice.

V. 11. *And Jephthah uttered*, &c.] Jephthah, before he undertook this important ſervice, ſought the Lord's direction, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing very particularly in fervent prayer, as one who would go forth in faith, and expected all his ſucceſs from God. The Mizpeh here mentioned was eaſt of Jordan, and was called Mizpeh of Gilead, (v. 29,) and Mizpeh of Moab, in contradiſtinction from another place of the ſame name, which lay weſt of Jordan.

V. 12. *And Jephthah ſent*, &c.] Perhaps by divine direction, he propoſed peace to the Ammonites before he declared war againſt them, according to the law of Moſes; (*Deut.* c. xx. v. 10, 11.)

V. 24. *Wilt thou not*, &c?] Jephthah did not allow Chemoſh to be really a God: but he ſpake to the Ammonites according to their notions; who were wont to aſcribe their ſucceſs to the aſſiſtance of this ſuppoſed deity. The whole of this meſſage ſhews that Jephthah had well ſtudied the hiſtorical part of the books of Moſes, (*Num.* c. xxi. v. 26—30.) His argument was very clear, and his demand very reaſonable; for he only required, that the Ammonites ſhould ceaſe to harraſs a people, who neither had injured, nor intended to injure them. Upon their refuſal, the war became juſt, and neceſſary: and therefore he ſolemnly appealed to the Lord to judge betwixt Iſrael, and whom-

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whomsoever the LORD our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.

25 And now, *art* thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? did he ever strive against Israel, or did he ever fight against them,

26 While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns, and in Aroer and her towns, and in all the cities that *be* along by the coasts of Arnon, three hundred years? why therefore did ye not recover *them* within that time?

27 Wherefore I have not sinned against thee, but thou doest me wrong to war against me: the LORD the Judge be judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon.

28 Howbeit, the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.

29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah; and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead, and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over *unto* the children of Ammon.

30 And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the LORD, and said, If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands,

31 Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the LORD's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

32 So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the LORD delivered them into his hands.

33 And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, *even* twenty cities, and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter. Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

34 And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances: and she *was his* only child: beside her he had neither son nor daughter.

35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes, and said, Alas, my daughter! thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me: for I have opened my mouth unto the LORD, and I cannot go back.

36 And she said unto him, My father, *if* thou hast opened thy mouth unto the LORD, do to me according to that which hath pro-

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the Ammonites, and to decide in favour of those, who had the more righteous cause. Every declaration of war implies such an appeal; but it is seldom made upon such good grounds, and in the same spirit of humble faith.

V. 30, 31.] Perhaps Jephthah's army was small, and his courage was ready to fail through unbelief, and the prospect of imminent danger; and therefore he joined a solemn vow to his earnest prayers. But the vow itself was evidently rash and improper. The Lord had prescribed the animals, that were to be offered in the different kinds of sacrifices. There were also different kinds of vows, and particular regulations of them. It was therefore very wrong to vow, that whatsoever first came forth of the doors of his house, "should be the Lord's, and be offered for a "burnt-offering:" A dog, cat, or other unclean animal might first have met him; but it was likely that one of his family would; which indeed he seems to have expected. Not being so well acquainted with the preceptive part of the books of Moses, as with the historical, he seems to have confounded in his mind the several laws concerning sacrifices, and vows; and especially to have had some confused idea of the law, and custom of devoting persons, or things to utter destruction; (*Note Lev.* c. xxvii. v. 28, 29:) which being especially intended for the enemies of God, and things abused to idolatry, &c; he erroneously applied to innocent persons, and Israelites, over whose lives he could have no power, either in his public, or private character: and he supposed that the execution of this vow was by offering them for a burnt-offering. And it appears, that his judgment was not only confused through ignorance of the divine law; but that it was also perverted by a too great familiarity with the customs of the surrounding idolaters, who, on such emergencies, frequently vowed, and offered human sacrifices; supposing them acceptable to the Deity, in proportion to the pain which they occasioned to themselves.

V. 34—40.] Many writers have endeavoured to shew that Jephthah did not sacrifice his daughter, but that he shut her up in perpetual solitude, and virginity: and they urge in favour of that opinion, that "she bewailed her vir-"ginity," not her death; and that "she knew no man:" and they suppose that the daughters of Israel went to condole with her four times in the year, and not to lament her death. But it is not likely that it should become a custom, not only for her acquaintance, or the daughters of Gilead, but for those of all Israel, thus to flock to her four times in the year: and we never read of either law, or custom in the Old Testament for any person to be devoted to the Lord by perpetual celibacy: on the contrary, marriage was deemed so honourable in all, and bearing children, in the women; that to die unmarried, or childless was deemed disgraceful, as well as a misfortune; (*Luke* c. i. v. 25:) which seems to have occasioned the expressions above-mentioned. As her death was supposed to be for the glory of God, and the good of Israel, so pious a person, as she evidently

ceeded out of thy mouth; foraſmuch as the LORD hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, *even* of the children of Ammon.

37 And ſhe ſaid unto her father, Let this thing be done for me; Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains, and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows.

38 And he ſaid, Go, And he ſent her away *for* two months: and ſhe went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains.

39 And it came to paſs at the end of two months, that ſhe returned unto her father, who did with her *according* to his vow which he had vowed: and ſhe knew no man. And it was a cuſtom in Iſrael,

40 *That* the daughters of Iſrael went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year.

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was, would not bewail on that account; but, according to the ſentiment of all the Iſraelitiſh women, ſhe would bewail that ſhe died unmarried, and childleſs, eſpecially as her father had no other child, nor any proſpect of poſterity: and had ſhe been ſhut up in perpetual ſolitude, ſhe need not have requeſted two months, to bewail her virginity, for ſhe had all her remaining life to do it in. It would be very wrong to decide poſitively in ſo controverted a caſe, which at laſt is more matter of curioſity, than of edification: it however appears to me moſt probable, that Jephthah, did offer his daughter as a burnt-offering, perhaps induced thereto by a miſapprehenſion of Abraham's being commanded to ſacrifice his ſon Iſaac. In this he acted conſcientiouſly, and he ſhewed his readineſs to part with any thing for the glory of God: but his conſcience was erroneous, and his error aroſe from his ignorance of the Scriptures. Had he been properly inſtructed, he would doubtleſs have repented of making ſuch a raſh vow, and have offered a ſin-offering, with his thank-offerings for his victory, at the altar of Shiloh: and not have added one fault to another; in treating his own child, who appears to have been a moſt dutiful, amiable, and pious young woman; who came out with ſongs of praiſe to the Lord for his goodneſs to Iſrael, and congratulations of Jephthah's ſucceſs againſt their enemies; as if ſhe had been the accurſed enemy of God, and of his people: much leſs would he have offered ſo horrid a ſacrifice to Jehovah, who had expreſly forbidden them, as "an abomination, which he "hated;" (*Deut.* c. xii. v. 31.) Some account and extenuation of the affair may be given, but he cannot be vindicated in it. When Saul had raſhly brought Jonathan under the curſe of utter deſtruction, the people reſcued him, and did right, for Saul, not Jonathan, was the tranſgreſſor; and the whole tranſaction ſhews how little the people were acquainted with, or governed by the law of God.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

As the ſins of parents ſo often occaſion diſgrace, and hardſhip to their children; this ſhould unite with higher motives to induce men to govern their paſſions according to the law of God. Activity, capacity, prudence, and piety will often render a man ſuperior to all the diſadvantages of his birth; and the hardſhips of his youth will prepare him for the ſervices, of his future life. We ſhould not injure, or deſpiſe the meaneſt perſon; for we know not how ſoon we may ſupplicate their aſſiſtance. It is eſpecially dangerous to mal-treat the ſervants of God; and many who do ſo in proſperity, in ſeaſons of terror, and diſtreſs, are glad to ſeek the benefit of their protection, counſel, and prayers: and in all ages, they, whom God hath moſt honoured, and employed, have previouſly been treated even by thoſe, to whom they afterwards were moſt uſeful, with contempt, and injuſtice. And none ought to be diſcouraged, or ſurpriſed by it; as they are dealt with in the manner that Joſeph, Moſes, Jephthah, and David were; nay in this eſpecially are followers of the Son of God, who endured the contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, before he was exalted to be a Prince, and Saviour. Thus alſo the Lord is continually treated: men neglect his ſervice, deſpiſe his authority, and rob him of his glory; yet in their diſtreſs they apply unto him for to ſave them. But as he forgives without upbraidings the penitent ſinner, ſo ought his people to behave to their enemies: nor will Jeſus himſelf ſave any who do not conſent, that he ſhould reign over them; and his diſciples, alſo ſhould ſeek to reform thoſe, whoſe temporal diſtreſſes they relieve. Thoſe undertakings are like to proſper, and thoſe public ſituations to be well filled, reſpecting which the Lord is conſulted and truſted in ſimple faith, prayer, and conſcientious obedience. They, who poſſeſs the moſt courageous faith, will be the moſt diſpoſed for peace, and the readieſt to make advances, and conceſſions in order thereto: and when rapacity, and ambition, cloking their deſigns under the maſk of equity; (for though few men love juſtice, moſt would be thought to do ſo;) render ſuch endeavours unavailing; having ſhewn that we would, if poſſibly, live peaceable with all men, we may ſafely leave the matter with the Lord. And as the Judge of all the earth, he will award to thoſe who delight in contention, public or private, a recompenſe meet for their turbulent diſpoſitions, and evil deeds. As far as we are acquainted with the word of God, we ſhall find a clear light ſhine upon our paths, diſcovering to us the ſafe and happy way: but, even if we act uprightly, yet are ignorant of the Scriptures, we ſhall fall into lamentable miſtakes, to the diſhonour of God, and the great diſcomfort of our ſouls. This ſhould incite us to a diligent ſtudy of the whole word of God, that we may be completed in the knowledge of the will of the Lord: and this ſhould remind miniſters to be exact, copious, and frequent, in diſcuſſing practical ſubjects; that they, who are diſpoſed to perform their duty, may not be left to ſin through ignorance or miſtake. How checkered are the ſcenes of this mortal life! Sorrow treads upon the heels of mirth; and our choiceſt comforts, often through our own unwatchfulneſs, become the occaſions of our ſevereſt trials: but we need the leſs wonder at this, when we obſerve, how defective the characters of the beſt of men are; and how the beſt actions are often connected with ſuch, as are utterly

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1st. Jephthah abused by the men of Ephraim, severely punishing them, and soon after dying, v. 1—7. *2d. Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon successively judging Israel. v.* 8—15.

AND the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together, and went northward, and said unto Jephthah, Wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon, and didst not call us to go with thee? we will burn thine house upon thee with fire.

2 And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at great strife with the children of Ammon; and, when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands.

3 And when I saw that ye delivered *me* not, I put my life in my hands, and passed over against the children of Ammon, and the LORD delivered them into my hand; wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight against me?

4 Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim: and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim, because they said, Ye Gileadites *are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, *and* among the Manassites.

5 And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites: and it was *so*, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, Let me go over, that the men of Gilead said unto him, *Art* thou an Ephraimite? If he said, Nay;

6 Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth; and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce *it* right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in *one of* the cities of Gilead.

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unwarrantable. A chearful mind, disposed to be grateful unto God, and to endure any thing for his honour, and out of love to his people; and a ready submission to parental authority, are such beautiful blossoms, in young persons, and promise such fruit in riper years; that we must regret to see them blasted by premature death; and lament that they, who have so well performed the inferior duties, are not spared to be useful in the more important relations of the married state. But though their death is a loss to society, they are themselves no losers; for the preparation for an useful life will render death also comfortable, in whatever way, they may be called hence. In lawful vows, when we have opened our "mouth unto the Lord, we "may not go back;" we should therefore be very considerate in forming them, that we may not involve ourselves, or others, in distress, perplexities, or temptations: but nothing can oblige us to that which is in itself unlawful. With this single exception we cannot do too much to express our gratitude for mercies received, or part with too much for the glory of God. Though we cannot approve of the conduct of Jephthah; we may well admire, and imitate his resolution, and self-denial, and still more those of his daughter. Let us not then forget the love of the Father in giving his Son, or of the Son in giving himself a *real*, and acceptable sacrifice for the sins of rebellious man. Bought with such a price, let us present our bodies, and souls for a living sacrifice unto God; and look forward with heartfelt satisfaction to that country, where ignorance, error, sin, or sorrow shall be known no more: where the believer's victory will be complete, his triumphs unalloyed, and unsullied, and his hallelujahs, uninterrupted, and eternal.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—6. *And the men of Ephraim*, &c.] (*Note*, c. viii. v. 1.) Jephthah was a Manassite, and the Ephraimites had the same quarrel with him, that they had formerly had with Gideon: but their resentment vented itself in a more outrageous, and abusive manner. We cannot find much to blame in Jephthah's answer: but it was not so conciliating as that of Gideon had been. They had it seems been sent to, and would not come, and their anger was therefore extremely unreasonable: but instead of being satisfied with Jephthah's arguments, they proceeded to assault him; and irritated the Gileadites by abusive language; as if they had been the refuse of the descendants of Joseph, who had been banished for their crimes beyond Jordan. But the Gileadites took a most severe revenge upon them, for getting possession of the fords of Jordan, they slew great numbers of them, when indeed *they* were fugitives; having artfully devised to distinguish them by their provincial pronunciation of the Hebrew word, which signifies a river. How far Jephthah concurred in this cruel revenge cannot be determined; but it was entirely unjustifiable, and exceedingly weakened the common cause of Israel.

V. 7. *Judged Israel*, &c.] It seems after this transaction, all Israel quietly submitted to Jephthah, as their judge: but he lived but a short time, and saw little comfort after his advancement.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst pride prevails in the heart, discord, and contention will proceed from it: and when insolence escapes chastisement, it often grows more abusive. But such persons will at length meet with those, who are as ready to revenge, as others have been to endure their affronts. Nothing is more foolish than scurrility: without any advantage it rouses the most implacable resentment, and prepares the way for bloodshed. Thus the tongue, "that "unruly evil, sets on fire the whole course of nature, and

8 And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel.

9 And he had thirty sons and thirty daughters, *whom* he sent abroad, and took in thirty daughters from abroad for his sons: and he judged Israel seven years.

10 Then died Ibzan, and was buried at Beth-lehem.

11 And after him Elon a Zebulonite judged Israel; and he judged Israel ten years.

12 And Elon the Zebulonite died, and was buried in Aijalon, in the country of Zebulun.

13 And after him Abdon the son of Hillel, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.

14 And he had forty sons, and thirty nephews, that rode on threescore and ten asscolts: and he judged Israel eight years.

15 And Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died, and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. Israel sinning, and harassed by the Philistines, 2d. An angel promising a son to Manoah's wife, and appointing him to be a perpetual Nazarite, v. 2—5. 3d. Her husband requesting, and obtaining another visit, and the angel discovering who he was, v. 6—21. 4th. Manoah alarmed, but encouraged by his wife, v. 22, 23. 5th. Samson born, and early moved by the Spirit of the Lord, v. 24, 25.

AND the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD delivered them into the hand of the Philistines forty years.

2 And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was* Manoah: and his wife *was* barren, and bare not.

3 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou *art* barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.

4 Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean *thing*:

5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come upon his head:

" is set on fire of hell." But they, who are most ready to boast, hector, and revile, generally prove cowardly in real danger; and might have their own reproaches, with great propriety, retorted upon them; but that Christians must not render railing for railing. In the origin, or the event of contention, both parties are commonly to blame: even good men cannot always bear the ingratitude, and ill-treatment of those, whom they have served, with proper calmness: nor have all of them equally the talent of turning away wrath by a soft answer; and in a just cause, we are apt to be hurried on by our passions to unwarrantable lengths: for " the beginning of strife is like the letting " forth of water, therefore let us leave off contention " before it be meddled with." Yet even in such lamentable scenes, the Lord is righteous, and prosecutes his settled plan of resisting, and abasing the proud. The splendour of men's exploits, and the excellency of their characters often increase the number, and rage of their enemies: nor need they be surprised, if they, who ought to thank, commend, reward, and congratulate them upon their success in dangerous attempts to promote the public welfare, should abuse, and hate them, and threaten their destruction. None is prepared to do good in such a world as this, who hath not learned to expect, and accept of evil, as his recompense from man; and to persevere in hope of a better recompense from a gracious God. No contentions are so bitter, as those, which arise betwixt brethren, or betwixt rivals for honour, and precedency. What need have we then to watch and pray against envy, pride, ambition, and those evil tempers, which set the world as it were in flames, from age to age, and which by horrid carnage gratify that first great murderer the devil? Alas! that so many *Shibboleths* should be invented to divide the church also; to be the watchword of angry disputants, and the pretext for professed disciples of Christ abusing, and persecuting each other! May the Lord incline all his people " to follow " after the things, which make for peace, and things, " whereby one may edify another!" Many renowned and envied persons die of broken hearts on account of personal, and domestic affections: so that their inward anguish must soften their bitterest enemies into compassion, if they knew the whole. The Lord is to be acknowledged, in giving domestic comforts; as well as submitted to, when he withholds, or withdraws them: but increasing families bring increasing cares, and duties, in instructing, providing for, and settling children in a suitable manner; which cannot be neglected without guilt, and painful consequences.—In fine the happiest life of individuals, and the happiest state of society, is that, which affords the fewest remarkable events. To live in credit, and quiet, to be peacefully useful in our circle, to possess a clear conscience, and to enjoy communion with God our Saviour whilst we live; and to die at peace with God and man, forms the substance of all that a wise man can desire.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1. *Forty years.*] These years are computed to be coincident with the time of the last judges; the Ammonites were subdued, but the Philistines still harassed the Israelites, (c. x. v. 7,) till Samson was arrived to maturity and began their deliverance.

V. 4, 5.] (*Notes*, &c. *Numb.* c. vi.) The Nazarite's vow was voluntary, and for a limited time, and by the touch of a

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for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb; and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.

6 Then the woman came, and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance *was* like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he *was*, neither told he me his name.

7 But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean *thing*: for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

8 Then Manoah entreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born.

9 And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband *was* not with her.

10 And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the *other* day.

11 And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, *Art* thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I *am*.

12 And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass: how shall we order the child? and *how* shall we do unto him?

13 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman, let her beware.

14 She may not eat of any *thing* that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean *thing*: all that I commanded her let her observe.

15 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee until we shall have made ready a kid for thee.

16 And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD: for Manoah knew not that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

17 And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What *is* thy name, that, when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour?

18 And the angel of the LORD said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it *is* secret?

19 So Manoah took a kid, with a meat-offering, and offered *it* upon a rock unto the

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dead body, &c, was broken, and to be begun over again. But Samson was devoted by the Lord's express appointment all the days of his life; and it seems probable that the nature of this separation was not so strict, as the voluntary vow. The infant in the womb, and at the breast would subsist upon the same nourishment, with the mother, and therefore she was required to observe the same rules, during that period: she would also be led to expect something extraordinary, from a child whose birth was attended by such observances. (1 *Sam.* c. i. v. 11. *Luke* c. i. v. 15.)

V. 6. *A man of God*, &c.] That is, an holy prophet, one peculiarly devoted to, and honoured of God. This supposed man of God is said to have been "like an angel;" by which it is evident that angels, as they actually appeared to the people of God, were not distinguishable in general from prophets, except by a more venerable appearance: though in the *emblematic* description of them in some parts of Scripture, they are represented with wings. Some attention to this circumstance should be paid by those designers, or painters, who would preserve *historical truth* in their performances.

V. 8.] Manoah doubted not the performance of the promise, which had been made to his wife in his absence; but only prayed that the same supposed prophet might be sent to instruct them in their duty relative thereto. This was the genuine exercise of faith.

V. 16. *Though thou detain*, &c.] Manoah, not knowing who this messenger of God was, seems to have doubted whether he should prepare him a banquet, or a sacrifice; (c. vi. v. 18—21:) to this hesitation this answer was directed: "for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of "the Lord;" this seems to imply, that had he known, who it was, the thought of offering a burnt-offering, would not have been improper. But as he took him only for a man, it arose from ignorance, and was very sinful: the same would have been equally true, had he been the greatest created angel. (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 17.)

V. 18. *Secret.*] Or wonderful; the same name that is given to the Messiah by the prophet. (*Isaiah*, c. ix. v. 6. *Gen.* c. xxxii. v. 29.) In consequence of this intimation Manoah, though no priest, offered his burnt-offering, &c, upon a rock, where some rude altar was hastily prepared; and he was accepted in so doing: probably fire from the rock consumed the sacrifice; (c. vi. v. 21.) He offered it to Jehovah, and he did wondrously; (for the words "the "angel" are not in the original,) according to the meaning of his name "wonderful;" for in the presence of Manoah, and his wife, he ascended towards heaven with the flame of

LORD:

LORD: and *the angel* did wondrouſly; and Manoah and his wife looked on.

20 For it came to paſs, when the flame went up toward heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD aſcended in the flame of the altar: and Manoah and his wife looked on *it*, and fell on their faces to the ground.

21 (But the angel of the LORD did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife.) Then Manoah knew that he *was* an angel of the LORD.

22 And Manoah ſaid unto his wife, We ſhall ſurely die, becauſe we have ſeen God.

23 But his wife ſaid unto him, If the LORD were pleaſed to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have ſhewed us all theſe *things*, nor would, as at this time, have told us *ſuch things* as theſe.

24 And the woman bare a ſon, and called his name Samſon; and the child grew, and the LORD bleſſed him.

25 And the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eſhtaol.

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fire from off the altar, and by that Manoah knew him to be the *angel Jehovah*, which occaſioned his terror, leſt death ſhould be the conſequence of having ſeen God. From theſe circumſtances the reader will eaſily collect, whom Manoah ſuppoſed the angel to have been.

V. 23. *If the Lord*, &c.] Manoah's wife being, at that time at leaſt, the ſtronger in faith, encouraged her huſband, by the conſideration that their accepted ſacrifice, united with the promiſes, which had been given, to aſſure them of the Lord's favour; for had he intended their deſtruction, he would not have done thoſe wondrous works, or have ſpoken thoſe gracious words unto them. The revelation of the goſpel, the appointment of divine ordinances, as means of grace, the favouring us with the written, or preached word, and the ſtirring up our minds to pay regard thereto, are all hopeful tokens of ſpecial love. But when we are taught above all things to deſire the ſalvation of Chriſt, and to fear coming ſhort of it: where we take delight in his ordinances, and commandments, and experimentally know that our prayers are heard, and anſwered, we may ſafely, and confidently infer, that the Lord would not have done ſuch things for us, and ſhewn ſuch things to us, if he had meant our deſtruction, nay if he had not appointed us unto ſalvation. (*Pſalm* lxvi. v. 16—20. 1 *Theſſ.* c. v. v. 9.)

V. 25. *In the camp of Dan*, &c.] Probably that tribe, which lay next the Philiſtines land, was encamped to preſerve their country from their depredations: amongſt them Samſon diſcovered at times ſuch extraordinary courage, ſtrength, and activity, as evidently proceeded from the Spirit of the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It is our duty to prevent ſin, and miſery, as far as we can, and our honeſt endeavours for that purpoſe will be accepted of God, whether we ſucceed or not: but his judgments are a great deep, and for infinitely wiſe reaſons he is pleaſed to *permit* their entrance, and to over-rule them to kind and merciful purpoſes. We ought to make haſte to keep God's commandments; but to wait patiently for his performance of his promiſes: his purpoſes will gradually unfold, his plan will in due ſeaſon be completed: and when we ſee the whole, the wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs of it, will be more bright than the noon-day ſun. We may in the mean time be thankful that the Lord hath a remnant in all ages; and though they have trials, which are unknown to, unpitied by, or incapable of relief from, their fellow-creatures: yet they have no ſorrows, which the Lord doth not pity; none which he will not remove in the beſt time, and manner: and he will by various means diſcover to them the kind notice he takes of their troubles, for their ſupport, until he ſees good to relieve them. Retirement is always friendly to communion with God, and his people are never leſs alone, than when alone. Every promiſe of God implies a correſpondent duty, and in expecting the performance of the one, we muſt not neglect the other: and thoſe, who are peculiarly honoured of God, muſt be proportionably ready to deny themſelves for his ſake. If parents deſire their children to be mortified to fleſhly luſts, and devoted to God, they ſhould be careful to be ſo themſelves. The parental duty commences even from the child's conception, and every thing ſhould be attended to which may conduce to it's welfare of body, and ſoul: prayer ſhould be offered in it's behalf; for an immortal creature is brought into exiſtence, which will be happy or miſerable for ever; and it is conceived in ſin, and cannot be holy or happy, without the ſpecial grace of God, and an intereſt in the great Redeemer. We need alſo divine direction in reſpect of our children's education, leſt any of the rules of God's word ſhould be forgotten, miſtaken, or neglected; that being trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, there may be a well-grounded hope of their becoming uſeful to the church, and to the world. Happy is it, when married perſons poſſeſs unreſerved confidence in each other, and can converſe freely together concerning their ſpiritual experiences; that they may have the benefit of each others counſel, and prayers: (*Eccleſ.* c. iv. ver. 9—12:) the one may ſuggeſt hints, and encouragements, which did not occur to the other; and they, who at one time, or in one reſpect are the weakeſt, may at other times, and in other reſpects prove the ſtrongeſt, and the wiſeſt.—When we deſire to know, that we may do the will of God, we may pray for inſtruction with the moſt unſhaken aſſurance of it's being granted; (*James*, c. i. v. 5, 6:) but perhaps he may ſee good to teach us by means of our inferiors; and we ſhould be ready to receive inſtruction in that humiliating manner. And true ſpiritual knowledge, grace, and conſolation, always excite deſires, and dictate prayers, for further communications, and diſplays of God's glory to our ſouls. They, whom he honours, as inſtruments of good to us,

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. Samson's affection for a Philistine woman; his slaying a lion, as he went to see her; and his marriage with her, v. 1—9. *2d. His riddle expounded by the Philistines, through the treachery of his wife, v.* 10—18. *3d. His killing thirty Philistines, and departing in anger; and his wife given to his companion, v.* 19, 20.

AND Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines.

2 And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore get her for me to wife.

3 Then his father and his mother said unto him, *Is there* never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well.

4 But his father and his mother knew not that it *was* of the LORD, that he sought an occasion against the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath, and came to the vineyards of Timnath: and behold, a young lion roared against him.

6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily

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we should honour likewise, yet not in any way derogatory to the glory of the Lord himself. But hospitality without grudging to those, who love his name, and a readiness to devote our substance to his glory, are always an ornament to the profession of godliness. In our best meant actions we are prone to forget or mistake the truths, and precepts of God's word, and need reminding of them: and a vain curiosity often supplants our proper attention to the plain practical parts of Scripture, especially those, which relate to our present duty: but we should be as willing to be ignorant of what the Lord is pleased to conceal, as willing to receive whatever he is pleased to teach us; and many of our prayers are most profitably answered, by being denied. The name of our Lord is wonderful, and secret, because incomprehensible: but by his wonderful works he makes himself known, as far as our instruction, and encouragement require it; and farther knowledge would only puff us up with self-conceit: his chief display of himself is in the person of Jesus Christ, his co-equal Son, who, having offered on earth one sacrifice for our sins, and being risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, presents with acceptance our spiritual sacrifices, when offered through faith in his name. Happy are we, when our hearts, and affections ascend, whither the Saviour is gone before: we may then with pleasure, and admiration contemplate the wonders of redeeming love, and every discovery of his glory, will awe our souls into deeper reverence, and humiliation before him. This satan will sometimes attempt to convert into terror, and discouragement, whilst we compare his holiness, and majesty, with our meanness, and pollution. But he will not cast off those, who are humbly determined if they must perish to perish supplicating his mercy: having spared them when enemies, and taught them to value his salvation, he will answer their prayers, dispel their fears, and fulfil his largest promises; for which blessing they should wait with patient faith. When children possess in health the use of their limbs, senses, and understandings, parents have abundant cause for gratitude: but most of all, when they give early indications, that the Holy Spirit is working upon their tender minds, and preparing them for the service of God. This let us in the first place desire, seek, and pray for; and may this blessing be widely bestowed upon the rising generation!

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 4. *Knew not that it was of the Lord*, &c.] Many think that Samson contracted this marriage by special direction from the Lord: such marriages not being immoral in themselves, but forbidden on account of their pernicious consequences: (*Hos.* c. i. v. 2, 3.) That by intimation from God, he thus sought occasion against the Philistines: and shewed his respect to his parents by asking their concurrence; who opposed his marriage as long, as "they knew not that it was of the Lord." The words (v. 3.) translated, "she pleaseth me well," may be rendered, "the matter is right," and be considered as an intimation, that it was from God; upon which they consented, and went with him. This transaction was a type of Christ's espousing the church of the Gentiles, according to the good pleasure of the Father. But perhaps the expression only means, that it pleased God to leave Samson to follow his own inclinations, intending in his infinite wisdom to educe good from his misconduct, and his parents consented, because he was bent upon it. However his example is not recorded for our imitation.

N. B. The chronology from Exodus to the building of Solomon's temple, being four hundred and eighty years, is here computed upon the following obvious, though not certain scheme: fifty-seven years were spent in the wilderness, and under Joshua: to these are added the number of years assigned to each judge; with a supposed coincidence betwixt Jair in Gilead, and Tola in Canaan (c. 10;) for which thirteen years are allowed; and another betwixt Samson and Eli of about six years: this leaves sixty years from the death of Eli to the commencement of David's reign. As this seemed the most probable conjecture I could frame for this obscure period, I date the whole according to it, and only mention it on that account.

V. 5, 6. *To the vineyards of Timnath*, &c.] Samson when at a distance from his parents, was assaulted by, and tho' unarmed, easily slew a young strong lion; because "the "Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him," and he mentioned not the extraordinary exploit to his parents. This was

upon him, and he rent him as he would have rent a kid, and *he had* nothing in his hand: but he told not his father or his mother what he had done.

7 And he went down, and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well.

8 And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and behold, *there was* a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.

9 And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat: but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcase of the lion.

10 So his father went down unto the woman: and Samson made there a feast; for so used the young men to do.

11 And it came to pass, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you; if ye can certainly declare it me within the seven days of the feast, and find *it* out, then I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of garments:

13 But if ye cannot declare *it* me, then shall ye give me thirty sheets and thirty change of garments. And they said unto him, Put forth thy riddle, that we may hear it.

14 And he said unto them, out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness. And they could not in three days expound the riddle.

15 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that they said unto Samson's wife, Entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle, lest we burn thee and thy father's

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an earnest of his victories over the Philistines, not by human might, or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord. David in like manner slew a lion, and a bear, before he killed Goliath, and subdued the enemies of Israel: and Jesus Christ in the wilderness, ere he entered upon his public ministry; and on the cross, previous to his ascension into glory, overcame the devil, that roaring lion, that goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

V. 8, 9.] By the special providence of God a swarm of bees had settled, and collected honey in the carcase of the lion; which was a most unlikely place for that purpose; being both inconvenient and offensive to that delicate insect, which draws honey from the most odoriferous flowers, and plants. This Samson found, when he turned aside to see the carcase, and perhaps to repeat his thanks for his deliverance.

V. 12—14.] When Samson, in conformity to custom celebrated his marriage feast, the Philistines brought him thirty companions, pretending respect, but probably placing them as a watch upon him, being aware of his great strength. To prevent a worse use of their time, Samson proposed his riddle as a trial of ingenuity, and a wager with each of them, of a sheet, shirt, or other linen garment, and a change of raiment of all sorts, that they could not resolve it. The riddle, in its literal purport, meant no more, than that he had got honey, for food, and pleasure from the lion, which in it's strength, and fury was prepared to devour him. Yet this explanation of the riddle may be interpreted as containing another riddle of more importance, and more hard to be understood, except by the teaching of God—The victory of Christ over satan, by means of his humiliation, agonies, and death; and the exaltation that followed to him, the glory that redounded to the Father, and the spiritual advantages, which thence accrue to his people, seem immediately typified thereby. The entrance of sin, the fall of man, and the ruin of the human race, through the malice of satan will issue in *his* deeper misery, in God's greater glory, and in the increased felicity of all the redeemed, and of all holy creatures to all eternity. The persecutions of the church have promoted it's purity, and prosperity. The trials, conflicts, and temptations of God's people, are productive of holiness, and comfort to their souls in this world, and work for them an exceeding weight of glory in the next. Even the remains of indwelling sin, and the very falls of *real believers*, become occasions to them of deeper humility, more simple dependance on, and ardent love for the Saviour, more admiring gratitude to God, more compassion for their fellow sinners, more fitness for many kinds of service on earth, and greater meetness for the occupations of the redeemed in glory. And if any abuse this sacred truth, let them know, that they are not concerned in it; for *upright souls* are alwas rendered more watchful, humble, diligent, simple, compassionate, and fervent in prayer, by every false step they make: at least no others give evidence that they are believers. And even death that devouring monster, that king of terrors, being robbed of his sting, and stripped of his horror, transmits the soul to the realms of bliss, and will ere long restore the body incorruptible immortal and glorious, to partake of endless felicity. In these, and many other senses, "out of the eater comes "forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness."

V. 15.] The barbarity, insolence, and selfishness of this conduct illustrate the misery of Israel's bondage under such tyrants. Mr. Henry notes, "That they ought not "to lay wagers, who cannot bear to lose with better tem-"per:" we may add, that such passions, and implacable resentments are the common effects of affronted pride, and disappointed covetousness, in every kind, and degree of gaming: which is a good reason for entirely avoiding it. The seventh day here mentioned seems to have been the seventh day of the week, and the fourth of the feast:

ther's house with fire: have ye called us to take that we have? *is it* not *so?*

16 And Samson's wife wept before him, and said, Thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not: thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people, and hast not told *it* me. And he said unto her, Behold, I have not told *it* my father nor my mother, and shall I tell *it* thee?

17 And she wept before him the seven days, while their feast lasted: and it came to pass on the seventh day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him; and she told the riddle to the children of her people.

18 And the men of the city said unto him on the seventh day before the sun went down, What *is* sweeter than honey? and what *is* stronger than a lion? And he said unto them, If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.

19 And the Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he went down to Ashkelon, and slew thirty men of them, and took their spoil, and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle: and his anger was kindled, and he went up to his father's house.

20 But Samson's wife was *given* to his companion, whom he had used as his friend.

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the remaining part of which Samson's wife spent in entreating him with tears to tell the riddle to her, out of fear of, or attachment to her countrymen; and at length prevailed.

V. 18. *If ye had not*, &c.] They could not have discovered it of themselves, if they had not drawn it from him, by tampering with his wife.

V. 19. *The Spirit of the Lord*, &c.] He found himself, by an immediate impulse of the Spirit of God directed, emboldened, and assisted in this attack upon the enemies of Israel; which was fully justified by their public oppression, without adverting to their treachery to Samson.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In contracting marriage, the eye, the ear, the senses are dangerous counsellors; beauty, and wit are very doubtful recommendations, and wisdom, piety, and holiness ought principally to be attended to. Next to the word of God, the concurrence of parents is requisite to render that relation honourable, and comfortable. But parents ought to act with consideration, and kindness in this matter: and if constrained to refuse their concurrence; they should give such convincing, and important reasons, as may prove that their refusal, springs from wisdom and affection, not from caprice, and severity: and from an unwillingness that they should make an imprudent choice, not from any disposition to bind them, against their will, to a single life. Yet ordinarily there can be no necessity for a person, that professes godliness, to marry with one, who is manifestly irreligious. But the Lord can over-rule for the best of purposes, those actions, which we must by no means imitate: his designs do not influence our conduct, unless he inform us of them; but his written word is our constant rule. We are always exposed to danger of body, and soul, when alone, and when in company, but nothing can hurt us, except we are wandering from the path of duty. Even satan, "that roaring lion," may be effectually resisted, and completely overcome, if in answer to the prayer of faith, the Spirit of God communicate his strength to our souls; in this way alone can we overcome this enemy; and thus all his temptations shall eventually conduce to our benefit: but by ostentation, and we often lose the comfort, and the real credit, of our best disputed conflicts with our spiritual enemies. The special favours, which God bestows upon us, can only be mentioned on some occasions, to some persons, and in great modesty, without savouring of vain-glory; and we obtain some secret victories over temptation, for which we need repeatedly to bless God, but of which we cannot speak particularly to our nearest earthly friend. We should be always ready to assist the comforts of others, by conferring with them on those topics, which have comforted us; and also to impart to them our temporal good things: especially to parents, and benefactors. We enjoy the most sweetness from God's goodness to us when we most frequently turn aside to meditate upon and bless God on that account: and as one successful conflict prepares for another; so one season of peculiar mercy is an earnest of another. It is almost impossible to associate with worldly people, without conforming to their vain customs: at best, when evident evil is avoided, we waste time to no purpose: but we are called to redeem our time, and to do all to the glory of God. We ought constantly to watch and pray against pride, anger, and covetousness, and to avoid every thing, that gives force to them! for their effects are inconceivably dreadful, when they acquire the ascendancy. It is dangerous to be connected with those, who will not be satisfied with any measure of love, or respect, except we will offend God, or injure ourselves to oblige them; and a worldly wife, or a wordly friend is to a godly man, as an enemy in the camp, who will watch every opportunity to betray him; and by assiduity and perseverance will more, or less prevail, over his resolutions, and prevail with him to make such compliances, as will greatly injure his credit and comfort. Nor can those connexions be comfortable or durable, where important secrets cannot be entrusted without the danger of being divulged. And, indeed satan's chief advantage against us, arises from his correspondence with our deceitful hearts, and inbred lusts. But the wisest counsels of wicked men are very foolishness, and all their gain is loss at length: they secure some worldly interest, and for it lose their lives, or their souls! We are naturally more prone to be angry with those, who have injured us, than to repent of our sin against God. Imprudent connexions commonly issue in speedy separations; nor are any more likely to asperse a man's character, cheat him of his property, or defile his bed, than they, who have been

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1ſt. Samſon finding his wife given to another; and deſtroying the corn fields, &c, of the Philiſtines by foxes, and fire-brands: who burn her, and her father, v. 1—6. *2d. Making great ſlaughter of them, delivered up by the Iſraelites, and killing a thouſand Philiſtines with the jaw-bone of an aſs, v.* 7—17. *3d. Ready to periſh with thirſt, crying to the Lord, miraculouſly relieved, and afterwards judging Iſrael, v.* 18—20.

BUT it came to paſs within a while after, in the time of wheat harveſt, that Samſon viſited his wife with a kid; and he ſaid, I will go in to my wife into the chamber. But her father would not ſuffer him to go in.

2 And her father ſaid, I verily thought that thou hadſt utterly hated her; therefore I gave her to thy companion: *is* not her younger ſiſter fairer than ſhe? take her, I pray thee, inſtead of her.

3 And Samſon ſaid concerning them, Now ſhall I be more blameleſs than the Philiſtines, though I do them a diſpleaſure.

4 And Samſon went and caught three hundred foxes, and took fire-brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midſt between two tails.

5 And when he had ſet the brands on fire, he let *them* go into the ſtanding corn of the Philiſtines, and burnt up both the ſhocks, and alſo the ſtanding corn, with the vineyards *and* olives.

6 Then the Philiſtines ſaid, Who hath done this? and they anſwered, Samſon, the ſon-in-law of the Timnite, becauſe he had taken his wife, and given her to his companion. And the Philiſtines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire.

7 And Samſon ſaid unto them, Though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you, and after that I will ceaſe.

8 And he ſmote them hip and thigh with a great ſlaughter: and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam.

9 Then the Philiſtines went up, and pitched in Judah, and ſpread themſelves in Lehi.

10 And the men of Judah ſaid, Why are ye come up againſt us? and they anſwered, To bind Samſon are we come up, to do to him as he hath done to us.

11 Then three thouſand men of Judah went to the top of the rock Etam, and ſaid to Samſon, Knoweſt thou not that the Philiſtines *are* rulers over us? what *is* this *that* thou haſt

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treated with unmerited kindneſs and confidence. But happy they, who feaſt upon the fruits of Chriſt's conflicts, and victories: all things ſhall work together for their good; and their ſharpeſt trials on earth, yea the ſevereſt agonies of death ſhall prove the occaſion of their loudeſt ſongs of triumphant joy, and praiſe in heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1. *Viſited his wife*, &c.] Not knowing that his wife was given to another man, Samſon after a time found his anger ſubſide, and his affection revive: and accordingly he went to ſee her, taking with him a kid, on which to feaſt with her, and her friends.

V. 3—5.] We are to note, that Samſon was conſcious that he was to deliver Iſrael from the Philiſtines; and only waited for a fair occaſion to declare againſt them: this was afforded by their injurious treatment of him; which was a ſpecimen of the conduct of the Philiſtines towards the Iſraelites when moſt ſubmiſſive. And in the means, which he employed, we muſt advert to the power of God, both in ſupplying, and ſucceeding them; to mortify the pride, and puniſh the wickedneſs of the Philiſtines. The foxes were doubtleſs very numerous in thoſe parts, and the people very expert in taking them: Samſon probably employed others in procuring, and preparing them, by faſtening a lighted torch between the tails of two of them. Being thus let go, they would hinder each other from gaining their holes, in the woods, and would take ſhelter in the neighbouring corn-fields, and vineyards: and the weather being dry, the corn ripe, and the fire kindled in many places at once, we may eaſily conceive that great deſtruction would very ſpeedily be effected by this uncommon contrivance.

V. 6. *Burnt her*, &c.] Samſon's wife betrayed him, for fear of being burnt with fire; and thereby brought that very death upon herſelf, for having by her treachery provoked Samſon to this meaſure: thus the Jews crucified Chriſt, leſt his claim to be their king ſhould bring the Romans upon them; and thereby brought that very calamity upon themſelves.

V. 7. *Though ye*, &c.] The Philiſtines had indeed avenged Samſon of thoſe, who had injured him; but they were inſtigated by hatred to him, though they dared not to attack him: therefore he purpoſed, before he ceaſed, more effectually to avenge himſelf, and his people upon them.

V. 8. *Hip and thigh*, &c.] This obſcure phraſe, which has greatly perplexed the critics, probably means, that he run upon them, as they fled from him, and threw them down, and trampled them to death. "To go down, and dwell "on the top of a rock," ſeems alſo very obſcure. Perhaps he ſlew the enemy upon a mountain, from which he deſcended, and then went, and dwelt alone on the top of a rock. This ſeems to have been for retirement, that he might not be ſurpriſed by the Philiſtines, and becauſe he choſe not to truſt the Iſraelites.

V. 11. *What is this*, &c.] The Iſraelites were ſunk into done

done unto us? and he said unto them, As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.

12 And they said unto him, We are come down to bind thee, that we may deliver thee into the hand of the Philistines. And Samson said unto them, Swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves.

13 And they spake unto him, saying, No; but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hand: but surely we will not kill thee. And they bound him with two new cords, and brought him up from the rock.

14 *And* when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the cords that *were* upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire, and his bands loosed from off his hands.

15 And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, and put forth his hand and took it, and slew a thousand men therewith.

16 And Samson said, With the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps, with the jaw of an ass have I slain a thousand men.

17 And it came to pass when he had made an end of speaking, that he cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand, and called that place Ramath-lehi.

18 And he was sore athirst, and called on the LORD and said, Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?

19 But God clave an hollow place that *was* in the jaw, and there came water thereout; and when he had drunk, his spirit came again,

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an abject frame of spirit; and were satisfied with their bondage to the Philistines, or despaired of deliverance, or basely feared the trouble, and peril of attempting it; or they would not have yielded up their champion in so base a manner.

V. 12. *That ye will not fall*, &c.] Samson quietly submitted to be bound by the Israelites, who were intentionally his murderers, and to be delivered up to the Philistines: but he indented with them, that they would not themselves fall upon him, lest he should be constrained to destroy them, instead of their enemies, which he was unwilling to do, though so shamefully treated by them. In all this he was an evident type of Christ, who in his retirement was rudely assaulted by the Jews, whom he could easily have destroyed, but would not: into their hands he surrendered himself, and they bound him, and delivered him up to the Romans to be crucified; though even the bonds of death could not hold him, or prevent his victories, and triumphs.

V. 14, 15.] When the "Spirit of the Lord came "mightily upon him," his bonds were soon broken: ("for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty:") and then the jaw bone of the contemptible ass, became a more formidable weapon than sword or spear, and a thousand men fell before him, being alike unable to resist, or to escape!

V. 16, 17. *And Samson*, &c.] Elated with this surprising victory, he celebrated his own praise, instead of giving glory to God, which rendered the consequent trial needful, and salutary. Ramath-lehi signifies, the lifting up of the jaw-bone.

V. 18. *And he was sore*, &c.] Thus he felt his weakness in himself, as before he had shewn his strength, when assisted of God: this urgent distress reminded him of his danger, led him to thank God for his deliverance, and to pray unto him for present relief.

V. 19. *In the jaw*, &c.] Or in the place, where the jaw lay, or in Lehi, a spring was supernaturally opened, by which he was relieved from his danger; and he called the place "En-hakkore," that is the well of him that cried.

Christ too in his grand conflict with the enemies of our salvation, "thirsted," but had no well opened for his relief: for he drank of the cup of the wrath of God for us, which Samson did not; as well as trod the wine-press *alone*, as did Samson on this occasion. After this event Samson was submitted to, as judge by the people. The twenty years during which he judged Israel, are said to be in the days of the Philistines, which intimates that their deliverance was incomplete, and their enemies very formidable; because, as we may suppose, they had not duly repented and returned to the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

He gains the noblest victory, in every contest, who first proposes reconciliation; especially when this is done by the offended party, and the superior relation: and such concessions adorn the characters even of those, who are most renowned for courage. Where the knowledge of God, and of his law are wanting, the most ordinary transactions of life will be conducted upon such principles, as tend to confusion, and licentiousness: and wicked men, conscious of their own base intentions, will suspect the worst of designs; or pretend to do so, to cover their own injustice: and their proposals, made under the guise of peace, are no less to be dreaded, than their open injustice. It is therefore best to avoid all fellowship with them. We should endeavour to live at peace with all men: and in case that be impracticable, to avoid every thing, which may render us justly chargeable with the consequences of contention. And ere the Lord proceed to execute vengeance, he will manifest the inexcusable wickedness of the hearts and lives of his enemies. In the hands of his servants the most contemptible instruments are sufficient, and successful. When men obtain plenty by rapine, and abuse it upon their lusts, they may reasonably expect to have it taken from them: nor does it require much ability, to be an incendiary, and kindle the fire of discord in families, churches and nations: indeed such wretches are instigated by one more subtle, and malicious than themselves, and will probably be consumed in

and he revived. Wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore, which *is* in Lehi unto this day.

20 And he judged Iſrael in the days of the Philiſtines twenty years.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Samſon in danger at Gaza through an harlot, and his eſcape, v. 1—3. 2d. His love of Delilah, her treachery, his hair ſhorn, the Lord departing from him, his being ſeized, impriſoned, and made ſport of by the Philiſtines, v. 4—25. 3d. His death with multitudes of his enemies, and his burial by his friends, v. 26—31.

THEN went Samſon to Gaza, and ſaw there an harlot, and went in unto her.

2 *And it was told* the Gazites, ſaying, Samſon is come hither. And they compaſſed *him* in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, ſaying, in the morning when it is day we ſhall kill him.

3 And Samſon lay till midnight, and aroſe at midnight and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two poſts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put *them* upon his ſhoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that *is* before Hebron.

4 And it came to paſs afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whoſe name *was* Delilah.

5 And the lords of the Philiſtines came up unto her, and ſaid unto her, Entice him, and

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the fire, which they have kindled. They who ſin to avoid ſuffering, will bring troubles upon themſelves, againſt which they can have no protector. Heartleſs profeſſors, who value the friendſhip, and fear the frown of the world, and are the ſlaves of ſin, and ſatan, will cenſure, hate, and betray thoſe, who call them to liberty in the ſervice of God: and to ſave themſelves in times of perſecution, will apoſtatize, and turn betrayers, and accuſers of the brethren: (*Matt.* c. xxiv. v. 9, 10:) and in ſuch men's judgment, the beſt ſervices, and moſt dangerous endeavours to do good, deſerve reproach, condemnation, and puniſhment. But we ſhall not be diſcouraged by ſuch things, when we conſider how the Saviour was treated: we ſhall ſee how we ought to act, when we obſerve his meekneſs, patience, and dying prayers for his crucifiers: and we ſhall diſcard our fears, when we conſider his triumphs, his aſcenſion, his glory, and his promiſe, that they, who ſuffer with him, ſhall alſo be glorified with him. Whenever we are peculiarly favoured of God, without great watchfulneſs, the pride of our hearts will lead us to rob him of his glory: hence every comfort muſt be counterbalanced with a croſs: and the more any man is made uſeful to others, the more mortifying mementos he generally needs of his own weakneſs, folly, and unworthineſs. By ſuch painful diſcipline we are taught to know our own place, and to feel our entire dependance on, and continual obligations to the Lord. When our trials have produced theſe effects, they ſhall be removed, and become ſources of gratitude, and comfort; and excite us to raiſe freſh monuments of the goodneſs of God. But in this world our enemies will continue powerful, and our victories will be incomplete: ere long we ſhall be made more than conquerors, and render perfect and eternal hallelujahs.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—3. *Then went Samſon*, &c.] Hitherto Samſon's character, though uncommon, has appeared illuſtrious: and when we conſider him as raiſed up to deliver Iſrael; and inſtructed, as well as aſſiſted in doing it, in that unprecedented manner, which beſt tended to mortify the Philiſtines, and to manifeſt the mighty power of God; we may fairly vindicate moſt of his paſt conduct, and ſafely imitate much of it: and notwithſtanding many infirmities we have hitherto met with nothing inconſiſtent with his character of a Nazarite. But in this chapter we find him behaving in ſo wicked, and infatuated a manner, that many have been led to queſtion, whether he were a godly man or not. But the apoſtle has determined that queſtion; (*Heb.* c. xi. v. 32:) and adverting to the doctrines, and examples of Scripture, the deceitfulneſs of the human heart, the artifices of ſatan, and the methods, in which the Lord frequently deals with his people, we may interpret this riddle of a man, (as ſome have called him,) and perceive that we are not very different; and may thus learn uſeful leſſons from this hiſtory, which puzzles ſome, ſtumbles others, and emboldens others to cavil, and object. Confiding in his great ſtrength, and the terror of him, with which the Philiſtines were ſeized, he boldly entered Gaza, one of their chief cities, on what account we know not; and there was tempted to go in unto an harlot, to gratify his ſenſual luſt. This diſgraceful circumſtance was made known to the inhabitants, who fearful of attacking him laid wait for him all night, and were probably forming ſome ſtratagem, or ſending for ſome re-inforcements, in order in the morning to aſſault, or enſnare, and kill him. But at midnight, perhaps awakened by remorſe of conſcience, he aroſe; and the Lord, though offended "wrought for his own name's "ſake;" and by his aſſiſtance, in contempt of the guards, he ſeized upon the gate, with the poſt, and bars, and all, and carried them ſeveral miles to the top of an hill, no one venturing to interrupt, or ſeize him. This reminds us of him, who in the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh, was crucified betwixt two thieves: but he aroſe as a conqueror over death, and every foe, and, as it were, broke open and carried away with him the very gates of the grave, whilſt he aſcended into heaven as the firſt-fruits of the reſurrection.

V. 4. *Whoſe name was Delilah.*] Delilah ſignifies "a conſumer." It is not certain whether ſhe were a Philiſtine, or a licentious Iſraelite. But Samſon indulged a baſe affection for her, and waſted his time in her company in a moſt ſhameful manner: perhaps emboldened by his impunity, in the foregoing inſtance.

V. 5. *The lords of*, &c.] The princes of their five

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ſee wherein his great ſtrength *lieth*, and by what *means* we may prevail againſt him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will give thee every one of us eleven hundred *pieces* of ſilver.

6 And Delilah ſaid to Samſon, Tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great ſtrength *lieth*, and wherewith thou mighteſt be bound to afflict thee.

7 And Samſon ſaid unto her, If they bind me with ſeven green withs that were never dried, then ſhall I be weak, and be as another man.

8 Then the lords of the Philiſtines brought up to her ſeven green withs which had not been dried, and ſhe bound him with them.

9 (Now *there were* men lying in wait, abiding with her in the chamber.) And ſhe ſaid unto him, The Philiſtines *be* upon thee, Samſon. And he brake the withs, as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire. So his ſtrength was not known.

10 And Delilah ſaid unto Samſon, Behold, thou haſt mocked me, and told me lies: now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mighteſt be bound.

11 And he ſaid unto her, If they bind me faſt with new ropes that never were occupied, then ſhall I be weak, and be as another man.

12 Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith, and ſaid unto him, The Philiſtines *be* upon thee, Samſon. And *there were* liers in wait abiding in the chamber. And he brake them from off his arms like a thread.

13 And Delilah ſaid unto Samſon, Hitherto thou haſt mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mighteſt be bound. And he ſaid unto her, If thou weaveſt the ſeven locks of my head with the web.

14 And ſhe faſtened *it* with a pin, and ſaid unto him, The Philiſtines *be* upon thee, Samſon. And he awaked out of his ſleep, and went away with the pin of the beam and with the web.

15 And ſhe ſaid unto him, How canſt thou ſay, I love thee, when thine heart *is* not with me; thou haſt mocked me theſe three times, and haſt not told me wherein thy great ſtrength *lieth*.

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chief cities, ſoon heard of Samſon's conduct, and formed their plan for his ruin: by promiſing Delilah about ſix hundred pounds ſterling, they induced her to employ all her inſinuation to find out the cauſe of his ſupernatural ſtrength, which they ſuppoſed to depend on ſome obſervance, that he might be induced to neglect; upon which his ſtrength failing him, they might avenge themſelves upon him. It ſeems that their terror of him was ſo great, that they durſt not upon any advantage, attempt any thing againſt him, till they were ſatisfied that his great ſtrength was departed from him. However the hand of God, in reſtraining them from killing him, when he was aſleep in the chamber with them, and when one was employed in ſhaving his head, is very viſible and ſurpriſing.

V. 6, 7. *Tell me*, &c.] We may be ſure that this artful woman would propoſe this as a mere curious queſtion; that ſhe would couch it in ſuch terms, accompany it with ſuch blandiſhments, and urge it at ſuch times, as were moſt likely to prevail. Yet Samſon had ſome ſuſpicion that it was with no good deſign, that ſhe deſired to pry into this important ſecret; but inſtead of leaving her, or giving her a direct refuſal, he endeavoured to amuſe her by an evaſive anſwer. He knew that his ſtrength was immediately from God, who had conſtituted him a perpetual Nazarite, of which his hair was the token: but if he renounced his Nazarite's character, by ſhaving his head, the Lord would depart from him, and he would become as other men. He was not at firſt ſo infatuated, as to diſcloſe the ſecret: but he was taken in ſatan's net, and was ſure to become every moment more, and more entangled.

V. 9. *Now there were*, &c.] Samſon's infatuation was very great: but we cannot conceive that he would have fallen aſleep again, and again in Delilah's lap, if he had ſeen the Philiſtines in the chamber prepared to ſeize him. We may ſuppoſe, that they waited every time to ſee, whether he were able to break his bonds, before they quitted their concealment: and that when they found that his ſtrength was not departed, they kept cloſe: and that Delilah artfully turned the matter off, as a jeſt, which ſhe put upon him to diſcover, whether he had told her the truth, or not.

V. 14. *And ſhe faſtened*, &c.] Theſe repeated attempts would have ſatisfied him, that ſhe intended his ruin, had not whoredom taken away his heart, and made him ſenſeleſs, and brutiſh.—Every ſtep brought him nearer to the fatal diſcovery, and cataſtrophe.

V, 15. *When thine heart is not with me*, &c.] Delilah pretended to diſcredit all his profeſſions of love for her, ſo long as he refuſed to give her this peculiar proof of it. He had ſacrificed his honour, conſcience, intereſt, and every other valuable object to his paſſion for her: but whilſt he had one reſerve, ſhe would not be ſatisfied. Such abſolute affection cannot be placed upon any creature without idolatry: but it is that very love, which the Lord juſtly requires of us, when he bids us to give him our heart: nor will he accept of us, whilſt there is one reſerve: whilſt we deliberately refuſe to part with one worldly object for his ſake; or to yield him any ſervice, which he requires at our hands. Had Abraham peremptorily refuſed to ſacri-

16 And

16 And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him *so* that his soul was vexed unto death:

17 That he told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I *have been* a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man.

18 And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, Come up this once; for he hath shewed me all his heart. Then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her and brought money in their hand.

19 And she made him sleep upon her knees: and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him.

20 And she said, The Philistines *be* upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him.

21 But the Philistines took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison house.

22 Howbeit, the hair of his head began to grow again, after he was shaven.

23 Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together, for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand.

24 And when the people saw him, they praised their god: for they said, Our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country, which slew many of us.

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fice his beloved Isaac, the Lord might have said, "how "canst thou say, that thou lovest me, when thy heart is "not with me!" For the true love of the infinitely glorious God swallows up, regulates, or subordinates every other affection; and is itself alone *absolute* or *unreserved*.

V. 16. *Vexed unto death.*] What an infatuation was this, that when he was thus incessantly and intolerably teased to do so foolish, and wicked an action, he had not resolution to depart from her!

V. 19–21. *She made him sleep*, &c.] It seems that Delilah bound him in his sleep, as it is said, that "she "began to afflict him." By which the Philistines being satisfied, that his strength was departed from him, they ventured from their concealment, seized upon their prey, and having put out his eyes, preserved him as a monument of their victory, and made him drudge in hard labour. To all which he could make no effectual resistance, for he found that the Lord was departed from him. What a change was this? To what wretched, and disgraceful situation had sin reduced this mighty judge of Israel, who was before himself as a whole army of men! Had his head been shaven without his fault, the case would have been different: But his whole conduct had been as great a contempt of the Lord's favour, glory, and authority; as if he had in disdain cut off his Nazarite's hair with his own hands: and therefore he was constrained to endure the dreadful effects of his folly. Thus men proceed in sin, till they are given up of God, and fast bound in satan's fetters, and drudge on in his service. Thus believers, growing negligent, and self-indulgent, grieve the Spirit of God, lose their strength, and are taken captive by this enemy. The Lord generally rebukes and chastens them for their first offences: but to teach them all whither their deviations tend, and to what their recoveries are owing, he permits a few to wander wider, and sink deeper; and yet recovers them at last; and marking his displeasure in their most severe temporal sufferings, preserves them from sinking into the pit of destruction. These examples hypocrites will abuse, and Pharisees revile, and infidels deride, to their own more fearful punishment: but true Christians will be thereby rendered more humble, watchful, and circumspect; more simple in their dependance on the Lord, more fervent in prayer to be kept, and praise for being preserved, from falling; and if they fall, they will by them be secured from sinking into despair. Such an example was Samson, and this is the real interpretation of the riddle of his character.

V. 22. *The hair of*, &c.] Without doubt Samson's afflictions were the means of bringing him to deep repentance: by the loss of his bodily sight the eyes of his understanding were opened to perceive his own madness, and wickedness; and, by depriving him of his bodily strength, the Lord was pleased to renew his spiritual strength. Then would he humble himself before the Lord, and seek his merciful forgiveness, and not seek it in vain. In token of his reconciliation, his hair grew probably much faster than is usual; which was an indication that the Spirit of the Lord was returning unto him, and that he would recover his extraordinary strength. But the Philistines having blinded, and fettered him, were under no further apprehensions on that account.

V. 23, 24.] This was either some occasional feast for their victory over Samson, or some annual festival, that was observed on that account with the greater solemnity, in honour of Dagon. When they had offered their sacrifice, they met together to feast, and to divert themselves, either in the temple of Dagon, or as some think in a theatre erected for that purpose. On this occasion the

25 And

25 And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry that they said, Call for Samson, that he may make us sport. And they called for Samson out of the prison-house; and he made them sport. And they set him between the pillars.

26 And Samson said unto the lad that held him by the hand, Suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.

27 Now the house was full of men and women: and all the lords of the Philistines *were* there; and *there were* upon the roof about three thousand men and women, that beheld while Samson made sport.

28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O LORD God! remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, of the one with his right hand, and of the other with his left.

30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with *all his* might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that *were* therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than *they* which he slew in his life.

Philistines renewed their triumphs over Samson, who probably had been preserved for that purpose; and also presumed to celebrate the triumph of Dagon their god, over Jehovah the God of Israel: (*Dan.* c. v. ver. 1—5:) as if by his help they had prevailed against the judge of Israel, who formerly by the help of the Lord had been victorious over them.

V. 25. *Made them sport*, &c.] They diverted themselves by insulting over his abject situation, exercising their cruel ingenuity in making him appear contemptible, and ridiculous. Thus Christ being apprehended, and bound by his enemies, was insulted by the council, the servants, and the soldiers.

V. 26. *The pillars*, &c.] The main weight of the building rested upon two pillars in the centre, very near together, according to the method of building made use of in some parts of the world; against which Samson, as if wearied, desired leave to rest himself.

V. 27. *All the lords*, &c.] All the principal persons of the nation, were within this building, whilst about three thousand others were upon the flat roof, looking through apertures made for that purpose, to enjoy the cruel pleasure of insulting over their fallen enemy.

V. 28. *And Samson called*, &c.] The triumph of the Philistines was the triumph of Dagon: but the cause of Samson was the cause of Israel, and of God. He was the judge of Israel, appointed of God to be an avenger of their enemies; and for his transgression he had been justly delivered into their hands, and they had not only cruelly treated him, but impiously blasphemed God. As in ordinary cases we may hope for the conversion, and salvation of any of our fellow-sinners, so we are commanded to forgive, do good to, and pray for every one of them: and such extraordinary cases are not recorded for our imitation, though the persons concerned did what was in their case right, and were influenced by the Spirit of God. For the same reason that satan, and his angels, being the incurable enemies of God, are the objects of our allowed abhorrence; we should be required to detest any individual on earth, whom we certainly knew to be the object of God's final hatred: and in a future state, when sinners will no longer be under a dispensation of mercy, we shall rejoice in the destruction of all the enemies of God. (2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 14. *Rev.* c. vi. v. 10.) Samson's prayer was both dictated, and answered of God; nor could the knowledge of it have been attained, but by revelation. And in his extraordinary case he knew, that it was right that he should avenge the cause of God, and Israel, and that he should desire to execute the vengeance of God upon them, for their despiteful cruelty to him. Nor is he to be accused of self-murder: he sought not his own death, but Israel's deliverance, and the destruction of their enemiss: and there is no intimation, that he was impatient under his sufferings; though in accomplishing his purpose, he was willing to lay down his life with them. There is a vast difference betwixt rushing uncalled into the presence of God, out of proud impatience, rebellion, and contempt of life, when it is made miserable by a man's own misconduct; and being willing to lay down life for the honour of God, and the welfare of his people; though the circumstances, into which a man adventures be as certainly fatal, as the means by which a man murders himself: for a man is no more deemed a self-murderer, who sacrifices his life for the good of his country in the field of battle; than he is deemed a murderer of others, who in a just war slays the enemies of his country.

V. 30.] The numbers within, and upon the building would *naturally* occasion much slaughter amongst them: but we must ascribe to the same power, which enabled Samson to throw down the building, the decisive destruction, which it caused. Thus Samson died in bonds, and amongst the Philistines, as an awful rebuke for his sins: but he died penitent, and had not his future portion with them: and the effects of his death typified those of the death of Christ, who, by voluntarily laying down his life amongst transgressors, subverted the foundations of satan's kingdom, and provided for the deliverance of his people. By this blow the princes of the Philistines were destroyed, their government was unhinged, their power crushed, and their courage daunted; so that they made no opposition to Samson's relations, when they went to fetch his body, to be buried amongst his people. Thus the body of Christ also was, without opposition, given to his friends, that it might be honourably interred. Samson signifies "a little sun;" according to this allusion, he arose upon Israel after a suit-

31 Then his brethren, and all the houſe of his father, came down, and took him, and brought *him* up, and buried him between Zorah and Eſhtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father. And he judged Iſrael twenty years.

able pre-intimation to his parents, and during the morning of his life he ſhone very bright: but towards the evening he was greatly obſcured by clouds; yet when ſetting he burſt through the gloom, and ſhone with more ſplendour than ever. So Jeſus, our long-expected ſun of righteouſneſs, aroſe upon Iſrael, and upon the earth; after ſhining with glorious, and benign luſtre during his life, he was obſcured by the thickeſt clouds juſt before his ſetting: but when he cried out "it is finiſhed," and gave up the ghoſt, he ſhone forth with mild but moſt glorious ſplendour, and died a triumphant conqueror. But he differed from Samſon; in that he died praying for his murderers, and aroſe again to complete the redemption of his people.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Nothing, except our evident duty, ſhould ever prevail with us to venture into thoſe places, where bad examples, and licentious characters abound. Even in that caſe, we ſhould go with fear, and trembling, and earneſtly begging of God to turn away our eyes from beholding, and to preſerve our hearts from conceiving vanity, and to ſtrengthen us to reſiſt every temptation. For when we become unwatchful, and ſelf-confident, we are near ſome humiliating fall; the roving eye readily admits the licentious deſire into the heedleſs heart; and luſt being conceived, ſin is brought forth, and miſery is the conſequence. Even they, who have grown old in an honourable profeſſion of godlineſs, are no longer ſafe, than they are kept humble: and ſinful propenſities, which have long lain dormant, will revive under ſuitable temptations, and acquire their former aſcendancy, and even domineer more than ever, if we provoke God to leave us to ourſelves. The blandiſhments of beautiful women have proved dreadful weapons againſt the church of God. (*Prov.* c. ii. v. 16—19. c. v. ver. 3—14. 22, 23. c. vii. v. 26, 27:) And ſatan would rather ſee the active, and uſeful ſervant of God, yielding to the enticements of an harlot, and ſleeping in Delilah's lap; than boldly venturing the tyrant's rage, and yielding up himſelf to be caſt into the fiery furnace. They, who are captivated in this manner, are ſpeedily expoſed to the deepeſt ſhame, and the moſt imminent danger; their reputation, ſtrength, and uſefulneſs will be torn from them; the cauſe, which they ſhould ſerve, will be betrayed by them, and their enemies will be hardened in their triumphs over them, and the religion, which they profeſs. The *outward* peril, which attends ſuch forbidden intercourſe, is generally ſo great, that nothing but blind infatuation can induce men to venture upon it: but who can tell the machinations of the powers of darkneſs againſt thoſe, who are ſtupidly indulging their luſts, and ſleeping in the very jaws of deſtruction? It muſt be aſcribed to the Lord's unſpeakable goodneſs if any eſcape, who are once taken in theſe ſnares. But lamentable is it to conſider, that this goodneſs is ſo generally abuſed into an encouragement to further crimes; for every ſinful propenſity is ſtrengthened by indulgence. Even true believers are ſeldom duly humbled for their ſins, till they taſte the bitter effects of them; and therefore it is eventually better to be chaſtened for our firſt offences, than to eſcape with impunity. Companions in iniquity can have no good reaſons for truſting one another. And they, who betray the cauſe of God, can expect no other, than to be betrayed by their fellow-creatures; for they who are enſlaved to one luſt, need not wonder to find their companions under the dominion of another. Unworthy of a man, and ſtill more of a believer is that love, which is placed on a worthleſs object, on account of external embelliſhments, and for the ſake of animal gratification, whilſt conſcience, honour, and every noble purpoſe of the ſoul, are ſacrificed thereto. When a man is thus bound in the chain of his own luſts, he ſeems to loſe even common ſenſe; and no wickedneſs in the object of his idolatrous affections can make him ſenſible of his folly and danger, or willing to renounce the baſe attachment. This is indeed a deep ditch, into which many great men, and even ſome good men have fallen; but from which few have eſcaped, and they by a miracle of mercy, and with the loſs of almoſt every thing, except their precious ſouls. Whatever a man hath already ſacrificed to ſuch a criminal paſſion, ſtill more will be required; no denial will be taken, no bounds aſſigned, or end fixed to artful, and intereſted importunity, until a man has ruined himſelf and all thoſe, who are, or ought to be dear to him; for aſſiduity, diſſimulation, and inceſſant blandiſhment will overcome the ſtrongeſt reſolutions, and teaſe a man into compliance with the moſt unreaſonable, and ruinous demands: and all counſels, warnings, and paſt experiences are in this caſe ineffectual. On this Delilah's lap thouſands ſleep ſo ſound, that nothing but the flames of hell can awake them. And though the Lord again, and again deliver his people, even when they grieve his Spirit by their ſins: yet if they preſume upon his goodneſs, he will ſeverely puniſh them, and even make them the contempt, and reproach of the fooliſh; he will tear from them all their earthly comforts, and fill their ſouls with the moſt exquiſite anguiſh; and, without ſending them to hell, he can make their ſufferings ten thouſand times greater than all the pleaſures of their ſins. Nay he can cloud the characters of the moſt eminent of his ſervants with ſo dark a veil, that the people of God ſhall be ready to conſider them as hypocrites, and apoſtates. Thus he will ſet them up as a beacon to warn others of the rocks on which they ſplit. And though many will, by their falls and miſeries, be taught to watch and pray againſt temptation; yet they will be oppreſſed by the painful reflexion, that multitudes will by their crimes be prejudiced, and hardened in infidelity, and ungodlineſs to their everlaſting deſtruction. Out of this horrible pit none can eſcape, but by deep humiliation for ſin, earneſt cries for mercy, patient ſubmiſſion to correction, and renewed converſion unto God through Jeſus Chriſt. Their heavieſt ſorrows when they have theſe effects will prove moſt precious favours, their comfort, and ſtrength ſhall be renewed, and their cruel enemies ſhall finally be diſappointed. Yet even in this caſe the chaſtening rod may purſue them to the grave. When ſuch perſons have obtained pardon, and hope to die in peace, and go to glory; they can deſire to

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, Micah an Ephraimite, 1st. Setting up idolatry in his house, v. 1—6. 2d. Obtaining a Levite to be his priest, v. 7—13.

AND there was a man of mount Ephraim, whose name *was* Micah.

2 And he said unto his mother, The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver, that were taken from thee, about which thou cursedst, and spakest of also in mine ears; behold, the silver *is* with me; I took it. And his mother said, Blessed *be thou* of the LORD, my son.

3 And when he had restored the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the LORD from my hand for my son, to make a graven image, and a molten image; now therefore I will restore it unto thee.

4 Yet he restored the money unto his mother; and his mother took two hundred *shekels* of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image: and they were in the house of Micah.

5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.

6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel, *but* every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

7 And there was a young man out of Bethlehem-judah, of the family of Judah, who *was* a Levite, and he sojourned there.

8 And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find *a place:* and he came to mount

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live for no other purpose, but to wipe off, if possible, the blot, which they have cast upon the gospel, and to take vengeance, (so to speak,) upon satan and his cause, for the injury, they have sustained; and with their dying lips, or in their dying moments to render some service to the church of God: and some who have disgraced the gospel, and rejoiced the hearts of it's enemies, have afterwards been so deeply humbled, and have closed their lives in such a manner, as hath more than counterbalanced all, and turned the triumphings of wicked men into confusion. Indeed all successful villainy will soon be punished; and they who hate, betray, and persecute the church of God, or any of it's members, have not only the prayers of God's people, but the intercession of Christ himself against them, whilst they continue impenitent: how then can they escape destruction? Vain is our expectation of protection, or assistance from God, when we are committing deliberate sin: we may think to go forth as at other times, but shall find that our locks are shorn, and our strength is gone. Nay, if ministers, with unrepented guilt upon their conscience, continue to preach, pray, and administer the sacraments, their exertions will fail of their wanted efficacy; and as the Lord is departed from them, satan will disregard their feeble efforts. But it is most lamentable, when they alone are not sensible of the awful change: what can then be expected, but that the enemy will blind, and enslave them more and more to his basest drudgery! May God help us to walk humbly, and watchfully, to abstain from fleshly lusts, and avoid the beginnings of evil; and to beware of the subtlety of satan, and his agents, and the deceitfulness of our own hearts. May our unreserved love and entire dependance be placed upon the divine Saviour. He conquered by dying, and rose to triumph: by his power all his true people shall conquer, and triumph also. Here they must live mingled with the wicked, and die *outwardly* in the same manner; but they have a friend to receive their departing souls; and a place in heaven prepared for them. Their bodies, may or may not be buried together; but they shall certainly be separated at the resurrection of the dead; the one shall go away into everlasting punishment, the other into life eternal. May we then choose this good part, which shall never be taken from us!

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *And there was*, &c.] Samson was the last judge before Eli, as is generally agreed, and the events recorded in the ensuing chapters were coincident with the preceding history; and took place, not many years after the death of Joshua.

V. 2—4.] Micah's mother, having lost her money, in a rage imprecated the divine vengeance upon the thief, if he did not restore it, pretending that it was devoted to God, by a solemn vow. Her son, who had stole it, was by this curse affrighted to disclose the theft, and restore the money; and thus he obtained her blessing, such as it was: in consequence two hundred shekels were expended in making an image, and perhaps the remainder in the preparation for its worship.

V. 5. *An house of gods*, &c.] Or "of God;" for it is probable that he purposed to worship the God of Israel, and he ignorantly imagined, that in this manner, having appointed his son to be priest, he might serve God as acceptably, as by going up to the tabernacle.

V. 6. *There was*, &c.] Either there was no judge at that time, or he possessed not that authority, which was requisite for repressing idolatry, as a king might have done. Probably the judges, when they had performed those services, for which they were raised up, were not much regarded in the distant parts of the land, by a people, who were always prone to return to their idols.

V. 7. *Of the family of Judah*, &c.] His father was a Levite, but by marriage allied to the tribe of Judah, in whose lot Bethlehem lay. We cannot suppose a Levite was constrained for mere want, to ramble like a vagabond:

Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed.

9 And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I *am* a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find *a place*.

10 And Micah said unto him, Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten *shekels* of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals. So the Levite went in.

11 And the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man was unto him as one of his sons.

12 And Micah consecrated the Levite; and the young man became his priest, and was in the house of Micah.

13 Then said Micah, Now know I that the LORD will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to *my* priest.

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. The spies of the Danites employing Micah's priest to consult the Lord for them, v. 1—6. 2d. The spies searching out Laish, making their report to their brethren, who marched towards Laish, and robbed Micah of his image, and his priest, &c. v. 7—26. 3d. Their conquest of Laish, and their establishment of idolatry, v. 27—31.

IN those days *there was* no king in Israel: and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in; for unto that day *all their* inheritance had not fallen unto them among the tribes of Israel.

2 And the children of Dan sent of their family five men from their coasts, men of valour, from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it; and they said unto them, Go, search the land: who, when they came to mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, they lodged there.

3 When they *were* by the house of Micah, they knew the voice of the young man the Levite: and they turned in thither, and said unto him, Who brought thee hither? and what makest thou in this *place?* and what hast thou here?

4 And he said unto them, Thus and thus dealeth Micah with me, and hath hired me, and I am his priest.

5 And they said unto him, Ask counsel, we

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this man was probably of an unsettled disposition, and did not love to be under the controul of the priests: rather than be their servant, he would be the priest of an idol, at very low wages.

V. 13. *Now I know*, &c.] Micah was conscious that the priesthood of his son was *informal*; but foolishly fancied that he had now mended the matter. Whereas a Levite had no right to officiate as priest, nor had *he* any authority to consecrate him; and to his other crimes he added that of tempting a Levite to idolatry.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Old age will never cure the heart of it's love of worldly objects, and when men have lost their relish for other sinful indulgences, the love of money frequently acquires double force: but every idol, is liable to be torn from them, and their inordinate love of it, will increase their grief and resentment for the loss of it. The curse causeless will only hurt the person, who vents it; yet when children rob their parents, they may expect from them a curse instead of a blessing, and in consequence the displeasure of God, (*Prov.* c. xxviii. v. 24.) Confession, and restitution, though attendants on true repentance, do not always imply it's presence: (*Matt.* c. xxvii. v. 3—5. Those parents cannot reasonably expect their children to do their duty to them, who have neither by their instructions or example taught them their duty to God, but have been their tempters to ungodliness. Riches are seldom made a good use of: in one form or other they are commonly idolized, either in themselves, or in those idols, which proud, and sensual men purchase with them. Men naturally love their own inventions in religion, being more flattering to their pride, and more indulgent to their sloth and lusts, than God's appointments: and the liberality of superstitious people, often shames the niggardliness of the professors of true religion. They, who once deviate from the rule of God's word, will wander still more widely, and bewilder themselves more entirely: and will presumptuously expect a reward from God, for the very practices, which he abhors. When pride, an unsettled temper, ignorance, and sloth meet in those ordained to the ministry, with poverty, or extravagance; by the prospect of secular advantage, they may be induced to patronize crimes, and become ringleaders in transgression; whilst their example, and concurrence give a *quietus* to every remaining scruple in the consciences of others. Many wealthy people love to have *such Levites* for *their priests*; because, instead of reproving their sins, they embolden them therein; and induce them, to conclude, that there is no reality at all in religion, as it's ministers are so mercenary, and ungodly.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *All their inheritance*, &c.] In the division of the land the city Laish, or Leshem (*Josh.* c. xix. v. 47, 48.) had been assigned to the Danites, besides their portion near the lot of Judah; but as it lay in the northern extremity of the country, they had not attempted to possess it, till they were constrained for want of room to seek new settlements.

V. 5, 6.] The Danites had not consulted the Lord by pray

pray thee, of God, that we may know whether our way which we go ſhall be proſperous.

6 And the prieſt ſaid unto them, Go in peace: before the LORD *is* your way wherein ye go.

7 Then the five men departed, and came to Laiſh, and ſaw the people that *were* therein, how they dwelt careleſs, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and ſecure; and *there was* no magiſtrate in the land, that might put *them* to ſhame in *any* thing: and they *were* far from the Zidonians, and had no buſineſs with *any* man.

8 And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eſhtaol: and their brethren ſaid unto them, What *ſay* ye?

9 And they ſaid, Ariſe, that we may go up againſt them: for we have ſeen the land, and, behold, it *is* very good; and *are* ye ſtill? be not ſlothful to go, *and* to enter to poſſeſs the land.

10 When ye go, ye ſhall come unto a people ſecure, and to a large land: for God hath given it into your hands; a place where *there is* no want of any thing that *is* in the earth.

11 And there went from thence of the family of the Danites, out of Zorah and out of Eſhtaol, ſix hundred men appointed with weapons of war.

12 And they went up, and pitched in Kirjath-jearim in Judah: wherefore they called that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day; behold, *it is* behind Kirjath-jearim.

13 And they paſſed thence unto mount Ephraim, and came unto the houſe of Micah.

14 Then anſwered the five men that went to ſpy out the country of Laiſh, and ſaid unto their brethren, Do ye know that there is in theſe houſes an ephod, and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image? now therefore conſider what ye have to do.

15 And they turned thitherward, and came to the houſe of the young man the Levite, *even* unto the houſe of Micah, and ſaluted him.

16 And the ſix hundred men appointed with their weapons of war, which *were* of the children of Dan, ſtood by the entering of the gate.

17 And the five men that went to ſpy out the land went up, *and* came in thither, *and* took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image: and the prieſt ſtood in the entering of the gate with the ſix hundred men *that were* appointed with weapons of war.

18 And theſe went into Micah's houſe, and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image. Then ſaid the prieſt unto them, What do ye?

19 And they ſaid unto him, Hold thy peace, lay thine hand upon thy mouth, and go with us, and be to us a father and a prieſt: *is it* better for thee to be a prieſt unto the houſe of one man, or that thou be a prieſt unto a tribe and a family in Iſrael?

20 And the prieſt's heart was glad, and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image, and went in the midſt of the people.

21 So they turned and departed, and put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage, before them.

22 *And* when they were a good way from the houſe of Micah, the men that *were* in the

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his high prieſt about their intended enterpriſe: but when their ſpies met with this Levite, whom they had known in his former rambles, and were informed by him that he was become a prieſt, they bethought themſelves of conſulting the Lord by him: in which their ignorance and inattention were proved to be lamentably great. The Levite having gone through his form, anſwered them according to their inclinations, which being verified by the event, raiſed the reputation of the oracle, and ſanctioned the idolatry. Thus fortune-tellers, and monthly prognoſticators, ſometimes happening to conjecture right, all their blunders are forgotten, and theſe *random lucky gueſſes* raiſe their credit with the ignorant, and credulous. But in this manner God ſends men a ſtrong deluſion to believe a lie, who ſeek information in a way prohibited in the ſacred Scriptures.

V. 7. *They dwelt careleſs*, &c.] The Iſraelites had ſo neglected to proſecute their victories, that the Canaanites deſpiſed them: and this people living, unmoleſted in a plentiful country, had no magiſtrates, and were not ſecured by walls, troops, or alliances, but every one lived according to his own inclination, without either fear or ſhame.

V. 11. *Six hundred men*, &c.] So ſmall a company out of this large tribe, (*Numb.* c. xxvi. v. 43,) unaſſiſted by their brethren, marching upon this enterprize, manifeſted how regardleſs the Iſraelites were of the public cauſe, and how intent they were upon their perſonal indulgence. Yet

houſes near to Micah's houſe were gathered together, and overtook the children of Dan.

23 And they cried unto the children of Dan: and they turned their faces, and ſaid unto Micah, What aileth thee, that thou comeſt with ſuch a company?

24 And he ſaid, Ye have taken away my gods which I made, and the prieſt, and ye are gone away; and what have I more? and what *is* this *that* ye ſay unto me, What aileth thee?

25 And the children of Dan ſaid unto him, Let not thy voice be heard among us, leſt angry fellows run upon thee, and thou loſe thy life, with the lives of thy houſehold.

26 And the children of Dan went their way: and when Micah ſaw that they *were* too ſtrong for him, he turned and went back unto his houſe.

27 And they took *the things* which Micah had made, and the prieſt which he had, and came unto Laiſh, unto a people *that were* at quiet and ſecure: and they ſmote them with the edge of the ſword, and burnt the city with fire.

28 And *there was* no deliverer, becauſe it *was* far from Zidon, and they had no buſineſs with *any* man; and it was in the valley that *lieth* by Beth-rehob: and they built a city, and dwelt therein.

29 And they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Iſrael: howbeit the name of the city *was* Laiſh at the firſt.

30 And the children of Dan ſet up the graven image: and Jonathan, the ſon of Gerſhon, the ſon of Manaſſeh, he and his ſons were prieſts to the tribe of Dan until the day of the captivity of the land.

31 And they ſet them up Micah's graven image, which he made, all the time that the houſe of God was in Shiloh.

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this ſmall troop, in confidence of ſucceſs, took their families with them. Mahaneh-dan ſignifies the camp of Dan.

V. 24. *And what have I more?* &c.] Micah, though ignorant and immoral, yet deemed his religion his chief treaſure; and therefore when they had taken that from him, wherein he had gloried, and on account of which he was confident, that the Lord would do him good, he counted himſelf to have loſt all, and intimated that they might as well have taken all the reſt of his ſubſtance too. Whatever a man thus values, and confides in, and ſuppoſes he cannot live, and be happy in the want of, is his idol, and occupies God's throne in his heart: and he will ere long have to exclaim, "My gods are gone, and what have I more?" Had the Danites deſtroyed Micah's idols, and made an example of the Levite, it might have been juſtifiable: but their conduct was equally a robbery of God, and man. They coveted this ready made religion, and this upſtart prieſt, and oracle, which had ſuddenly riſen into reputation; and they thought the *piety* of the end, would juſtify the violence of the means, which they employed to accompliſh it. And indeed it was a very proper beginning of ſo vile an apoſtacy. The captivity afterwards mentioned was that of the ark, by the Philiſtines, in the early days of Samuel; for it may be ſuppoſed that Samuel and David repreſſed all open idolatry in the land; but it continued all the years of the judges, till the ark was removed from Shiloh. Afterwards Jeroboam ſet up the worſhip of the golden calf in this very city.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If men were as ſenſibly affected with the wants of their ſouls, as they are with thoſe of the body, the inheritance of the kingdom of heaven, though diſtant, and future, would not be neglected; and the labour, danger, and ſelf-denial, which lie in the way would no longer affright, or deter them from ſeeking it. Whatever valour, wiſdom, or diligence we employ in any undertaking, we ſhall not be really ſucceſsful, if we forget to conſult the Lord, and ſeek his aſſiſtance, and bleſſing; nor are they fit to ſpy out the good land for others, who begin not in this manner. Men will generally find out thoſe of their own character in every place; and an ignorant, and erroneous conſcience will meet with ſome ſuperſtition or falſe religion, apparently coined on purpoſe for it. Succeſs proves not our undertakings to be pleaſing to God, any more than a fortunate conjecture proves a man a prophet: for the former is ſometimes ſent as a curſe upon the ſoul: and the latter is permitted to puniſh thoſe, who deſpiſe, and hate the truth. We ought to be thankful for good government; and for magiſtrates, who put men to ſhame for their crimes; without which they can ſcarce be prevented from deſtroying each other. The bleſſings alſo of liberty, and proſperity call for gratitude: yet when they produce ſloth, ſelf-indulgence, and carnal ſecurity, they indicate approaching deſtruction. Wordly men finding "no want of any thing, "that is in the earth," conſider not the diſadvantages, they lie under, in reſpect of their ſouls: for if their ſituations, or occupations conſiſt not with true religion, they can either do without any, or frame one ſuited to their conveniency. If men are deſtitute of the fear of God, they will ſeize upon whatever they covet, when they poſſeſs power, and can do it with impunity: and juſtice, gratitude, and the rights of hoſpitality form but feeble barriers in their way. Indeed, injuſtice and idolatry conſiſt well with each other; for ſatan loves, though God hates "rob-"bery for burnt-offering." They who do wrong, are commonly much offended, if the injured party dares to complain, or remonſtrate; and thus theft is frequently an

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. A Levite's concubine committing adultery, and returning to her father; his going to take her back, and kindly entertained by her father, v. 1—9. *2d. Their late departure, lodging at Gibeah, and the shameful behaviour of the inhabitants, which ended in the woman's death, v.* 10—28. *3d. The Levite's conduct upon that occasion, v.* 29, 30.

AND it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of mount Ephraim, who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah.

2 And his concubine played the whore against him, and went away from him unto her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah, and was there four whole months.

3 And her husband arose, and went after her, to speak friendly unto her, *and* to bring her again, having his servant with him, and a couple of asses: and she brought him into her father's house; and, when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him.

4 And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him; and he abode with him three days: so they did eat and drink, and lodged there.

5 And it came to pass on the fourth day, when they arose early in the morning, that he rose up to depart: and the damsel's father said unto his son-in-law, comfort thine heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way.

6 And they sat down, and did eat and drink both of them together: for the damsel's father had said unto the man, Be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry.

7 And when the man rose up to depart, his father-in-law urged him; therefore he lodged there again.

8 And he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart: and the damsel's father said, Comfort thine heart, I pray thee. And they tarried until afternoon, and they did eat both of them.

9 And when the man rose up to depart he

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introduction to murder, through the joint influence of avarice, pride, and malice. But they, who rob God of his glory, and tempt others to iniquity, deserve to be plundered by their fellow-creatures; and they, who trust in unprincipled persons need not wonder, if they are deceived. Mercenary priests will go very disgraceful lengths to obtain preferment, and even set their services to sale to the highest bidder. But whilst they eagerly seize upon the proposed advantage, let them remember, that they are increasing guilt, shame, mischief, and condemnation. When the removal of idols weans the heart from idolatry, the anguish of parting will be made up by the consequent advantage: but wretched are they, who are deprived of their idols, and left under the power of the idolatrous affection! Thus death will rend men from all those worldly objects, on which they have placed their affections: their gods will be for ever gone, and what have they more? But the case of self-confident hypocrites, when disappointed of all their towering hopes, will be peculiarly dreadful! Happy they, who renounce all for Christ, and in him have the Lord for their God! no enemies or changes can take their portion, or the comfort of it from them. If we would have this felicity, we must carefully attend to the word, and ordinances of God, and be afraid of every deviation from our perfect rule: "for behold how great a matter a "little fire kindleth."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1. *In those days*, &c.] This happened whilst Phinehas the son of Eleazar was High Priest, and therefore not very long after the death of Joshua: (c. xx. v. 28.) There was then no king in Israel, nor any judge, who exercised authority over the people in general; and the want of a regular civil government produced many fatal effects. This should teach us thankfully to receive the benefits, and patiently to submit to the real, or imaginary inconveniencies of that government, which the Providence of God hath placed over us. In this, and the following chapters we have a most shocking history, which not only gives us a melancholy view of the state of matters in Israel, at so early a period; but a very humiliating picture of the desperate wickedness of the human heart; and a very instructive lesson concerning the fatal effects of sin.

V. 2. *His concubine*, &c.] (*Note, Gen.* c. xxv. v. 6.) This woman seems to have been the Levite's only wife, and was called his concubine, because not admitted to all the privileges of that relation: but her father is called his father-in-law, and he is called her husband. (c. xx. v. 4.) Only this Levite, and that worthless one, of whom we read in the foregoing chapters, are mentioned in the book of Judges: the one of which proved the guilty cause of establishing idolatry; and the concubine of the other, the occasion of the almost total destruction of a tribe in Israel.

V. 3. *Speak friendly*, &c.] By this expression we may hope that this woman was penitent, and cast down under the sense of her guilt, and afraid of being made a public example: which the Levite thus compassionately obviated. It is generally thought that her father was faulty in entertaining her, when she left her husband; and that she had been improperly indulged by him: but it is more plain, that she was not a proper wife for a Levite; and probably his affection for her was inordinate, and his choice imprudent, being chiefly on account of her beauty, which seems to have attracted the inhabitants of Gibeah, when they re-

and his concubine, and his ſervant, his father-in-law, the damſel's father, ſaid unto him, Behold now, the day draweth towards evening, I pray you tarry all night: behold, the day groweth to an end, lodge here, that thine heart may be merry; and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayeſt go home.

10 But the man would not tarry that night, but he roſe up and departed, and came over againſt Jebus, (which *is* Jeruſalem,) and *there were* with him two aſſes ſaddled; his concubine alſo *was* with him.

11 *And* when they *were* by Jebus, the day was far ſpent; and the ſervant ſaid unto his maſter, Come, I pray thee, and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebuſites, and lodge in it.

12 And his maſter ſaid unto him, We will not turn aſide hither into the city of a ſtranger, that *is* not of the children of Iſrael; we will paſs over to Gibeah.

13 And he ſaid unto his ſervant, Come, and let us draw near to one of theſe places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah.

14 And they paſſed on, and went their way, and the ſun went down upon them *when they were* by Gibeah which *belongeth* to Benjamin.

15 And they turned aſide thither, to go in *and* to lodge in Gibeah: and, when he went in, he ſat him down in a ſtreet of the city; for *there was* no man that took them into his houſe to lodging.

16 And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, which *was* alſo of mount Ephraim; and he ſojourned in Gibeah: but the men of the place *were* Benjamites.

17 And when he had lifted up his eyes, he ſaw a way-faring man in the ſtreet of the city: and the old man ſaid, Whither goeſt thou? and whence comeſt thou?

18 And he ſaid unto him, We *are* paſſing from Beth-lehem-judah toward the ſide of mount Ephraim; from thence *am* I: and I went to Beth-lehem-judah, but I *am now* going to the houſe of the LORD; and there *is* no man that receiveth me to houſe.

19 Yet there is both ſtraw and provender for our aſſes; and there is bread and wine alſo for me, and for thy handmaid, and for the young man *which is* with thy ſervants: *there is* no want of any thing.

20 And the old man ſaid, Peace *be* with thee: howſoever, *let* all thy wants *lie* upon me; only lodge not in the ſtreet.

21 So he brought him into his houſe, and gave provender unto the aſſes: and they waſhed their feet, and did eat and drink.

22 *Now* as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain ſons of Belial, beſet the houſe round about, *and* beat at the door, and ſpake to the maſter of the houſe, the old man, ſaying, Bring forth the man that came into thine houſe, that we may know him.

23 And the man, the maſter of the houſe, went out unto them, and ſaid unto them, Nay, my brethren, *nay*, I pray you, do not *ſo* wickedly; ſeeing that this man is come into mine houſe, do not this folly.

24 Behold, *here is* my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine, them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what ſeemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not ſo vile a thing.

25 But the men would not hearken to him: ſo the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abuſed her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to ſpring they let her go.

26 Then came the woman in the dawning of the day, and fell down at the door of the man's houſe where her lord *was*, till it was light.

27 And her lord roſe up in the morning, and opened the doors of the houſe, and went out to go his way: and, behold, the woman his concubine was fallen down *at* the door of the houſe, and her hands *were* upon the threſhold.

jected the offer of the Ephraimite's daughter, (v. 25.) In other reſpects the Levite's character ſeems to have been conſiſtent with his profeſſion.

V. 18. *To the houſe of the Lord*, &c.] At Shiloh, which was near his habitation in mount Ephraim: either his employment as a Levite required his attendance, or he purpoſed to offer ſacrifices, according to the circumſtances of his family, before he returned home. His conduct in refuſing to contract familiarity with the inhabitants of the land, was a very proper, and ſeaſonable example, and proteſt againſt the general diſobedience of the Iſraelites in that reſpect.

V. 22—24.] (*Gen.* c. xix. v. 4—9.)

28 And

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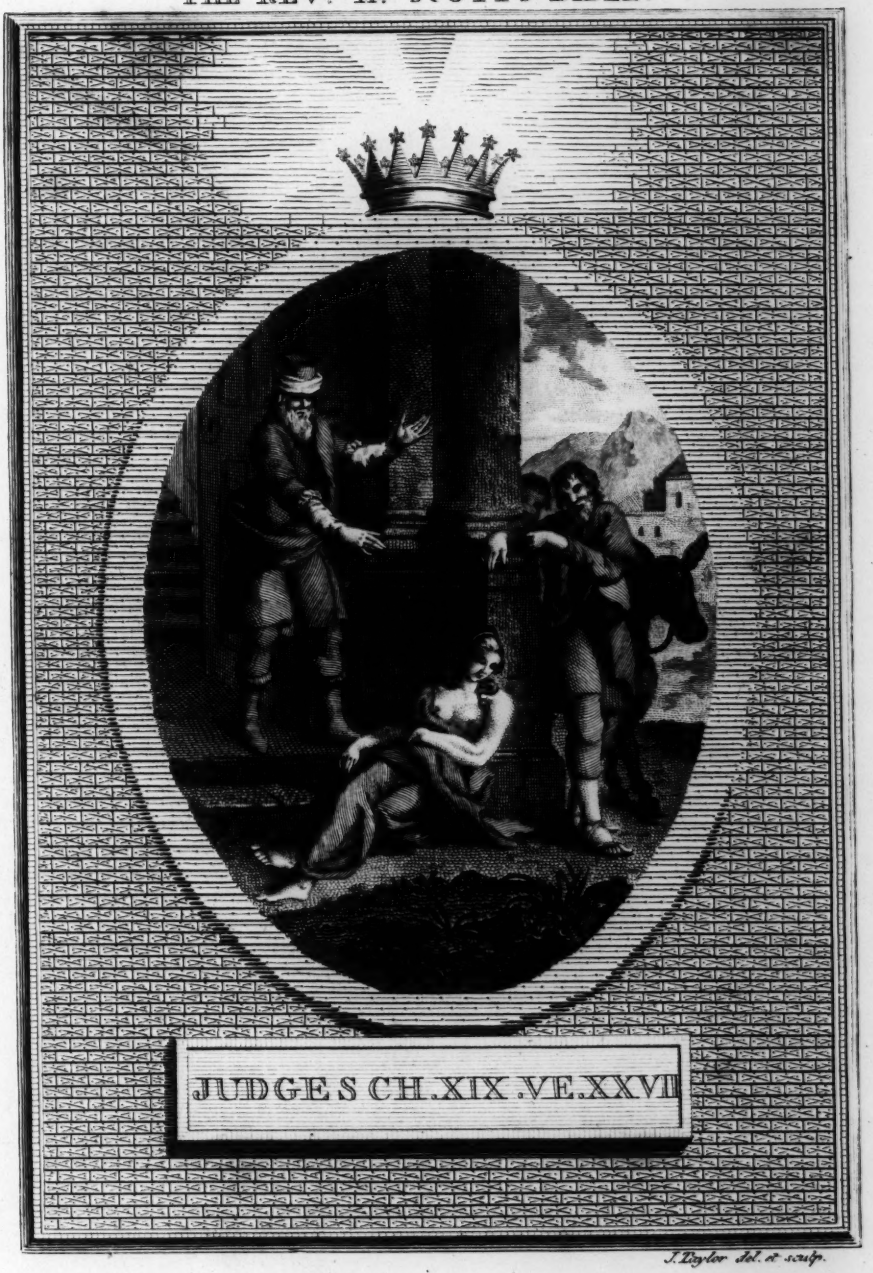

J. Taylor del. et sculp.

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28 And he ſaid unto her, Up, and let us be going: but none anſwered. Then the man took her *up* upon an aſs, and the man roſe up, and gat him unto his place.

29 And when he was come into his houſe he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, *together* with her bones, into twelve pieces, and ſent her into all the coaſts of Iſrael.

30 And it was ſo, that all that ſaw it ſaid, There was no ſuch deed done nor ſeen from the day that the children of Iſrael came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: conſider of it, take advice, and ſpeak *your minds*.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1ſt. The Levite's cauſe heard in a convention of Iſrael; their determination to avenge his quarrel; their demand from the Benjamites to deliver up the inhabitants of Gibeah; who refuſe, and prepare for war, 1—17. *2d. The Iſraelites defeated in two battles with great loſs,* 18—25. *3d. Their ſucceſs*

V. 29, 30.] It had an inhuman appearance thus to mangle the dead corpſe of this unhappy woman: but it was intended to excite a more general attention to, and a keener reſentment againſt ſo horrible a crime, which called for as tremendous a puniſhment. The juſtice of God was diſplayed, even by the enormous wickedneſs of theſe men: adultery was puniſhable by death; this woman was about to eſcape; but in this dreadful manner her iniquity found her out, and was puniſhed in kind. We hope that ſhe died penitent, and found mercy; but the temporal judgment of God purſuing her to death, formed an awful, and ſalutary warning to others not to venture upon ſuch crimes, which God will puniſh, though man may ſpare them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Men are ſeldom aware of the future conſequences of their conduct, when they yield to temptation: and few ſins are followed with ſo fatal, and durable effects, perſonal, domeſtic, or ſocial, as that of adultery. But it becomes miniſters and profeſſors of godlineſs, to forgive and be reconciled, without upbraiding thoſe, who have moſt inexcuſably injured them, when they appear penitent; and to ſpeak comfortably to thoſe, who are in danger of being ſwallowed up of over much ſorrow. External attractions are very deceitful, and often prove the occaſion to the poſſeſſors themſelves, as well as to others, of much ſin, and miſery, nay of final deſtruction: inſtead therefore of being vain of them, ſuch perſons have cauſe to tremble, and to be doubly watchful againſt temptation, and inſtant in prayer for the preſerving grace of God: and ſo much depends on the character, and behaviour of miniſters, that if they chooſe improperly, through ſuch worthleſs inducements, they will be ſure to find either a ſnare, or a croſs. Kindneſs is due to thoſe, who behave with affection in the ſeveral relations of life: but every man hath his proper place and duty, which require his attendance; therefore preſſing importunities may be carried too far, and induce imprudent, and prejudicial conceſſions. For it is beſt always to ſet about our work early; and what we call time enough, generally proves little enough.—How changeable are human affairs! Unexpectedly our brighteſt proſpects are clouded, and the deepeſt calamities overtake us: we ſhould therefore learn to moderate our affections, to lower our expectations, and to ſtand prepared for the worſt. Miniſters ſhould put themſelves to any inconveniency to enforce their precepts by their own example. More inhumanity, and villainy may be expected from degenerate profeſſors, than from infidels: and in general where we expect the moſt kindneſs, we often meet with the greateſt injuries, that we may learn to ceaſe from man. An unfeeling diſregard to the wants of others generally accompanies ſenſuality, and ungoverned luſts: and there are many, who imitate the example of thoſe, whoſe ſhameful crimes have been recorded in their puniſhment; to one, who copies the examples of hoſpitality, integrity, and piety, which are mentioned with commendation in the Scriptures. When men have caſt off the fear of God, they are frequently given up to their own vile luſts even to diſgrace the very nature of a man, and to exceed the very beaſts in their brutiſhneſs: Iſraelites eſpecially, who rebel againſt the light, and grow hardened under the means of grace, will become as abandoned as, and vaſtly more inexcuſeable than filthy Sodomites. When iniquity becomes generally triumphant, few will dare to proteſt againſt it: and it is ſafer to venture into a den of lions, than into ſuch receſſes of iniquity. Yet in the worſt of times, there will be ſome who will venture ſcorn and reproach in being kind to the Lord's ſervants for his ſake; and who will not grudge the expence of hoſpitality: for whilſt idleneſs, and ſenſual luſts waſte a man's ſubſtance, honeſt labour and frugality ſupport the expence of being liberal. But ſuch perſons will live as ſtrangers in this world, and muſt expect to be abuſed by their wicked neighbours, except when an equitable government affords them it's benign protection. In imitating the good actions of God's people, we are very liable to be betrayed into their faults; (*Gen.* c. xix. v. 6—8;) and an unbelieving policy often induces us to make unwarrantable conceſſions: but the commiſſion of ſin to avoid danger will generally involve us in ſtill greater difficulties. The righteous Lord, permits ſinners to execute his juſt vengeance upon one another: and if the ſcene here deſcribed is horrible, what will be the diſcoveries of the day of judgment? Yet this is human nature! And though few will believe the humbling truth, all this wickedneſs is in every human heart; and if we have not committed theſe abominations in our lives, we owe the more gratitude to the Lord, for the reſtraints of his Providence, or the influences of his grace. Whilſt therefore it behoves thoſe in authority, to conſider, take advice, and ſpeak their minds, how, in this ſtate of human nature, crimes may beſt be prevented by the ſalutary puniſhment of criminals: we may each of us conſider, how to eſcape from the wrath to come, to mortify the ſins of our own hearts, to reſiſt ſatan's temptations, and to avoid the pollutions, that are in the world: and how we may beſt be prepared for, and extract benefit from all our temporal calamities.

after having been humbled before the Lord; and the almoſt total extirpation of the Benjamites, v. 26—48.

THEN all the children of Iſrael went out, and the congregation was gathered together as one man, from Dan even to Beer-ſheba, with the land of Gilead, unto the LORD in Mizpeh.

2 And the chief of all the people, *even* of all the tribes of Iſrael, preſented themſelves in the aſſembly of the people of God, four hundred thouſand footmen that drew ſword.

3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Iſrael were gone up to Mizpeh.) Then ſaid the children of Iſrael, Tell *us*, how was this wickedneſs?

4 And the Levite, the huſband of the woman that was ſlain, anſwered, and ſaid, I came into Gibeah that *belongeth* to Benjamin, I and my concubine, to lodge:

5 And the men of Gibeah roſe againſt me, and beſet the houſe round about upon me by night, *and* thought to have ſlain me; *and* my concubine have they forced, that ſhe is dead.

6 And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces, and ſent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Iſrael: for they have committed lewdneſs and folly in Iſrael.

7 Behold, ye *are* all children of Iſrael; give here your advice and counſel.

8 And all the people aroſe as one man, ſaying, We will not any *of us* go to his tent, neither will we any *of us* turn into his houſe;

9 But now, this *ſhall be* the thing which we will do to Gibeah, *we will go up* by lot againſt it:

10 And we will take ten men of an hundred throughout all the tribes of Iſrael, and an hundred of a thouſand, and a thouſand out of ten thouſand, to fetch victual for the people, that they may do, when they come to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Iſrael.

11 So all the men of Iſrael were gathered againſt the city, knit together as one man.

12 And the tribes of Iſrael ſent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, ſaying, What wickedneſs *is* this that is done among you?

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1. *Then all the children*, &c.] We read not at this time of any judge, or great counſel of the nation: and Phinehas the High Prieſt ſeems to have confined himſelf to the duties of his office; and conſidering his piety, zeal, wiſdom, and experience to have been much neglected by the new generation of Iſraelites. Probably each tribe had it's own internal government, to which the Levite ſent his meſſage; and by their united determination, the people were gathered together in arms, to the amount of 400,000 men; and we muſt ſuppoſe that ſome were left at home out of every tribe, to take care of their flocks, and fields, &c. Doubtleſs the Benjamites were ſummoned alſo, but they would not come, and probably were offended at the interpoſition of the other tribes in this buſineſs. Mizpeh was ſituated near to Shiloh, and the encampment of ſo vaſt a multitude might be more conveniently formed there: but they "were gathered together before the Lord at Miz-"peh," and were near the tabernacle, and the High Prieſt, to inquire of him concerning their buſineſs; who was only applied to *officially*, to conſult the Lord by Urim and Thummim, about ſuch queſtions, as they propoſed to him.

V. 8—11.] The abhorrence of the crime expreſſed, and the determination formed by the Iſraelites to puniſh the criminals were very proper: but they formed their reſolves with too much precipitation, reſentment, ſelf-preference, and ſelf-confidence. There were with them alſo ſins againſt the Lord: and the abomination of Gibeah was both an evidence, and effect of their national degeneracy; and it called for deep humiliation, and lamentation that ſuch wickedneſs had been wrought in Iſrael, as well as indignation againſt the criminals. They ought to have begun with perſonal, and national repentance and reformation; with godly ſorrow, ſolemn ſacrifices, and earneſt ſupplications. This was required in other wars; much more in ſuch a war as this; (*Deut.* c. xxiii. v. 9.) no reſolution ſhould have been formed, until all this had been thoroughly attended to; nor until inquiry have been made of the Lord, what he would have them to do, on ſo melancholy an occaſion. For they were not expreſsly commanded to proceed in this manner againſt any crime, however horrid, except idolatry: and we do not find, that they attempted any thing againſt the idolatrous Danites, (c. xviii.) whoſe conduct, though not ſo deſtructive of the peace of ſociety, more immediately ſtruck at the honour of God, and the intereſts of true religion. Not attending to theſe previous duties, but going forth to battle under the guilt of their own ſins, confiding in their ſuperior numbers, and the goodneſs of their cauſe, and elated with ſelf-preference, on account of their exemption from this crime, and their zeal to puniſh it, they met at firſt with ſevere rebukes; and the Benjamites were employed to chaſtiſe them, before they executed the vengeance of God upon *them*, for their more atrocious wickedneſs. Theſe obſervations will help to explain the difficulty, which ſtrikes the reader at the *firſt* peruſal of this chapter: how it was, that the Iſraelites with ſo good a cauſe, and good intentions, and much zeal, and ſome regard to religion, ſhould meet with ſuch diſaſters. Indeed the judgments of God are a great deep, and we frequently cannot diſcern the reaſons of his diſpenſations: but in this caſe, his wiſdom and juſtice are eaſily perceived by the attentive mind, and much important inſtruction may be thence derived.

13 Now therefore deliver *us* the men, the children of Belial, which *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death, and put away evil from Israel. But the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel:

14 But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah, to go out to battle against the children of Israel.

15 And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities, twenty and six thousand men that drew sword, beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered seven hundred chosen men.

16 Among all this people *there were* seven hundred chosen men left-handed: every one could sling stones at an hair-*breadth*, and not miss.

17 And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin, were numbered four hundred thousand men that drew sword; all these *were* men of war.

18 And the children of Israel arose, and went up to the house of God, and asked counsel of God, and said, Which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin? And the LORD said, Judah *shall go up* first.

19 And the children of Israel rose up in the morning, and encamped against Gibeah.

20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah.

21 And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah, and destroyed down to the ground of the Israelites that day twenty and two thousand men.

22 And the people the men of Israel encouraged themselves, and set their battle again in array, in the place where they put themselves in array the first day.

23 (And the children of Israel went up, and wept before the LORD until even, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother? And the LORD said, Go up against him.)

24 And the children of Israel came near against the children of Benjamin the second day.

25 And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeon the second day, and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again eighteen thousand men; all these drew the sword.

V. 13. *Benjamin would not*, &c.] The conduct of the Israelites was in this very equitable: but whether the rulers of Gibeah ought not previously to have been applied to, to have delivered up all the criminals to justice, seems doubtful. However the refusal of the Benjamites, and their patronizing of so horrid a villainy, because committed by their own tribe, prove them to have been deeply corrupted, and (all their advantages considered) as ripe for divine vengeance, as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Confiding in their own valour, and military skill, they seem to have first prepared for battle in this unequal contest.

V. 16. *Left-handed*, &c.] Whether they could use both hands, or only the left hand, they would discharge the stones in a direction, against which their opponents were not upon their guard, and thus do the greater execution. The number of the Benjamites was much decreased, since they were numbered before their entrance into Canaan, (*Numb.* c. xxvi. v. 41.)

V. 18. *Asked counsel*, &c.] This is the only transaction in this whole book wherein mention is made of the tabernacle, ark, priests, and sacrifices, &c; though they had been instituted in so express, and particular a manner: and not only marks the sinful inattention of Israel, but shews that the typical meaning of those institutions was the grand end designed by them. The Israelites did not on this occasion inquire of the Lord, whether they should war against the Benjamites or no? or what reformation, humiliation, fasting, sacrifices, &c, should precede the distressing enterprize? but they took it for granted that they ought to go up, and that they were worthy to be employed, and sufficient to succeed in that service, and only inquired which tribe should have the precedency: accordingly they received an answer to this question, which neither authorised the expedition, nor promised success in it.

V. 23. *And wept*, &c.] The people were much afflicted at so severe a rebuke, and somewhat affected with a sense of their sin, as having brought this calamity upon them: and they accordingly made their inquiry more particular than before. But they were not yet sufficiently humbled, or chastised; and therefore, though the Lord commanded them to go up to battle, they were again put to the worse, and lost so many men, that the whole number slain in the two encounters amounted to many more, than all the fighting men of the tribe of Benjamin. This was a public rebuke for national crimes, and shewed, that, though it was their duty to punish the offenders, they had not gone about it in the proper manner, and in a proper dependance upon the Lord.

26 Then all the children of Iſrael and all the people went up, and came unto the houſe of God, and wept, and ſat there before the LORD, and faſted that day until even, and offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings before the LORD.

27 And the children of Iſrael enquired of the LORD, (for the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in thoſe days;

28 And Phinehas, the ſon of Eleazar, the ſon of Aaron, ſtood before it in thoſe days,) ſaying, Shall I yet again go out to battle againſt the children of Benjamin my brother, or ſhall I ceaſe? And the LORD ſaid, Go up; for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand.

29 And Iſrael ſet liers in wait round about Gibeah.

30 And the children of Iſrael went up againſt the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themſelves in array againſt Gibeah, as at other times.

31 And the children of Benjamin went out againſt the people, *and* were drawn away from the city; and they began to ſmite of the people, *and* kill, as at other times, in the high-ways, of which one goeth up to the houſe of God, and the other to Gibeah in the field, about thirty men of Iſrael.

32 And the children of Benjamin ſaid, They *are* ſmitten down before us as at the firſt. But the children of Iſrael ſaid, Let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the high-ways.

33 And all the men of Iſrael roſe up out of their place, and put themſelves in array at Baal-tamar; and the liers in wait of Iſrael came forth out of their places, *even* out of the meadows of Gibeah.

34 And there came againſt Gibeah ten thouſand choſen men out of all Iſrael, and the battle was ſore: but they knew not that evil *was* near them.

35 And the LORD ſmote Benjamin before Iſrael: and the children of Iſrael deſtroyed of the Benjamites that day twenty and five thouſand and an hundred men: all theſe drew the ſword.

36 So the children of Benjamin ſaw that they were ſmitten: for the men of Iſrael gave place to the Benjamites, becauſe they truſted unto the liers in wait which they had ſet beſide Gibeah.

37 And the liers in wait haſted, and ruſhed upon Gibeah: and the liers in wait drew *themſelves* along, and ſmote all the city with the edge of the ſword.

38 Now there was an appointed ſign between the men of Iſrael and the liers in wait, that they ſhould make a great flame with ſmoke to riſe up out of the city.

39 And when the men of Iſrael retired in the battle, Benjamin began to ſmite *and* kill of the men of Iſrael about thirty perſons; for they ſaid, Surely they are ſmitten down before us, as *in* the firſt battle.

40 But when the flame began to ariſe up out of the city with a pillar of ſmoke, the Benjamites looked behind them, and, behold, the flame of the city aſcended up to heaven.

41 And when the men of Iſrael turned again, the men of Benjamin were amazed: for they ſaw that evil was come upon them.

42 Therefore they turned *their backs* before the men of Iſrael unto the way of the wilderneſs; but the battle overtook them: and them which *came* out of the cities they deſtroyed in the midſt of them.

V. 26.] At length the people were convinced of their error; and inſtead of murmuring, or queſtioning the divine authority of the anſwers, that they had received, as an unhumbled heart would be prone to do; they blamed themſelves alone: and by weeping, praying, faſting, ſacrifices, and particular inquiries of the Lord, conducted the ſolemn buſineſs, in the way, in which it ſhould originally have been undertaken: *i. e.* in a ſpirit of humiliation, repentance, faith, and dependance on the Lord. So that their loſſes proved eventually bleſſings, by ſubſerving the cauſe of true religion amongſt them. Accordingly they received from the Lord a more particular anſwer, and a promiſe of ſucceſs, which was immediately fulfilled, though not without ſome further loſs, (v. 31.) In the mean time the Benjamite's ſucceſs increaſed their inſolence, and hardened them to their deſtruction.

V. 35. *The Lord ſmote*, &c.] Though the numbers of the Iſraelites were ſo much ſuperior to thoſe of Benjamin; though their ſtratagem was well laid, and executed; and the battle bravely fought; yet the inſpired penman aſcribes the victory to the Lord as entirely, as if he had ſmitten the Benjamites by miracle.

43 *Thus* they inclosed the Benjamites round about, *and* chased them, *and* trode them down with ease, over against Gibeah toward the sun-rising.

44 And there fell of Benjamin eighteen thousand men: all these *were* men of valour.

45 And they turned, and fled toward the wilderness unto the rock of Rimmon: and they gleaned of them in the high-ways five thousand men; and pursued hard after them unto Gidom, and slew two thousand men of them.

46 So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were twenty and five thousand men that drew the sword: all these *were* men of valour.

47 But six hundred men turned, and fled to the wilderness unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months.

48 And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin, and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of *every* city, as the beast, and all that came to hand: also they set on fire all the cities that they came to.

V. 47. *Six hundred men*, &c.] The small number that are not mentioned, but which are required to make up the sum total, are supposed to have been slain in the foregoing engagements: and it seems that the whole tribe of Benjamin, with all their women, and children, were destroyed, except six hundred men. The Israelites cannot be justified in this uncommanded, and undistinguishing slaughter, and were doubtless actuated by vehement resentment: but the Lord was pleased to permit it, as an awful example to future ages of his vengeance against those, who commit, and those who countenance, and protect others in such abominations. But though the battle in Gibeah so dreadfully overtook the Benjamites, it did not prevent the growth of ungodliness amongst the other Israelites: so that "the battle "in Gibeah against the workers of iniquity did not over-"take them," (*Hosea*, c. x. v. 9.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are once more called to behold the fatal effects of indulged lusts; and taught to abstain from, and mortify every sinful inclination. Indignation against sin, zeal, promptitude, self-denial, unanimity, and resolution in bringing criminals to justice, when united with a careful investigation of facts, and circumstances, that the innocent may not be involved with the guilty, are very commendable in rulers, and in every one according to their station in society: yet repentance of sins, personal and national, with fruits meet for repentance; a dependance on God's mercy in Jesus Christ for forgiveness and grace, and an application to him for direction and success, are indispensably necessary to ensure his acceptance and assistance. Nature can abhor with indignation the crimes of other men; but grace teaches us to lothe our own. Nature prompts us to punish others with severity; grace inclines us to exercise severity in mortifying our own lusts, and to be tender towards others. But if we attempt to execute wrath upon offenders, or even to reprove, and reform them, whilst we are under the guilt of unrepented, and allowed sin in our hearts, and lives; it is merciful in God to rebuke us sharply for our hypocrisy, and not to leave us to be hardened in it through impunity. But having obtained forgiveness, and deliverance from our own sins, we may reasonably hope to be useful to others also: (*Matt.* c. vii. v. 1—5. *Rom.* c. ii. v. 1. 21—23. 1 *Tim.* c. iv. v. 16.) We may not judge of the goodness of a cause by it's success at first, or for a long time; but must wait for the final issue of things, except we can determine by the law of God. And if we are baffled in our endeavours, (though honestly meant, and zealously persisted in,) to serve the cause of God; we are not to infer, that we are not called to, or are required to desist from them; or even to content ourselves in our ill success: but we are reminded to inquire, whether we have begun our work at the right end? whether our private conduct do not blast our public endeavours? whether we have not been precipitate in our measures? whether we have duly adverted to our own character, as sinners, and are habitually exercising repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? whether we have not failed of humility, and of tenderness towards others? and whether by self-preference, and self-confidence we have not provoked the Lord to leave us experimentally to learn what we are in ourselves, and what we can do without him? Many an honest and zealous endeavour, in a good cause, has attained but little success; for such reasons as these. Therefore we should strictly examine, and deeply humble ourselves for our sins; praying earnestly, that the Lord would not condemn us, but shew us wherefore he contendeth with us. And solemn times set apart for fasting and prayer are never more seasonable, than when we are constrained to lament the ill success, which hath attended our labours to glorify God, and promote his cause, whether as ministers, or as private Christians. When our failures have this effect, they will promote our success; our blunders will increase our wisdom, and our weakness will prove an occasion of increasing our spiritual strength: satan, and his most formidable agents will in due time be constrained to give ground, and whatsoever we attempt shall prosper. In the mean time we should thankfully accept of his chastisement, and not despair of that success, which we prematurely at first expected. But it is hard to temper zeal with tenderness, and boldness with meekness and wisdom: impetuosity hurries us into unwarrantable excesses, or timidity stops short of proper decision. We ought therefore to watch carefully over our own spirits, and to pray continually to be preserved from this strange fire in the work of God: and above all to depend upon the atoning blood of Christ for the forgiveness, and acceptance of our best services. The same considerations should induce us to make candid allowances for those, who are betrayed into similar, or contrary mistakes. But evil pursueth sinners; their triumphing is short, and increases their hardness, and presumption: and how dreadful will be their case, when they shall see destruction coming upon them,

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. The lamentation of Iſrael for the Benjamites; and their perplexity, through their oath, not to marry their daughters to them, v. 1—4. 6, 7. 15—18. *2d. The inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead deſtroyed, for not coming to Mizpeh, &c; except the virgins, who were married to ſome of the Benjamites, v.* 5. 8—12. *3d. Their contrivance for furniſhing the others with wives, v.* 19—25.

NOW the men of Iſrael had ſworn in Mizpeh, ſaying, There ſhall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.

2 And the people came to the houſe of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices, and wept ſore;

3 And ſaid, O LORD God of Iſrael, why is this come to paſs in Iſrael, that there ſhould be to-day one tribe lacking in Iſrael?

4 And it came to paſs on the morrow, that the people roſe early, and built there an altar, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

5 And the children of Iſrael ſaid, Who *is there* among all the tribes of Iſrael that came not up with the congregation unto the LORD? for they had made a great oath concerning him that came not up to the LORD to Mizpeh, ſaying, He ſhall ſurely be put to death.

6 And the children of Iſrael repented them for Benjamin their brother, and ſaid, There is one tribe cut off from Iſrael this day:

7 How ſhall we do for wives for them that remain, ſeeing we have ſworn by the LORD, that we will not give them of our daughters to wives?

8 And they ſaid, What one *is there* of the tribes of Iſrael that came not up to Mizpeh to the LORD? And, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabeſh-gilead to the aſſembly.

9 For the people were numbered, and, behold, *there were* none of the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead there.

10 And the congregation ſent thither twelve thouſand men of the valianteſt, and commanded them, ſaying, Go and ſmite the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead with the edge of the ſword, with the women and the children.

11 And this *is* the thing that ye ſhall do, Ye ſhall utterly deſtroy every male, and every woman that hath lien by man.

12 And they found among the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead four hundred young virgins, that had known no man by lying with any male:

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without any poſſibility of eſcape! For though temporal calamities are often terrible, eternal miſery alone is to be feared entirely, and abſolutely. At that awful period ſinners will be holden in the cords of their own iniquities; their rejoicing will be turned into wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth, and all their hopes will iſſue in eternal deſpair. Hitherto there is ſpace given for repentance, a refuge provided, mercy proclaimed, and a throne of grace erected: thither let ſinners come, and plead the Saviour's name, and yet they ſhall be ſafe and happy. But how will they eſcape, who neglect ſo great ſalvation? all things will combine to haſten, and enhance their condemnation; eſpecially that of thoſe, who live under the light of the goſpel, whoſe crimes are more inexcuſable, and whoſe puniſhment will be proportionably ſevere. And all, who patronize, and delight in the workers of iniquity, will as accomplices ſhare their awful doom. From this condemnation good Lord deliver us!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1. *There ſhall not*, &c.] This raſh vow was the effect of the people's great indignation at the brutal crime of the men of Gibeah, and at the tribe of Benjamin, for protecting them. They deemed thoſe unworthy to be married to any of the daughters of Iſrael, who could treat another man's wife in ſuch a manner, or ſide with thoſe who did: and they haſtily ſwore that they would none of them marry their daughters to them: the conſequence of which ſeemed to be, either that a tribe would periſh from Iſrael; or that the ſurviving Benjamites would be conſtrained to marry heathen wives, contrary to law. Thus they brought themſelves needleſsly into great perplexities, and at laſt evaded the vow by a mere artifice.

V. 4. *They built there an altar*, &c.] As ſo great a multitude was aſſembled, and there were ſo many occaſions for offering ſin-offerings, burnt-offerings, thank-offerings, and vows, &c, probably the brazen altar was found inſufficient, and this was erected as a temporary addition to it, for the preſent occaſion: it ſeems to have been built at Shiloh, (v. 2.)

V. 5. *A great oath*, &c.] They who refuſed their aſſiſtance on this occaſion were doubtleſs blame-worthy, but this did not warrant their brethren thus to devote them to total extirpation. They were backward enough in attempting to extirpate the Canaanites, who were God's devoted enemies; but very haſty to vow the deſtruction of their brethren, who ſlighted their authority.

V. 9—12. *None of the*, &c.] This city lay at a conſiderable diſtance, beyond Jordan, in the borders of the Ammonites, and might not have heard of the vow, that had been made. But if they were guilty of neglect, and diſaffection to the common cauſe, they had not aſſiſted the Benjamites: and yet when the people were grieved for having proceeded to ſuch extremities againſt them; they proceeded to treat thoſe, who were far leſs criminal, with equal rigour! Surely a ſlighter puniſhment might have ſufficed, and enough of the blood of Iſrael had already been

male: and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan.

13 And the whole congregation ſent *ſome* to ſpeak to the children of Benjamin that *were* in the rock Rimmon, and to call peaceably unto them.

14 And Benjamin came again at that time; and they gave them wives, which they had ſaved alive of the women of Jabeſh-gilead: and yet ſo they ſufficed them not.

15 And the people repented them for Benjamin, becauſe that the LORD had made a breach in the tribes of Iſrael.

16 Then the elders of the congregation ſaid, How ſhall we do for wives for them that remain, ſeeing the women are deſtroyed out of Benjamin?

17 And they ſaid, *There muſt be* an inheritance for them that be eſcaped of Benjamin, that a tribe be not deſtroyed out of Iſrael.

18 Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters: for the children of Iſrael have ſworn, ſaying, Curſed *be* he that giveth a wife to Benjamin.

19 Then they ſaid, Behold, *there is* a feaſt of the LORD in Shiloh yearly, *in a place* which *is* on the north ſide of Beth-el, on the eaſt ſide of the high-way that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem, and on the ſouth of Lebonah.

20 Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, ſaying, Go and lie in wait in the vineyards;

21 And ſee, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin.

22 And it ſhall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will ſay unto them, Be favourable unto them for our ſakes; becauſe we reſerved not to each man his wife in the war: for ye did not give unto them at this time, *that* ye ſhould be guilty.

23 And the children of Benjamin did ſo, and took *them* wives according to their number, of them that danced, whom they caught: and they went and returned unto their inhe-

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ſhed! In interpreting their oath, they concluded to ſpare the virgins; probably with reference to the orders given concerning the Midianitiſh women; (*Numb.* c. xxxi. v. 17, 18.) But if their great curſe would admit of this limitation; why could they not have ſpared the other women, and children, and innocent perſons, and only have puniſhed the criminals? But eſpecially why did they not aſk counſel of the Lord, before they proceeded to action? The habit of military executions, which they had contracted in the wars of Canaan, in obedience to the Lord's expreſs command, ſeems to have had too great influence upon them in this affair, without making proper diſtinctions: and convenience, rather than juſtice, or piety ſeems to have induced them to ſpare the virgins, that they might be extricated from ſome of the difficulties, in which their other oath had involved them. But they would have acted better, if they had repented of their raſh oaths, brought their ſin-offerings, and ſought forgiveneſs in the appointed way, than thus to attempt to avoid the guilt of perjury, by actions equally unjuſtifiable.

V. 17. *There muſt be an inheritance*, &c.] The whole inheritance of the tribe was the property of the ſurvivors; and therefore wives muſt be procured them, that they might be repleniſhed to occupy it. The conduct of the Iſraelites in preſerving to the tribe of Benjamin its whole inheritance, was very commendable. Thus the ſurviving Benjamites were unexpectedly advanced to great affluence, by the miſerable deſtruction of their relations: and had it not been for the oath, many of the Iſraelites would have readily contracted alliances with them; by which it appears that they acted conſcientiouſly, though under a miſtaken opinion.

V. 21. *Dance in dances*, &c.] As ſacred dances formed a part of the religious ſolemnities under that diſpenſation; and as this feaſt was obſerved at Shiloh, we may ſuppoſe that it was a religious feſtival; perhaps the feaſt of tabernacles: otherwiſe dancing would have been very unſeaſonable in this time of public affliction. Yet probably the religious joy had gradually given place to a more diſſipated, and ſenſual mirth; as hath been the caſe with the feſtivals, which have been cuſtomarily obſerved in the Chriſtian church. Theſe dances were of young women only, without either men, or married women. This permiſſion was an evaſion of the vow, and gave licenſe to fraud, violence, and the marriage of children, without the conſent of their parents: and if that might be allowed of, the Benjamites could have found themſelves wives, without their giving them their daughters, and without uſing any force towards them.

V. 22. *Each man*, &c.] In this diminiſhed ſtate of the tribe, when every Benjamite could have maintained ſeveral wives, they only deviſed to procure one for each man: whence it appears, that polygamy, though connived at, was not generally practiſed amongſt them. Nor did they ever propoſe ſending them to the neighbouring nations to procure wives; by which it is probable, that ſuch marriages were not very common at that time.

V. 23. *And dwelt in them.*] Thus the remains of the

ritance, and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them.

24 And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe, and to his family, and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance.

25 In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.

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tribe began to increase; and some compute, that Ehud was raised up to be the judge of Israel, of this tribe, after it had been thus diminished.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the passions are vehemently excited, those measures appear needful, which afterwards are perceived to be unreasonable, and unlawful. Such times require peculiar caution, and deliberation, that our passions may have leisure to subside; else we shall certainly make work for bitter repentance. There is this danger in all contests public and private; and a good cause often becomes the occasion of great crimes, as the excess of zeal carries men beyond all the bounds of equity, and humanity. Well might the politic Romans refuse triumphs to those, who conquered in civil war; in which, the common interest is weakened, and the common enemies exult, whatever party acquires the ascendancy. Such unnatural contentions are generally conducted with the most pertinacious fury, and the most envenomed resentment, through the depravity of the human heart, and the subtlety of satan! But he triumphs still more, when he can excite divisions, and contentions in the church of God, whereby the truth is disgraced, the weak, and prejudiced are stumbled, and the enemies of religion alone are rejoiced. Yet many persons of apparent godliness, use greater asperity against their brethren, who are not exactly of their mind; than against the avowed opposers of all religion! But all such contests end in bitterness; (2 *Sam.* c. ii. v. 26, 27;) and the combatants will ere long weep over the effects of their own success. Nothing can be more absurd, than oaths taken, and solemn vows made, in the heat of passion: many have thereby entangled themselves in inextricable perplexity, have been induced to add one crime to another, and to use the most disingenuous evasions, and equivocations: (*Matt.* c. xiv. v. 7—11. *Acts* c. xxiii. v. 12—24:) of all things they require the most cautious reflection upon their future probable consequences. Our penitent confessions, and devotional exercises are too often succeeded by relapses into sin, for want of simply seeking direction from God, and depending on him to uphold us; whereby alone, we can discern, and proceed in the safe path, with comfort to ourselves, and with honour to our profession. Even necessary justice should be executed with deep concern: and men would not be forward in inflicting vengeance on lesser offenders, whilst more atrocious criminals were spared, were they not more ambitious of dominion for themselves, than zealous for the glory of God. Even lawful employments may induce habits, which will be apt to influence the conduct in concerns of another nature, and with very bad effect: we should therefore seek for self-knowledge, keep a strict watch upon our hearts, and be daily consulting the word of God as the rule of our duty. When great offenders are much cast down, they should be treated with gentleness, and preserved, if possible from temptations to despair, and total apostacy: and every act of apparent severity should be connected with evident disinterestedness. Too often the ordinances of God degenerate into a mere form, and carnal mirth supplants holy rejoicing: but those scenes, which the sensual, most delight in, expose them to unthought of consequences; (*Eccl.* c. xi. v. 9;) and give satan, and designing men their utmost advantage against them: all our chearfulness should therefore be tempered with reflection, and watchfulness. Children are generally very culpable, who marry without the consent of their parents; and they are still more vile, who entice them to do so: yet when the matter cannot be remedied, it is commonly the parent's duty, and wisdom to be favourable, and to make the best of it. That men can be so absurd, as to counsel others to acts of treachery, or violence, and to countenance them therein, out of a sense of duty, forms a striking proof of the blindness of the human mind, when left to itself; and of the fatal effects of an ignorant, or erroneous conscience. Our troubles in this world may be succeeded by seasons of comfort, and issue in our advantage; but they, who are cut off in their sins, sink into evil, only evil, and that for ever. Finally, we should be thankful for good magistrates, to restrain the violence of wicked men: but the fear, and love of God should restrain us from doing what is right in our own eyes, except as they are opened to behold the excellency of his most holy law.

THE BOOK OF

R U T H.

This ſhort book forms an appendix to the book of Judges, and an introduction to the enſuing hiſtory. It contains many particulars concerning the family of Elimelech, and informs us in what manner Ruth, a Moabiteſs, became the wife of Boaz, and an anceſtor of David, and of Chriſt. The chief events of the hiſtory took place at Beth-lehem, afterwards the city of David, whoſe genealogy concludes the book; and they muſt have occurred early in the time of the Judges. And probably Samuel was the penman thereof. We find in this Book excellent examples of faith, piety, patience, humility, induſtry, and loving kindneſs, in the ordinary occurrences of life: intimations of the ſpecial care, which God's providence takes of our moſt minute concerns, encouraging our entire confidence therein: and ſome typical repreſentations of the condeſcending love of the Saviour, in aſſuming the likeneſs of ſinful fleſh; and in bringing us ſinners of the Gentiles into the cloſeſt union with himſelf, and enriching us with all his unſearchable riches: theſe ſhould bind our hearts to his ſervice, and conſtrain us to live to his glory.

Before Chriſt 1320.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1ſt. Elimelech, and his family going into the land of Moab; his death; the marriage of his two ſons with Moabitiſh women; their death without children, and Naomi Elimelech's widow preparing to return into the land of Iſrael, v. 1—6. *2d. Orpah and Ruth, her daughters-in-law, propoſing to accompany her; her converſation with them, Orpah's return back, and Ruth's profeſſion, and reſolution to attend her, v.* 7—18. *3d. Their arrival and reception at Beth-lehem, v.* 19—22.

NOW it came to paſs, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land: and a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah went to ſojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife, and his two ſons.

Before Chriſt 1320.

2 And the name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two ſons Mahlon, and Chilion, Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah: and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

3 And Elimelech, Naomi's huſband, died; and ſhe was left, and her two ſons.

4 And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died alſo both of them; and the woman was left of her two ſons and her huſband.

NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Went to ſojourn*, &c.] This removal of Elimelech from the ordinances and people of God appears to have been improper. The famine was not ſo extreme, but others could endure it, and he was a perſon of property, and not likely to want the neceſſaries of life. Probably he thought that he could live better, and at leſs expence in the land of Moab, than in Canaan; but it terminated in the impoveriſhing, and waſting of his family. Elimelech "ſignifies my God the king," and Mahlon, and Chilion, ſignify "ſickneſs, and conſumption," having perhaps been children of a weakly conſtitution.

V. 4. *They took them wives*, &c.] This was the natural conſequence of Elimelech's conduct, in bringing them away from the people of God, and leading them into an acquaintance with the women of Moab. Thus they ſettled in the land of Moab, and ſpent their lives amongſt idolaters, eſtranged from the worſhip of Jehovah; and had they left families, they would probably have been incorporated with the Moabites.

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab, how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.

7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her: and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each *of you* in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11 And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters; why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12 Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband also to-night, and should also bear sons;

13 Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters: for it grieveth me much for your sakes, that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God.

17 Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.

18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

19 So they two went until they came to

V. 6. *Then she arose*, &c.] Perhaps Naomi abode in this strange country contrary to her inclination out of regard to her husband, and her sons; and she was now encouraged to return, by hearing, that the Lord had visited the land with greater plenty; for it would have been very hard for a destitute widow to return home, in a time of great scarcity. She seems to have been a person of eminent faith, and piety, and to have diligently instructed her daughters-in-law in the true religion; which she recommended by her example. They both had a great affection for her, and at first purposed to go with her into the land of Israel, notwithstanding her afflicted condition, though Orpah's resolution failed upon the trial. And their conduct to their husbands, and to herself, received her commendation, and excited her good wishes, and fervent prayers for them.

V. 11. *That they may be*, &c.] According to the law, and custom of the surviving brother marrying the widow of the deceased, who left no children. Naomi thus intimated to them, that she had no temporal advantages, or prospects to propose to them, if they were not disposed to accompany her out of disinterested love to God, and to the people of Israel. Upon this Orpah, not being prepared to venture all consequences, and renounce all her worldly prospects, for the sake of religion, though reluctantly, and with tokens of affection for Naomi, returned back to her country, her relations, and her gods; (*Matt.* c. xix. v. 22. 2 *Tim.* c. iv. ver. 10.)

V. 15. *Return thou*, &c.] Naomi did not desire that Ruth should return; but she intended to make trial of her sincerity, and to excite her to consider how she could bear poverty, and hardship, for the sake of the God of Israel. That if she were not in earnest it might now be discovered; or that she might set out with more steady determination of mind, and more absolute dependance on the grace of God, to enable to stand stedfast in her profession. When therefore she perceived that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she spake no more upon that subject.

V. 16. *Intreat me not*, &c.] The examples and instructions of Naomi had given Ruth the most favourable opinion of the character and religion of the Israelites, so that she desired to have her lot with them at any rate: for the sake of this, she was willing to renounce all her connexions, and prospects in the land of Moab, and to embrace hardship, and penury in a strange country, (c. ii. v. 11.) She was also determined to cleave to Naomi, whose converse had been so useful to her, however destitute, and afflicted she were, until death separated them. For her sincerity in this profession she called the Lord to witness, as well as to multiply her troubles, if she did not fulfill this her solemn engagement. These were doubtless the effects of true faith, and grace; and we may be sure that he who had thus far taught her, would bring her acquainted with every thing necessary to her salvation, and comfort, in due season, and order; and her future conduct evinced that her profession was sincere, and her faith living and genuine. Thus she renounced idolatry, and became a worshipper, and servant of the living God, and counted all but loss for the sake of his favour, and salvation.

V. 19. *Was moved*, &c.] Naomi had probably lived in affluence, and had been much respected: her neighbours

Beth-lehem.

THE REVD MR SCOTT'S BIBLE.

RUTH CH.I.VE.XVI.

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Beth-lehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem, that all the city was moved about them; and they said, *Is* this Naomi?

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

21 I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley-harvest.

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were therefore much surprised to see her return home, so altered in her appearance, and circumstances.

V. 20. *Call me*, &c.] Naomi signifies "pleasant," but Mara signifies "bitter:" she humbly considered her afflictions as coming from the Lord's hand upon her, and her family, for her sins, and that thereby "the Almighty testi- "fied against her," (v. 13:) perhaps considering herself to have been guilty in not leaving the land of Moab, immediately upon the death of her husband.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot form any judgment of the Lord's love or hatred towards us, or others, by outward circumstances; for whom he loves he chastens for their profit, and leaves his enemies to be hardened in prosperity. Afflictions should be submitted to, as the rebuke of God, and we are reminded by them to exercise repentance, and resignation to the divine will: for every endeavour, by carnal policy, to shift off correction, will eventually entangle us in greater difficulties. They, who, when they meet with inconveniency, or hardship, are disposed to change their situations, seldom prosper in this world; and prove that they understand not the real causes of their uneasiness: the displeasure of God, and the pride, and impatience of our hearts, cannot be avoided by change of place, or situation; and whilst these remain, we shall find misery, whithersoever we remove. But when we are tempted to remove from the ordinances of God, and the communion of his people, out of secular motives, we should "remember Lot," and Sodom. In such measures our children, and families are deeply concerned: if they are estranged from the people, and house of God, and brought acquainted with persons of no religion, or of a false religion, no other can be expected, but that they will closely connect themselves with them, and have their portion with them living and dying. Better would it be, to be pinched with poverty, and worn down with labour in the Lord's land, than to live in luxury, and ease, by hazarding such consequences. For our earthly trials, or enjoyments are of short continuance; death is continually removing those of every age, and situation; breaking in upon the most endeared unions as soon as formed, and marring all our outward comforts: we cannot therefore too decidedly prefer those advantages, which shall endure for ever; that we may be ready for every separating stroke. If we are constrained to dwell for a season in places of temptation, we should retire, when the necessity ceases; and consider every rebuke in God's providence as a call to us, to come out, and be separate from the workers of iniquity. If the Lord visit his people, in giving them bread, they ought to be content, and thankful, though they have not abundance of silver, and gold: and the assurance, that he will supply the real necessities of his true servants, should encourage us cheerfully to cast our lot amongst them. In every situation, and relation in life, especially amongst such, as are strangers to, or prejudiced against the truth, believers must aim to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. And when they behave with prudence, integrity, meekness, and kindness; when they have well performed the duties of relative life; when they shew attention to the temporal comfort, and compassion for the sufferings of those around them, with a readiness to do them good; and when they commend what is right in the moral, and relative conduct of those, who are not acquainted with spiritual things; they win much upon them, and render them more disposed to take in good part their endeavours to do good to their souls: and thus, beside the comfort of domestic harmony, the Lord will bless such a conduct, to be the means of bringing those, who were ignorant, careless, or prejudiced, to inquire after his truth, and salvation: whilst the contrary behaviour of too many professors forms the grand prejudice against true religion in the minds of thousands. However many will entertain an affection for such believers, as have been kind to them, and will have favourable sentiments of the gospel; who will not renounce all their worldly interests, pleasures, connexions, and prospects, and join themselves to the poor, and despised people of God, for the sake of Christ, and his salvation. They more desire, "rest in the house of an husband," or in some worldly settlement, or satisfaction, than that rest, to which Jesus invites our souls; and therefore upon trial they will depart from Christ, though sorrowful, and reluctant. Nothing but a deep sense of the importance of eternal things; and a conviction of our guilt, and our need of a Saviour: nothing but that faith, which is inseparably connected with true repentance, and hatred of sin, and which works by love of Christ, and his people, his truths, ordinances, and precepts, will carry a man through all possible temptations in such a world as this. And therefore the Lord proves those, who profess themselves his disciples, by setting the consequences before them in his word, and by giving them some experience of them in his Providence; by which they, who have not faith, are discouraged, and go back to their own people, and their idols: this, though lamentable, is no one's loss but their own. And though we ought greatly to desire the increase of true Christians, yet we should be cautious in our endeavours to multiply the number of *professors*; lest we engage those, who will betray the cause, that they are expected to defend. Especially we ought to examine whether we ourselves are thus stedfastly minded, and determined to cast our lot with the Lord's people, however poor, despised, or persecuted; and that living, or dying, and for ever? We should inquire whether this be our aim, and prayer? Whe-

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1ſt. Ruth gleaning in the field of Boaz, v. 1—3. *2d. His pious meeting with his reapers, and kind behaviour to her, and her reſpectful conduct towards him, v.* 4—16. *3d. Her return to Naomi, and converſation with her, v.* 17—23.

AND Naomi had a kinſman of her huſband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name *was* Boaz.

2 And Ruth the Moabiteſs ſaid unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after *him*, in whoſe ſight I ſhall find grace. And ſhe ſaid unto her, Go, my daughter.

3 And ſhe went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech.

4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and ſaid unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they anſwered him, The LORD bleſs thee.

5 Then ſaid Boaz unto his ſervant that was ſet over the reapers, Whoſe damſel *is* this?

6 And the ſervant that was ſet over the reapers anſwered, and ſaid, It *is* the Moabitiſh damſel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab;

7 And ſhe ſaid, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers amongſt the ſheaves: ſo ſhe came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that ſhe tarried a little in the houſe.

8 Then ſaid Boaz unto Ruth, Heareſt thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here faſt by my maidens.

9 *Let* thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they ſhall not touch thee? and when thou art athirſt, go unto the veſſels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn.

10 Then ſhe fell on her face, and bowed

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ther the proſpect of ſecular advantage has not ſome influence upon our minds? And whether, if that were withdrawn, or changed for the proſpect of poverty, and ſuffering, we ſhould not be tempted to draw back? But if we thus decided in our judgment for the Lord, and his ſervice, and ſalvation, he will aſſuredly accept of, and provide for us; he will make up all our loſſes, ſupport us under all our trials, and communicate unſpeakable conſolations; and whilſt others draw back unto perdition, we ſhall believe unto the ſaving of our ſouls: nay we ſhall even grow more determined by the apoſtacy of others, and by our own difficulties, and temptations: if we are reduced in our circumſtances, we ſhall be more grieved for the ſake of others, than for ourſelves; the conſciouſneſs of our ſins will teach us to ſubmit to our trials without murmuring: and our mourning will be mingled with heavenly ſweetneſs. Whilſt we remark the changes, that take place with reſpect to others, with compaſſion we ſhould be reminded to prepare for changes ourſelves, eſpecially for our laſt change; when the true believer ſhall find that all things have worked together for his everlaſting good.

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 2. *Let me now*, &c.] When Naomi and Ruth were ſettled in ſome homely lodging at Bethlehem; the latter, expecting nothing in Canaan but a life of hard labour, and mean fare, propoſed to go and glean in ſome field, where ſhe might obtain ſuch a favour; for the ſubſiſtence of herſelf, and her mother in-law, who was unable to endure the fatigue and heat, incident to ſuch an employment. The Lord indeed intended other things for her; but he was pleaſed in this manner to prove her ſincerity, humility, induſtry, and patience; and her affection to Naomi for his ſake. Such a trial Orpah could not have ſtood; but had ſhe been aſſured of ſuch a ſettlement in Iſrael, as Ruth at length obtained, ſhe would have come alſo, and have made an hypocritical profeſſion of religion for the ſake of ſecular advantage.

V. 3. *Her hap*, &c.] This circumſtance was *with Ruth* merely accidental, and not the reſult of choice, or contrivance; but it was the effect of the Lord's ſecret direction, in whoſe providence great events depend upon apparently trivial incidents.

V. 4. *The Lord be with you*, &c.] The name of Boaz ſignifies, "ſtrength is in him," and he was a "mighty man "of wealth;" but he was not above perſonally ſuperintending his own reapers; which is generally both for the maſter's intereſt, and the ſervant's comfort. The pious, affectionate language interchanged betwixt him, and his reapers, and which appears to have been familiar to them, induces us to hope that there were many godly perſons in Iſrael, notwithſtanding national defections: and it ſhews what effect their religion had upon their relative conduct, and common converſation, which all ſavoured of unaffected piety, and mutual good-will, producing affability in Boaz, and reſpect and affection in them. It is too lamentably true, that ſuch language as this is ſeldom heard in our fields, whilſt the bounty of Providence is gathering in; but frequently the reverſe; yea whatever can inflame the paſſions, and corrupt the morals, is both heard, and witneſſed on theſe occaſions: ſo that a ſtranger, who ſhould occaſionally be preſent, would thence be apt to form a very different opinion of the religion of England, than Ruth did of that of Iſrael, from the converſe and conduct of Boaz, and his reapers.

V. 10. *Seeing I am a ſtranger.*] That is, no Iſraelite, herſelf

herſelf to the ground, and ſaid unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou ſhouldeſt take knowledge of me, ſeeing I *am* a ſtranger?

11 And Boaz anſwered and ſaid unto her, It hath fully been ſhewed me all that thou haſt done unto thy mother-in-law ſince the death of thine huſband; and *how* thou haſt left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewеſt not heretofore.

12 The LORD recompenſe thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Iſrael, under whoſe wings thou art come to truſt.

13 Then ſhe ſaid, Let me find favour in thy ſight, my lord; for that thou haſt comforted me, and for that thou haſt ſpoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

14 And Boaz ſaid unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morſel in the vinegar. And ſhe ſat beſide the reapers: and he reached her parched *corn*, and ſhe did eat, and was ſufficed, and left.

15 And when ſhe was riſen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, ſaying, Let her glean even among the ſheaves, and reproach her not:

16 And let fall alſo *ſome* of the handfuls of purpoſe for her, and leave *them*, that ſhe may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.

17 So ſhe gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that ſhe had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 And ſhe took *it* up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law ſaw what ſhe had gleaned: and ſhe brought forth, and gave to her that ſhe had reſerved after ſhe was ſufficed.

19 And her mother-in-law ſaid unto her, Where haſt thou gleaned to-day? and where wroughteſt thou? bleſſed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And ſhe ſhewed her mother-in-law with whom ſhe had wrought, and ſaid, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day *is* Boaz.

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but a Heathen born, and brought up, a Moabiteſs, who am unworthy the regard, and unmeet for the ſociety of the people of God, even for that of the handmaidens, (v. 13.) the pooreſt of them; much leſs of the attention of one ſo eminent amongſt them. (*Matt.* c. xv. v. 26, 27. *Luke* c. vii. v. 6, 7.)

V. 11, 12.] Ruth had renounced the gods of Moab, and become a profeſſed worſhipper, and ſervant of the God of Iſrael. In proof of her ſincerity, ſhe had left the land of her nativity, where ſhe might have expected a comfortable ſettlement, to come into the land of Iſrael, without any proſpect of ſubſiſtance, but by her labour. She had left her parents, who were ſtill living, and her other relations, and friends, to come to a people, with whom ſhe had had no previous acquaintance, but againſt whom ſhe had been educated in prejudice, and enmity; and to attach herſelf to a poor widow, whom by her induſtry ſhe muſt help to maintain. And this ſhe did, becauſe ſhe believed that Jehovah was the only true God, and Iſrael his people: and therefore ſhe deſired to be aſſociated with them, and to have the benefit of the ordinances, and inſtructions, with which they were favoured. Thus ſhe came to truſt under the wings of the Lord God of Iſrael, depending on his power, care, and love, both for the bleſſings of ſalvation, and for the things, which were needful for the body. This her conduct had been much noticed, and Boaz had heard of it, and had formed a favourable opinion of her faith, and piety; and therefore he ſhewed her much kindneſs, encouraging her induſtry and affording her protection: and he aſſured her of his prayers for her, "that the Lord would recompenſe her work, &c:" for, though nothing, that we do, can merit ought of God, as a debt; yet every thing which is done, and every advantage, which is renounced for the Lord's ſake, out of humble faith, ſhall certainly be recompenſed with a gracious reward; perhaps in this world with more deſirable temporal comforts; than thoſe, which have been left behind: aſſuredly with inward peace, and with eternal life at laſt; (*Luke* c. xviii. v. 29, 30.) In all ages, and nations, converſion is ſubſtantially the ſame: irreligion or falſe religion are therein exchanged for the ſpiritual worſhip of the true God, through the appointed mediator, and in his inſtituted ordinances; the practice of ſin is changed for the purſuit of true holineſs; ſelf-dependance, for reliance upon God's mercy, grace, and providence for every thing; the expectation of felicity from the world, for the favour of God, as our portion; and the company of the workers of iniquity, for the ſociety of thoſe, who love, and ſerve God. But many *circumſtantials* depend upon a man's outward ſituation. They who have godly parents, and relations, who are engaged in lawful, and uſeful employments, and live in peaceable times, will not be immediately required to make the ſame ſacrifices, as they are, who are called out of families of embittered oppoſers, from occupations inconſiſtent with the precepts of God's word, or in times of furious perſecution. However the more we venture, renounce, or ſuffer for the Lord's ſake, the clearer evidence we have, that our faith is genuine, and that we ſhall receive a full reward. The principle, and the precept are in all caſes alike; but the application varies, according as different trials are allotted us, in the providence of God.

20 And Naomi ſaid unto her daughter-in-law, Bleſſed *be* he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindneſs to the living and to the dead. And Naomi ſaid unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, one of our next kinſmen.

21 And Ruth the Moabiteſs ſaid, He ſaid unto me alſo, Thou ſhalt keep faſt by my young men, until they have ended all my harveſt.

22 And Naomi ſaid unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.

23 So ſhe kept faſt by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley-harveſt and of wheat-harveſt; and dwelt with her mother-in-law.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1*ſt. Naomi inſtructing Ruth how to claim Boaz for her huſband, v.* 1—7. 2*d. The behaviour of Boaz towards her, v.* 8—15. 3*d. Her return to, and conference with Naomi, v.* 16—18.

V. 20. *To the living*, &c.] Boaz had been kind to Elimelech's family, before his removal to the land of Moab; and Naomi rejoiced that his care of her had revived, when ſhe ſo much needed his aſſiſtance; and ſhe begged of the Lord to repay him with his bleſſing.

V. 22. *That they meet thee not*, &c.] That would ſeem a ſlight put upon the kindneſs ſhewn her, as well as evidence an inconſtant temper of mind, which would give them an unfavourable opinion of her.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The diſtinctions, which we form in our narrow minds, concerning little, and great, mean, or important in the perſons, and affairs of men, do not comport with the judgment of the Lord: the gleaning of a poor Moabiteſs, who truſted in him, was deemed more worthy of his condeſcending notice, than the tranſactions of the greateſt princes, then living, which are almoſt entirely conſigned to oblivion. We ought not therefore to mind high things, but to condeſcend to men of low eſtate; and neither to glory in, nor to value others for thoſe diſtinctions, which the Lord thus diſregards. Honeſt induſtry, humble patience in poverty, and hardſhip, and a willingneſs to labour for aged parents, relations, or benefactors, who are unable to provide for themſelves, when they ſpring from true faith, are both honourable, and acceptable to God. True religion will teach a man to behave with propriety in every circumſtance, and relation of life, and will form kind maſters, faithful ſervants, and harmonious families: it will produce mutual love amongſt perſons of different ranks, and engage the rich to condeſcenſion, and the poor to humble, and reſpectful behaviour to their ſuperiors, and benefactors: and it will naturally expreſs itſelf in prayer, and praiſe. This return the pooreſt may render for favours beſtowed, and no liberality will excuſe the rich in the neglect of it: and the good examples of thoſe, who are placed in eminent ſtations, and employ many in their ſervice, are moſt extenſively beneficial. With what gratitude to God, and liberality to the poor ſhould the bounty of a kind providence be received by us unworthy ſinners! and how inexcuſable are they, who abuſe their plenty in intemperance, or covetouſly neglect the indigent, or allow themſelves in wickedneſs, when they are thus experiencing the goodneſs of the Lord! For if the unexpected, and unmerited favours, which we receive from our fellow creatures, engage us to gratitude; what return ought we to render to the Lord for his mercies? In ſhewing kindneſs to the deſtitute, we ought to avoid every thing, that may appear like reproaching them; and uſe our authority to induce others to a ſimilar conduct; for a generous mind in diſtreſs has very exquiſite ſenſibility, that ſhould not be wounded. All perſons ſhould be careful what connexions they form, and what places they frequent; but eſpecially young women, both for conſcience, and credit's ſake: and parents, and other ſuperior relations ſhould have a watchful eye over them, and require an account, where, and with whom they have ſpent their time. In the path of duty is ſafety, and we ſhould keep cloſe to thoſe employments, and ſituations, wherein the Lord hath bleſſed us, without being deſirous of change: he will not ſuffer thoſe, who truſt in him, to want the neceſſaries of life, and will often far exceed their expectations; and tender concern for each other's welfare, affectionate, and edifying converſation, with true piety, and contentment, will render the loweſt circumſtances, and the meaneſt fare comfortable. The Lord will prove thoſe, who enter upon a religious profeſſion, whether they are ſound hearted, and willing to ſtoop, and ſuffer for his ſake or not: but when he hath made trial of them, he will ſtir up the minds of his more experienced ſervants, to ſpeak comfortably to, and deal kindly with them. This is a good work, which all Chriſtians ſhould embrace every opportunity of performing; eſpecially to thoſe, who are chearfully induſtrious, and enduring hardſhip for conſcience ſake. But may not accommodation be here allowed of? Ought not parents to aſk their children where, and what they have gleaned from the ſermons, which they have heard, the books, which they have read, and the converſation that they have joined in? May we not alſo aſk ourſelves the ſame queſtion? He that would increaſe in wiſdom muſt be always thus gleaning, and muſt call himſelf frequently to account reſpecting it; and determine, if poſſible, to get ſome profitable hint from every perſon, and every occurrence. They, who thus daily collect knowledge from others, and keep cloſe to the word, and ordinances of God, will become thoroughly furniſhed for every good work. Finally let us, in the kindneſs of Boaz to Ruth, contemplate the kindneſs of Jeſus to poor ſinners; to whoſe meanneſs he moſt freely condeſcends, on whom though moſt unworthy, he liberally confers his benefits: and whom he neither upbraids himſelf, nor ſuffers others to upbraid with their former tranſgreſſions.

THEN

THEN Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?

2 And now *is* not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor.

3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

6 And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

9 And he said, Who *art* thou? and she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid; spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman.

10 And he said, Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter; *for* thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman.

12 And now it is true that I *am thy* near kinsman: howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I.

13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1—5.] We need not determine, whether this proposal of Naomi, and the compliance of Ruth, were entirely free from blame, or not: certainly it was not recorded for imitation, and is not to be judged of according to the rules of modern decorum. If the proposed measure had been of as ill appearance in those days, as it would be with us, we cannot conceive that Naomi would have advised it, or Ruth complied with it: and whatever tenderness Boaz might have shewn on such an occasion, it would have formed a sufficient reason for his refusing to marry her. The law concerning a man's marrying his brother's widow when he died childless, extended, it seems to the other near relations, when there were no brethren. This law, and custom gave Ruth, now proselyted to the true religion, a legal claim upon Boaz, as Naomi supposed, who knew not of another nearer kinsman. It was customary for widows to assert this claim; (*Deut.* c. xxv. ver. 5—10;) and considering Boaz's character, and superiority of station, she supposed that this was best done in a private manner. She deemed herself bound to promote this desirable settlement for Ruth, and had an entire confidence in both her, and Boaz. And as Ruth supposed Naomi to be best acquainted with the laws, and customs of Israel, she followed her counsel implicitly. Yet, when all allowances are made, perhaps neither party can be entirely exculpated. Their intentions were good, and the Lord prevented all bad consequences.

V. 7. *And when Boaz*, &c.] When their work was finished, it seems that he feasted with his labourers; and, according to the simplicity, and hardiness of the times, afterwards lay down to sleep upon some couch prepared for him in the barn, or in an adjoining tent. It is said "his "heart was merry;" but it may be translated, "his heart "was good;" and be an intimation of his thankfulness for the plenty, which the Lord had sent after the famine; and that his feast was consistent with temperance, and piety, as his consequent conduct proves it to have been. In the mean time Ruth concealed herself, till he was left alone, and then laid down at his feet waiting her opportunity of speaking to him; and by that very action preferred her claim to be received into the marriage relation to him.

V. 9. *Spread thy skirt*, &c.] This is supposed to have been a customary ceremony in contracting marriage, and implied the woman's being taken under the protection of her husband, and admitted to share all his comforts. This therefore was a direct claim upon Boaz to marry her; which she grounded upon the law of God, and his being the nearest relation of her deceased husband.

V. 10—13.] The conduct of Boaz in this transaction is worthy of the highest encomiums. He attempted not to take advantage of Ruth's situation, and proposal of marriage: he did not reproach her with the impropriety of her conduct; nor disdain her, as a poor, destitute stranger; nor suggest, that she was sw yed by interest in preferring her claim: but, instead of suspecting her of any ill inten-

of

of a kinſman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinſman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning.

14 And ſhe lay at his feet until the morning: and ſhe roſe up before one could know another. And he ſaid, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.

15 Alſo he ſaid, Bring the vail that *thou haſt* upon thee, and hold it. And when ſhe held it, he meaſured ſix *meaſures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and ſhe went into the city.

16 And when ſhe came to her mother-in-law, ſhe ſaid, Who *art* thou, my daughter? And ſhe told her all that the man had done to her.

17 And ſhe ſaid, Theſe ſix *meaſures* of barley gave he me; for he ſaid to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

18 Then ſaid ſhe, Sit ſtill, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in reſt, until he have finiſhed the thing this day.

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tions, he imputed her whole conduct to her affection to the family of Elimelech, and to Naomi; as if ſhe had thus ſhewn her greater kindneſs, than in coming with her into the land of Iſrael; and he commended her, for giving him, an elder man, the preference to younger perſons, whether rich or poor, Moabites, or Iſraelites; and for her regard to the law of God: and perceiving her confuſed, as is probable, upon the recollection of her ſituation, he obviated her fears, applauded her, as a woman of approved virtue, and made her a conditional promiſe of marriage, which he confirmed for her fuller ſatisfaction, with a ſolemn oath: and as ſoon as the morning arrived ſent her away with a preſent to her mother-in-law.

V. 14. *Let it not*, &c.] We may conſider theſe words as containing his reaſons for diſmiſſing her ſo early; for he ſaid within himſelf, "Let it not be known, that a woman "came into the floor:" or as his caution to Ruth, not to ſpeak of it to any one. For we do not find that there was any ſervant privy to the interview.

V. 16. *Who art thou?* &c.] Or what haſt thou done? What hath paſſed?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behoves aged perſons to recollect their younger days, and not to exclude young perſons from thoſe lawful ſatisfactions, of which themſelves have now given up all thoughts. Indeed we ſhould not make ourſelves a ſtandard for others, in any matter, which the law of God leaves to our choice; but ſhould, without cenſure, allow others in many things, which we deem inexpedient for ourſelves. The word of God hath pronounced marriage honourable in all; and therefore they, who from inclination, prudential regard to the intereſts of their families, a pious deſire of being more at leiſure, and having more in their power, for the ſervice of God, or through advancing years calling to prepare for the eternal world, chooſe to abide in a ſingle ſtate, ſhould not condemn thoſe, who may have as good reaſons for preferring a married life. If they are imprudent, they will have trouble in the fleſh, but their brethren ſhould ſpare them; and not cenſure what the word of God doth not condemn. (1 *Tim.* c. v. ver. 14.) The married ſtate, when properly entered into, is a reſt, as much as any thing on earth can be ſo called; as it ought to fix the affections, and form a connection for life: and it therefore ſhould be engaged in with great ſerioufneſs, and with earneſt prayers for the direction, and bleſſing of God upon it, and with an eye to his precept, and Providence. And parents ſhould carefully adviſe their children in this important concern, "that it may be well with them," as to the intereſts of their ſouls. The more willing any one is, for conſcience ſake, to renounce wordly intereſts, the more ſhould others deviſe how to promote his advantage. But good intentions will not juſtify improper means: and it is well for us, that we have to do with a pardoning God, who takes better care of our intereſt, purity, credit, and peace, than we often do of our own, and of each other's. Parents ſhould be very cautious what injunctions they lay upon their children, leſt their regard for, and obedience to them, ſhould enſnare their conſcience, and lead them into temptation: for the authority of a parent will not juſtify a ſinful action. Few men have ſuch command of their paſſions, and ſuch candour of mind, as neither to injure the virtue, or the reputations of females, who indiſcreetly put themſelves in their way: and yet to take advantage of a woman's affection, and confidence, for her irreparable damage, is much baſer, than defrauding thoſe, who implicitly truſt in us. However they, who value either their chaſtity, or their character, ſhould flee from ſuch ſituations, in which they can only be preſerved by the ſame power, that preſerved the young men, in the fiery furnace. All our plenty ſhould be ſhared with the poor, and induſtrious: and all our feaſting ſhould be ſo moderated, that we may neither be unfitted thereby for our ordinary employments, nor for the exerciſes of devotion. And when in ſuch circumſtances, and on ſuch occaſions, men can retain the dominion over their paſſions, and conduct themſelves with tenderneſs, prudence, piety, juſtice, and regard to the law of God, though moſt powerfully tempted to ſin, their wealth may be pronounced bleſſed, and their uſe of it honourable. But we muſt not be content even with a clear conſcience in the ſight of God; but we ſhould endeavour to preſerve a clear character, and to avoid whatever may excite ſuſpicion in the minds of others, or open the envenomed lips of ſlander; and we ought to be as tender of other's reputations, as of our own. And in every undertaking we ſhould be diligent in uſing proper means, and then quietly leave the whole to the Lord's deciſion. But without any impropriety we poor, polluted ſinners may apply to Jeſus Chriſt, our neareſt kinſman, and our brother, as dwelling in human nature, to ſpread his ſkirt over us, and to eſpouſe our ſouls to himſelf, to take us under his almighty care, and to admit us to ſhare all his unſearchable riches. He will never blame us for doing this unſeaſonably, or condemn us for the imperfections of our application, if we deſire to be

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. Naomi's nearer kinsman refusing to marry Ruth, v. 1—8. 2d. The marriage of Boaz with, and his son by Ruth, v. 9—17. 3d. The genealogy of his family from Pharez to David, v. 18—22.

THEN went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one, turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

3 And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land which *was* our brother Elimelech's:

4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy *it* before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if thou wilt not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: for *there is* none to redeem *it* besides thee; and I *am* after thee. And he said, I will redeem *it*.

5 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

6 And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem *it*.

7 Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel, concerning redeeming, and concerning changing, for to confirm all things: a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a testimony in Israel.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy *it* for thee: so he drew off his shoe.

9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and *unto* all the people, Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye *are* witnesses this day.

11 And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem.

12 And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, (whom Tamar bare unto Judah,) of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife; and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

his: he will make the best of us, and all we do; and will take our love to him, and desire of his salvation most kindly. And when we have applied to him, he will not rest till he hath accomplished our desires, and will in the mean time communicate blessings to us, and to ours in answer to our prayers. Nor can we too earnestly desire, and seek this same rest for our children, and friends, that it may be well with them also.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1—8.] Probably Elimelech's estate had been sold, till the year of jubilee; but it could not be alienated from the family, (*Lev.* c. xxv. ver. 25—28.) The nearest relation therefore had a right to redeem it by refunding the proportion of the purchase money; and as this would prove advantageous to him, he might be induced thereby to be kind to the poor family. As Elimelech had no surviving issue, it seems probable, that Ruth his daughter-in-law, was considered as entitled to his inheritance, according to the law given in the case of those, who left only daughters, (*Numb.* c. xxvii.) But to obviate all doubt in this matter, Boaz proposed to this kinsman of Elimelech's, that he should both redeem the estate, and marry Ruth; in which case the estate would certainly belong to his eldest son by her: but if he was unwilling to do it, he desired him to renounce his claim, and he would marry her, and redeem the land for himself, (*Numb.* c. xxxvi. v. 5—9.) But he was not willing to marry the poor widow, lest he should injure the circumstances of his family, and he therefore resigned all claim to the estate also. For this transaction respects all the several laws above referred to, and doubtless the whole was settled in the most regular, legal, and customary manner: and as the pulling off the shoe of the kinsman, was not done by Ruth, with the prescribed ceremonies, it seems not to refer to the law about refusing to marry a brother's widow, (*Deut.* c. xxv.

14 And the women ſaid unto Naomi, Bleſſed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinſman, that his name may be famous in Iſrael.

15 And he ſhall be unto thee a reſtorer of *thy* life, and a nouriſher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee, which is better to thee than ſeven ſons, hath born him.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her boſom, and became nurſe unto it.

17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, ſaying, There is a ſon born to Naomi, and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jeſſe, the father of David.

18 Now theſe *are* the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat Nahſhon, and Nahſhon begat Salmon,

21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed.

22 And Obed begat Jeſſe, and Jeſſe begat David.

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v. 9, 10,) but to have been the cuſtom in transferring inheritances.

V. 14, 15.] Naomi was congratulated on this occaſion more than the reſt, as ſhe had the ruins of her family thus providentially repaired, and her old age ſolaced after the death of her huſband, and ſons, through her daughter-in-law, who had loved her, and been a greater bleſſing to her, than ſeven ſons. The piety of the language, and conduct of all parties on this occaſion, ſhould not paſs unnoticed.

V. 17. *Obed.*] This ſignifies either "a ſervant," or "ſerviceable;" either alluding to the low eſtate of his mother, when gleaning in the fields, which now belonged to her: or to the expected uſefulneſs of her ſon to his family, and to Iſrael. From him Chriſt deſcended; and peculiar bleſſings and honour redounded to Boaz, who had not diſdained the low eſtate of Ruth, but had paid due honour to his deceaſed relations, and their decayed family: whilſt the kinſman, who refuſed ſo to do, is not allowed a place for his name in the book of God, but it is diſgracefully conſigned to oblivion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Diligence in buſineſs, punctuality to engagements without unneceſſary delay, integrity, and fair dealing in the affairs of common life, not only adorn a profeſſion of godlineſs, but tend to proſperity in the ordinary courſe of God's providence. Men are generally ready to embrace opportunities of increaſing their eſtates, but few know the value of godlineſs: nor can it be expected, that they, who ſupremely value carnal things themſelves, will make a due eſtimate of ſpiritual excellency in the character of others. Such are frequently the wiſe men of this world, whom the Lord charges with folly; they attend not to the concerns of their ſouls, and reject the ſalvation of Chriſt, for fear of marring their inheritance! Nay ſelfiſhneſs not only obliterates from their breaſts all charity, and juſtice, but extinguiſhes natural affection, and cauſes them to treat with diſdain their neareſt relatives, however excellent, if they are poor, and need their aſſiſtance. But the loſs, in the final event of things, will be their own alone; the Lord will raiſe up other friends for thoſe, who love, and truſt in him; and eſpecially for thoſe, who have ſhewn themſelves willing to bear hardſhip for his ſake. Nay, ſuch perſons, however poor, are a bleſſing to all connected with them. Eſpecially they to be valued in the marriage relation: "a prudent wife is "of the Lord," and "the price of a virtuous woman is "above rubies;" (*Prov.* c. xix. v. 14. c. xxxi. v. 10;) unſpeakably more valuable, than one poſſeſſed of wealth, beauty, and every external accompliſhment, but deſtitute of wiſdom, and grace. As marriage is honourable in the ſight of God, it ought to be publicly contracted, and recognized, that it may be diſtinguiſhed from thoſe deeds of darkneſs, which require concealment: and it is then like to be comfortable, when the law of God is regarded, and the bleſſing of God is ſupplicated in entering into it. In this important concern, (as in all others,) the people of God ſhould pray for one another, that the parties may live together in peace, be good examples, do worthily in the church, and in the world, and train up families for future uſefulneſs, when they have ſerved their generations, and are fallen aſleep. The birth of children alſo calls for united prayers, that they may be indeed a comfort to their parents, bleſſings to ſociety, and bleſſed themſelves: for without the bleſſing of God none of theſe things can be expected: and the general diſuſe of ſuch pious language, and behaviour amongſt profeſſing Chriſtians too plainly ſhew that true religion is at a low ebb amongſt us. Yet we ſhould never promiſe ourſelves much comfort from any earthly object; for our heavieſt trials often ariſe from thoſe quarters, whence we expected moſt ſatisfaction; and our greateſt ſolace from thoſe, whence we expected none: and one true Chriſtian friend may be better to us, than all our children, and relations. But if theſe ſtreams are ſo refreſhing, what may we not expect from the fountain? Let us then look to Jeſus, our redeemer, who "though he "was rich, for our ſakes became poor;" and at the price of his ſufferings, both ranſomed our inheritance, and purchaſed us to be eſpouſed unto him in truth and righteouſneſs: not induced thereto by our worthineſs, or excellency, but by his own unfathomable love to our polluted ſouls. To this union he invites the periſhing ſinner: This relation to the poor deſpiſed believer he avows, and glories in. Let us then joyfully accept of his ſalvation, expect all our felicity from him, and devote ourſelves to his ſervice; and being bought with a price, let us glorify him with our bodies, and ſpirits, which are his; by obeying his commandments, imitating his example, and recommending him, and his ſalvation by word, and deed to all around us.

The First Book of SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

The First Book of the KINGS.

This Book, and that, which follows, have their name from the prophet Samuel; though only a part of this first Book could be written by him; and the penman of the remainder is not known. But when Samuel was raised up to be the judge of Israel a new epoch commenced; in him the government by judges terminated, and the regal government was introduced, in Saul first, and afterwards in David, whom Samuel by divine command anointed kings; and these books proceed no farther, than their reigns, and are an introduction to the following history of the other kings of Judah, and Israel. From the Vulgate Latin translation, they are also called the first, and second Books of Kings, and the following, the third, and fourth Books of Kings. The first Book contains the history of about eighty years, though the chronology cannot be exactly ascertained. Therein we find Israel under the government of Eli, the High Priest, and their affairs greatly disordered by the wickedness of his sons. We have an account of Samuel's being raised up to be their reformer, and deliverer, and of his character, and actions. The history proceeds in the advancement of Saul to be the king of Israel, and of his ill behaviour; in the anointing of David to be his successor, and of his character, and exploits, and of Saul's persecution of him, until his death opened the way for David to the throne; who was not only the ancestor of Christ, but an eminent type of him, both in his person, and his kingdom. Many things in this book are worthy of our imitation, and encouraging to the faith, hope, and patience of the suffering believer: there are also many useful cautions, which we should regard with peculiar attention; and many awful warnings, to deter men, from turning back from a religious profession, from yielding to the suggestions of pride, envy, and malice, or from using their authority, and influence in persecuting the servants of God.

Before Christ 1131.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1st. An account of Elkanah, and of Hannah, and Peninnah, his wives, v. 1—3. 2d. Elkanah's attention to the worship of the Lord; and Hannah's disquietude because of her barrenness, and the misbehaviour of Peninnah, v. 4—8. 3d. Her prayer, and vow, and consequent comfort, and Eli's discourse with her, v. 9—18. 4th. The birth of Samuel, and the performance of her vow, v. 19—28.

NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:

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NOTES.

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *An Ephrathite.*] Elkanah appears to have been a Levite, (1 *Chron.* c. vi. v. 26—28. 33, 34.) Ramathaim Zophim was the place, which is afterwards called Ramah, and Arimathea; and, from the plural number here used, is supposed to have been divided into two or more parts, upon different eminences; the word Zophim signifies watchmen, perhaps because some watch towers, and watchmen were stationed there, for Ramah, signifies exaltation: or it might be so called from Zuph, Elkanah's ancestor. Ephrath is the same as Bethlehem, and he was called an Ephrathite probably from being allied in the female line to some family of the tribe of Judah, whose inheritance lay there.

2 And he had two wives; the name of the one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship, and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions.

5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7 And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her: therefore she wept, and did not eat.

8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? *am* not I better to thee than ten sons?

9 So Hannah rose, up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk: (now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD:)

10 And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14 And Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord; I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD.

16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial; for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

V. 3. *Yearly to worship*, &c.] The worship at Shiloh was kept up, but probably in an irregular manner, or Elkanah a Levite, would have had employment there. However in those times of apostacy, and idolatry, when men abhorred the offering of the Lord, through the wickedness of Eli's sons, it was commendable in Elkanah to go up, though but once a year, perhaps at the Passover, to worship the Lord. The Israelites were confined to one place, one altar, &c; and therefore Elkanah could not go elsewhere. But, though the wickedness of ministers doth not deprive the pious Christian of the blessing, nor furnish a sufficient excuse for neglecting the ordinances of God; yet not being under a similar limitation, we should prefer attending on *their* ministry, who appear at least to be walking heaven-ward themselves, as well as teaching others the true way thither.

V. 5. *A worthy portion*, &c.] When Elkanah evidenced his affection for Hannah, who probably was his first wife, by the customary indications, the envy, and jealousy of Peninnah, as well as her proud contempt of Hannah's barrenness, were excited, and great uneasiness was occasioned in his family: for Hannah laid these things more to heart, than she ought, and her perpetual sorrow distressed Elkanah, and greatly interrupted the comfort and benefit of the religious ordinances, on which they were attending. As this was the case from year to year, it was a strong temptation to him to keep away: and it might be one reason why Hannah refused to eat of the sacrifices; lest being eaten in mourning, the Lord should be displeased with her: (*Deut.* c. xxvi. v. 14. *Mal.* c. ii. v. 13.)

V. 8. *Am not I*, &c.] Elkanah remonstrated with Hannah concerning her immoderate grief, and reminded her, that though she had no children, she possessed his affection; which would conduce more to her real comfort, than ten sons without it would; and that therefore her situation was more desirable than that of Peninnah. This gentle rebuke prevailed with her to repress her grief, and partake of the sacrifice: but that did not comfort her heart, till she had poured it out in prayer.

V. 14—16. *How long*, &c.] Perhaps Eli had many times seen such abuses, as he here charged Hannah with, in those days of disorder, and excess, and sat near the tabernacle, (or temple, as it is called, being now stationary,) to repress such enormities, though he did not adopt the only effectual method. Perceiving her great discomposure, he too hastily attributed it to drunkenness; which was faulty in him, and had a tendency to increase her distress: (*Heb.* c. xii. v. 13—15.) But Hannah had now obtained such inward consolation, that this severe reflection neither distressed her, nor excited her anger. And she

17 Then

17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.

19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.

23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26 And she said, Oh, my lord! *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

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calmly explained to him the real cause of her agitation; and declared her abhorrence of the crime, of which he suspected her. In doing this, she defined the nature of fervent prayer very emphatically: "I poured out my soul before "the Lord." For prayer doth not consist *only* in using good words, but in opening before the Lord the inmost soul, and in unreserved confidence pouring out before him all our fears, sorrows, desires, and purposes; as a child would before a loving father, from whom alone he had expectations of relief, and who, he was satisfied, was able and disposed to help him.

V. 17. *Then Eli answered*, &c.] Though the character of Eli was very defective, yet there are many traces in it of true piety; and this answer is one. He was open to conviction, and willing to acknowledge himself mistaken; and to make Hannah, when he understood her real character, amends, by his commendation, blessing, and prayers, for the injury, which he had done her.

V. 20. *Samuel*, &c.] That is, "asked of God." This name would remind his mother, every time it was mentioned, of the Lord's kindness in remembering her affliction, and in answering her prayer.

V. 21. *His vow.*] Probably Elkanah had made a vow in case of Hannah's having a child, as well as consented to that, which she had made. The women were not commanded to go up to the sanctuary, and Hannah had a sufficient engagement at home.

V. 26. *That stood by thee*, &c.] Her heart was too full of joy, and gratitude, upon this occasion, to recollect the injurious reflection Eli had cast upon her: but she well remembered her prayer, and vow, and the Lord's gracious answer. This was a proper use of the memory; though we are more apt to remember injuries from man, than mercies from God.

V. 28. *I have lent him*, &c.] It may be rendered "I have "returned him to the Lord," as from him I have received him. It was her intention, that, as a Levite, and a Nazarite, Samuel should spend all his life in the immediate service of the sanctuary. But the Lord was pleased afterwards to employ him, as a prophet, and a judge in the public affairs of Israel.

He worshipped, &c.] The Jewish writers say that Samuel was three years old at this time: but he was not too young to attend with reverence on the worship of God, and to give early indications of true piety.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

General experience evinces the kindness, as well as equity, of the original institution of the divine law of marriage, and the fatal effects of deviating from it: for thereby men have marred their own comfort, and given rise to domestic contentions, and toenvy, malice, impatience, and every evil work, to the interruption of the worship of God, and the destruction of family religion. But none of our crosses, and trials must be suffered to drive us from the ordinances of God; for if satan can induce us to yield to discouragement in one respect, he will make trial in another, and never cease to harass us, when we are engaged in the duties of religion, till he hath driven us from every thing. Resolute resistance, and perseverance, with earnest cries to the Lord for his assistance, are our only successful weapons: "give not place to the devil:" (*Eph.* c. iv. ver. 26, 27.) The human heart can neither bear prosperity without insolence, or adversity without impatience; both which imply rebellion against the precept,

CHAP. II.

Contains. 1*ſt. Hannah's ſong of praiſe to God, v.* 1. 10. 2*d. Samuel's miniſtrations, his parents care of him, Eli's prayer for them, and Hannah's further fruitfulneſs, v.* 11. 18—21. 26. 3*d. The wickedneſs of Eli's ſons, and his too mild reproof of them, v.* 12—17. 22—25. 4*th. An awful meſſage to him by a prophet, v.* 27—36.

or the providence of God. Inſtead of being contented and thankful in our appointed ſituation, and rejoicing in the happineſs of others, we are prone to murmur, and to envy, and to vex ourſelves, becauſe others are more favoured, or proſpered, than we ſuppoſe ourſelves to be: yet could we change conditions in every reſpect with them, we ſhould generally increaſe our uneaſineſs. And impartial reflection upon our own ſituation in life, compared with our unworthineſs, and the condition of others, would ſilence our complaints, or convert them into thankful praiſes. But all inordinate paſſions are irrational, as well as inimical to our comfort: and even godly perſons, who are ſhocked at the thought of yielding to ſome temptations, often rebelliouſly, and ungratefully indulge exceſſive grief; which they ſhould watch, and pray againſt. But if our earthly comforts, when duly eſtimated, are greater than our croſſes, and the one ought to conſole us under the other; ſurely the favour of God is better to his people, than all beloved relations, or outward ſatisfactions, and ſufficient to compenſate for the want, or the loſs of them all. Every one ſhould comfort thoſe, who are in bitterneſs of ſoul: yet a mild, and tender rebuke is frequently the greateſt kindneſs, when we ſee our friends forgetting their mercies, or their duty. Nothing can give ſolid comfort to thoſe, who are in anguiſh of ſpirit, but the experience of the love of God ſhed abroad in the heart; nor will that cordial in general be communicated, till they have poured out their ſouls repeatedly in earneſt ſecret prayer. All other comforts, and comforters give feeble and tranſitory relief; this alone is adequate, and effectual. Without this, even the ſacrifice, and interceſſion of the Saviour, the attendance on public ordinances, and every religious exerciſe, will communicate no peace or joy to the ſoul. But ſecret prayer, when earneſt, and importunate, brings a bleſſing upon, and puts life into them all: nor could a concurrence of all poſſible diſtreſſes, and temptations render that man miſerable, or long uncomfortable, who improves aright the precious privilege of acceſs to the mercy-ſeat of a reconciled God in Chriſt Jeſus. But through ſatan's temptations, and the evil of our hearts, we are often reluctant to begin, and ſlight in preſenting, and haſty in concluding our petitions. Hence it is that we go mourning all the day long, inſtead of caſting our burden upon the Lord: and our miſeries will increaſe upon us, till we take this courſe; and the more we experience the ſweet conſolations, which are thus communicated, whilſt the ſoul is poured out before the Lord, the more we ſhall determine to call upon him, "as long as we live;" (*Pſalm* cxvi. v. 1—4.) Amongſt the various trials, to which we are expoſed in this world, none is in general more bitter, than the unkind ſuſpicions, and unmerited cenſures of thoſe, whom we love, and eſteem: who judging by appearances, may undeſignedly condemn our beſt actions, as deeming them the worſt of crimes. But whilſt the Lord hears our prayers, and comforts our hearts, we may bear even this with patience, and anſwer it with meekneſs: for though it is painful to be counted a child of Belial by our brethren; yet if our loving Father ſees that correction to be needful for us, and favours us with the aſſurance of his acceptance, and the light of his countenance, we may thankfully ſubmit to his will. Even before thoſe bleſſings are vouchſafed, which we have aſked in prayer, or we are certain of obtaining them, the Lord ſometimes communicates theſe ſupports to the ſoul, that exceed every temporal advantage, that no outward trouble can deſtroy, and that give a reliſh for thoſe mercies, which before we undervalued, or overlooked. We are moſt likely to obtain our deſires, when we are rendered willing to ſubmit our wills to the will of God, whether we ſhall have them or not. And no temporal ſatisfaction can be durably comfortable, which we cannot name Samuel "aſked of the "Lord;" which we do not receive from him with gratitude, as an anſwer to our prayers, and uprightly deſire to uſe to his glory, and in his ſervice. And although in general it is better to ſubmit to the Lord's will, whether he pleaſes to give us children, or not: yet if he give them, we ſhall have the moſt comfort in them, when they are moſt entirely his; and therefore we ſhould devote them to him from the firſt, bring them up for him, and pray continually that we may ſee early proofs, that he hath received them into his family, and made them his, to ſerve him all their days. The vows, or prayers, that we have made in our diſtreſs, muſt be performed with gratitude, when our deſires have been granted; that others may praiſe the Lord with us, and be encouraged to truſt in, and call upon him. We ought to be very cautious how we condemn thoſe who are uncommonly earneſt in religion, as if they were guilty of hypocriſy, enthuſiaſm, or other iniquity: and miniſters eſpecially, in their zeal againſt ſin, ought to be very careful, that they do not grieve ſuch, as are in bitterneſs of ſpirit: but if we have raſhly cenſured thoſe, who are not faulty, we ſhould be ready to hear their plea, to retract our deciſion, to give them encouragement, and to aſſiſt them with our prayers. It becomes not the profeſſion of godlineſs to be ſoon weary of the ordinances of God; but to leave them reluctantly to attend on our other duties: and when men are in ſuch haſte to ſet out upon journeys, or to engage in buſineſs, that they have not time to worſhip God, they are like to proceed without his preſence and bleſſing. There are times, when domeſtic employments may render it a duty to be occaſionally abſent from public ordinances; but thoſe ſeaſons ſhould abound the more in the exerciſes of ſecret devotion: and when ſpecial bleſſings have been conferred, and reſtraints are removed, the true believer will go with more eager deſires to the courts of the Lord, to pay his vows, and render his grateful praiſe. With what tranſports of joy then will the true believer at laſt, leave this diſtant land below, to aſcend to the courts above, to receive the full anſwer of all his prayers, and to render everlaſting praiſes, with an uninterrupted flow of holy affections, and with ineffable delight!

AND Hannah prayed, and ſaid, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD; mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies: becauſe I rejoice in thy ſalvation.

2 *There is* none holy as the LORD: for *there is* none beſide thee; neither *is there* any rock like our God.

3 Talk no more ſo exceedingly proud; let *not* arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD *is* a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of the mighty men *are* broken, and they that ſtumbled are girded with ſtrength.

5 *They that were* full have hired out themſelves

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *Hannah prayed*, &c.] (*Luke*, c. i. v. 46—55.) The word prayer is ſometimes uſed for any act of devotion, whether it be confined to petition, or include thankſgiving, and praiſe, or chiefly conſiſts of the latter. When Hannah aſked Samuel, ſhe ſpake in heart, but her voice was not heard; for that matter lay entirely betwixt the Lord, and her ſoul: but when, according to her vow, ſhe preſented him to God, his glory, and the edification of his people required a public acknowledgment. Whilſt her heart was enlarged with love and gratitude, ſhe was led on by the ſpirit of prophecy, to deſcant on thoſe things, which relate to the diſpenſation of God's providence, and grace to Iſrael, to the church of God, and to the world at large, even in future ages to the end of time. "Her heart rejoiced," not in Samuel, though juſtly beloved, but "in the Lord," who had given him to her; in his power, faithfulneſs and love: as having ſhewn her this ſpecial favour, what might ſhe not expect from ſuch a friend? "Her horn," (which is the weapon for defence, and annoyance in animals,) "was exalted in the Lord, and her "mouth was enlarged over her enemies;" for being delivered from the provocations of her rival, ſhe took that as an earneſt of more important victories, and rejoiced in the hope of triumphing over the adverſaries of her ſoul; for ſhe expected, and rejoiced in the ſalvation of the Lord, and in the expectation of it's completion in glory; as well as of *His* coming, who is the whole ſalvation of his people.

V. 2. *There is none*, &c.] From theſe perſonal mercies, Hannah proceeded to contemplate the perfections of that God, from whom they were derived. His holineſs, which compriſes all thoſe moral excellencies, that are his glory, and beauty, ſhe firſt celebrated. Juſtice, truth, goodneſs, and mercy, with abhorrence of every thing inconſiſtent with them, are in the Lord alone, underived, immutable, and complete; "there is none holy as the Lord:" all created holineſs is derived, dependant, mutable, and ſcanty; all human holineſs, defiled with a mixture of impurity. Nay, ſays the propheteſs, "there is none beſide thee," none holy, no other God, and all creatures are leſs than nothing, and vanity in the compariſon with him, (*Iſaiah*, c. xl. v. 15—17.) "nor is there any rock, like our God;" (*Deut.* c. xxxii. v. 4. 31:) he is the only protector, refuge, and ſupport: and they only are ſafe and ſtrong, who truſt entirely in him.

V. 3. *Talk no more*, &c.] If the propheteſs here at all noticed the boaſtings of Peninnah; ſhe certainly alſo meant ſomewhat much greater; and addreſſed as preſent the enemies of the church, who confiding in their numbers, ſtrength, courage, and conduct; and elated by ſucceſs, arrogantly gloried in themſelves, and inſulted over the deſpiſed ſervants of God. Theſe ſhe commanded to ceaſe from their proud boaſtings, and to remember, "that the Lord "is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." He diſtinguiſhes men's characters, and weighs their actions in the balance, and knows when to interpoſe in behalf of his people; for he knows, and approves of their temper and conduct, and will certainly plead their cauſe: he alſo knows thoſe, who deſpiſe, and hate him, and abhors their character, and will in due time effectually puniſh them, though for a ſeaſon they may ſeem to proſper.

V. 4—8.] The events which theſe verſes ſpeak of, are frequently called the viciſſitudes of blind fortune, whoſe fickleneſs, and capriciouſneſs are frequently railed at: but thy are indeed the reſult of infinite wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs, with irreſiſtible power, and ſovereign authority executing the ſettled purpoſes of God, of manifeſting his own perfections of ſaving thoſe, who truſt in, and love him; and of pouring contempt upon all other diſtinctions, in which ungodly men confide, and glory. Are they proud of their valour, military ſkill, or bodily ſtrength? their bows ſhall be broken, and themſelves unaccountably cruſhed, by an inferior, and deſpiſed company. Do they glory in their riches, and riot in eaſe, and luxury, whilſt they deſpiſe, and oppreſs the poor? They are frequently impoveriſhed, and reduced to the neceſſity of hiring themſelves out for bread, whilſt the poor and hungry are ſurpriſingly advanced to affluence. Do any glory, (as Peninnah did) in the increaſe of their families, and deſpiſe thoſe, who remain childleſs? The providence of God can ſoon, by unexpected death reduce their numbers, whilſt the deſolate are as wonderfully increaſed. For the Lord gives life, and takes it away, as he pleaſes: the moſt vigorous are by the ſtroke of his hand brought down to the gates of the grave; and the feeble are unexpectedly reſtored to health, and ſtrength. Such viciſſitudes are often obſerved in men's circumſtances, and families, contrary to all the rules of probability, wherein capacity and induſtry are utterly unavailing to prevent adverſity; and have no hand in raiſing men to proſperity; even from the loweſt, and moſt abject condition, to the throne of glory. Such events occaſion ſurpriſe, and many attempt to account for them; but the truth is, that it is the Lord's doing. "The pillars of the earth are his, and he "hath ſet the world upon them:" and the ſame power, which firſt created, and eſtabliſhed the earth in it's ſettled courſe, without human help, and in ſuch a manner, as no human power can change; by his ſecret overruling providence does every thing, and ſhould be acknowledged in every thing: and all creatures, animate, and inanimate, rational, or irrational, willing, or unwilling, are his inſtruments: and not only thoſe intelligent agents, who obey his

ſelves for bread; and *they that were* hungry ceaſed: ſo that the barren hath born ſeven; and ſhe that hath many children is waxed feeble.

6 The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiſeth up the poor out of the duſt, *and* lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to ſet *them* among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's, and he hath ſet the world upon them.

9 He will keep the feet of his ſaints, and the wicked ſhall be ſilent in darkneſs; for by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail.

10 The adverſaries of the LORD ſhall be broken to pieces; out of heaven ſhall he thunder upon them: the LORD ſhall judge the ends of the earth; and he ſhall give ſtrength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

11 And Elkanah went to Ramah to his houſe; and the child did miniſter unto the LORD before Eli the prieſt.

12 Now the ſons of Eli *were* ſons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.

13 And the prieſt's cuſtom with the people *was, that* when any man offered ſacrifice, the prieſt's ſervant came, while the fleſh was in ſeething, with a fleſh-hook of three teeth in his hand;

14 And he ſtruck *it* into the pan, or kettle,

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commands; but they, who follow their own devices, have all their attempts overruled to promote his ſecret wiſe, and righteous purpoſes. Theſe things are equally applicable to the diſpenſations of his kingdom of grace: wherein he reſpects not men's wiſdom, learning, greatneſs, or imagined excellency: but, paſſing by thoſe, who deem themſelves intitled to his regard, ſelects the vile, the poor, the fooliſh of the world, having taught them to feel their guilt, and miſery, and to value his free, and precious ſalvation: and thus he repleniſhes his church from the high-ways, and hedges, and "takes the poor from the duſt, and the beg-"gars from the dunghill, to ſet them among princes, and "to make them inherit the throne of glory," "according "to the eternal purpoſe, which he hath purpoſed in Chriſt "Jeſus our Lord:" (*Pſalm*, cxiii. v. 7, 8. *Eph.* c. iii. v. 11.)

V. 9. *He will keep*, &c.] His ſaints are thoſe, whom his grace hath ſeparated from a ſinful world, and ſanctified unto himſelf. "Their feet he will keep:" they ſhall be directed, and upheld in his ways; they ſhall not ſo ſtumble, as utterly to be caſt down; nor be ſo ſnared, as finally to be taken captive by their enemies; for the Lord being their guide, and keeper, will lead and protect them "in the midſt of the "paths of judgment," through this dangerous world to glory. But however ſinners may now boaſt, and fill the world with clamour, aud confuſion, they will ere long be put to ſilence, and ſink ſpeechleſs under the divine ſentence of condemnation, into everlaſting darkneſs, and deſpair. "For by ſtrength ſhall no man prevail," either to injure the Lord's people, overturn the intereſt of true religion, or ſecure themſelves from merited deſtruction.

V. 10. *The adverſaries*, &c.] Whilſt the Lord's adverſaries ſhall be totally ruined, his church ſhall proſper, not only as it did under the government of David, his king, whom Samuel by his command anointed; but under the goverment of his ſon, the Meſſias, who hath all power given him in heaven, and earth, who ſhall go on conquering, till all the ends of the earth ſubmit to his mediatorial ſway; and until he come to judge the quick and dead, at his appearing; when all enemies ſhall finally be put under his feet, and his glory be diſplayed in their deſtruction, and in the complete ſalvation of his people.

V. 11. *The child did miniſter*, &c.] The Levites were not called to any of their peculiar ſervices, until they were twenty-five years of age; but Samuel being devoted to the Lord in an eſpecial manner, was from a child employed about the ſanctuary, in thoſe things, of which he was capable: and as he did this from a pious diſpoſition of mind, it was approved, and called "miniſtering unto the Lord."

V. 12. *They knew not the Lord*, &c.] The ſons of Eli had been brought up in the courts of the Lord, and inſtructed out of the law, and perhaps had ſome ſpeculative knowledge of divine things: yet being ſons of Belial, men of a rebellious, and diſobedient ſpirit, it is ſaid, that "they knew "not the Lord." They had not that acquaintance with the divine character, united to a diſpoſition of heart to love it's excellency, which are eſſential to true Godlineſs; nor *that experience* of his faithfulneſs, and loving kindneſs, which they attain to, who truſt in, and call upon him, and have real communion with him. For want of this knowledge of God, and through their ignorance, error, or inattention to theſe firſt principles of religion, all their attendance upon divine ordinances was from the firſt mere hypocriſy, and they gradually ran into more flagrant abuſes. Eli appears to have been a godly man, and probably ſet his ſons a good example in private life, and gave them good advice, and inſtruction: but he yielded to a natural timidity, and feebleneſs of mind, and ſhunned trouble, and exertion; by this diſpoſition he was induced to indulge his children too much, without uſing his parental authority to reſtrain, and correct them, when young: and he connived at many abuſes in the ſervice of the ſanctuary, till they became cuſtoms, and made way for greater abominations; and even then he did not exert himſelf as became the High-Prieſt, and judge of Iſrael to puniſh, and repreſs them. This one fault opened the way for all the enormities, and fatal conſequences, which followed.

V. 13, 14.] The prieſts had their portion allotted them by the law out of every ſacrifice; which was given them

or

or caldron, or pot; all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh unto all the Israelites that came thither.

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And *if* any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and *then* take *as much* as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, *Nay*; but thou shalt give *it me* now: and if not, I will take *it* by force.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD; for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home.

21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

22 Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.

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after the burning of the fat, and before those, who offered the peace-offerings, prepared to feast on their portion with their friends. In addition thereto, this custom had crept in, and the people in veneration for the priesthood had quietly submitted to it; by which their appetites were gratified with greater variety, and their avarice, with an additional perquisite; (*Isa.* c. lvi. v. 9—12.)

V. 15, 16.] The sons of Eli were not long satisfied with the customary innovation; but, whilst they neglected, or postponed the duty of burning the fat, (which, typifying the sacrifice of Christ, and being the appointed expression of the officer's repentance, and faith, was essential to the acceptance of the offering,) they insisted upon having such portions of the flesh, as they chose, that they might indulge their sensual appetite: and when any one conscientiously, and mildly remonstrated against such an abuse in the ordinance of God, though willing to yield every other point to them, their very servants were so insolent, as to threaten to take it by force. Thus they "lorded it over God's heri-"tage," and "kicked at his sacrifice, which he had com-"manded."

V. 17. *The sin of the*, &c.] Their contempt of God, and of his ordinances, and the public dishonour done to his name was very great; and their sin was aggravated by their public character, and eminent station: but it is especially noted, that through them, "men abhorred the "offering of the Lord;" many were so prejudiced by their scandalous behaviour, as to think any religion, or no religion, better than the service at the tabernacle, and so were tempted to, or hardened in their idolatry, or irreligion: others, who were better disposed, would deem it unnecessary to put themselves to the trouble, and expence of going up to Shiloh with their sacrifices, to witness such enormities: and even they, who persevered in their attendance, were so grieved, that they hated to go, and had no comfort in the ordinances of God. Thus the whole appointment of God was likely to be neglected, and forsaken, and general ignorance, ungodliness and profligacy to ensue. Yet we do not read that Eli reproved them for these things, or refused to feast with them upon those portions of the sacrifices, which they so sacrilegiously obtained! for he seems to have been too indulgent of himself, as well as of them.

V. 18, 19.] The contrast betwixt the child Samuel, and the wicked sons of Eli, betwixt his docility, and early piety, is *intentionally* marked, by the accounts of them being thus interwoven. It was a trial of the faith of Elkanah, and Hannah to leave their son with such abandoned priests; but they were performing a vow, and the Lord, with whom they trusted him, preserved him from the contagion: and Eli was peculiarly pleased with him, and clothed him in a linen ephod, such as the priests wore, and others occasionally, in the service of God, thereby denoting the great expectations, that he had from him. And his parents who persevered in coming to the courts of the Lord, notwithstanding abuses, supplied him with every thing that he wanted, suitable to his station.

V. 20, 21.] It seems that Elkanah, and Hannah, having so hopeful a son, though they seldom saw him, were satisfied without more children: but in the midst of our censures of Eli, we have here somewhat to his praise: it appears that he really loved those, who loved the Lord; and was so taken with the conduct of Samuel, and with the piety of his parents; that his heart was enlarged in blessing them, and in praying, that they might be recompensed for devoting their only son to the service of God's sanctuary, by having more children: and his prayer in this respect was heard, and abundantly answered.

V. 22. *How they lay*, &c.] These women, who assembled at the door of the tabernacle, are said by some writers, to have dedicated themselves by courses to the service of the sanctuary, doing any work pertaining thereto, which belonged to their sex: such as spinning, weaving curtains, &c: and that by their attendance there the priests formed that acquaintance with them, which they abused to such vile purposes. Their business at the door of the tabernacle, was doubtless professedly of a religious nature; and perhaps they were not, at first, devoid of serious impressions: but when those, who ought to have been their instructors in

23 And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people.

24 Nay, my sons: for *it is* no good report that I hear; ye make the LORD's people to transgress.

25 If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall intreat for him? notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them.

26 (And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the LORD, and also with men.)

27 And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's house?

28 And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?

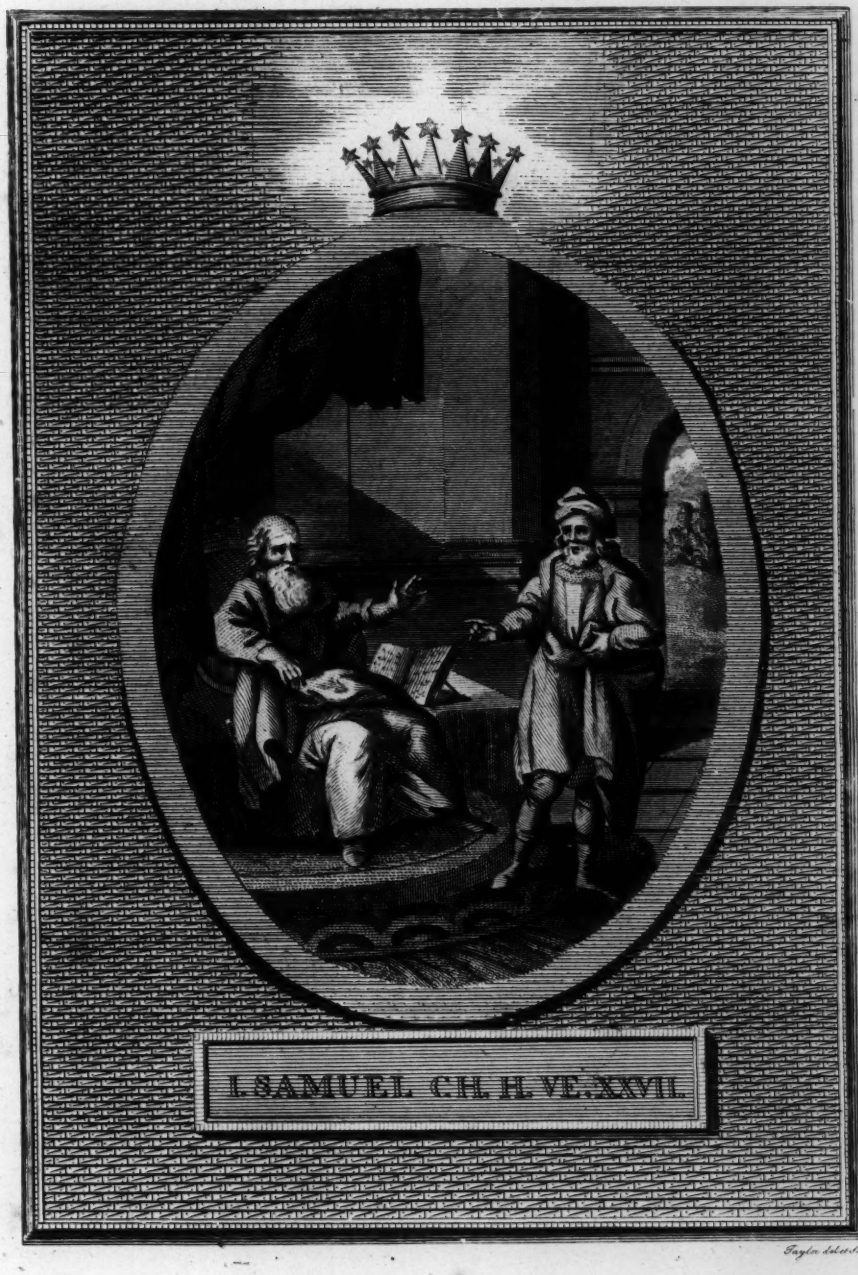
29 Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded *in my* habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?

religion, used their influence to solicit them to wickedness, the most shameful consequences followed. A more horrible abomination can scarce be conceived; and we should hardly have deemed it credible, did not almost every age and place produce examples of the same shameful abuse of religious profession, to the great dishonour of the gospel, and to the hardening and rejoicing of the hearts of the opposers of it's sacred truths.

V. 22—25.] This last enormity induced Eli to reprove his sons; which he did in language very reasonable, and suited to the case of those, who though faulty possess a tender conscience; but much too mild for such atrocious offenders. Indeed no words ought in such a case to have sufficed: the execution of condign punishment upon them was absolutely due to the insulted honour of God, and in order to counteract, by the salutary example, the fatal effects of their crimes upon the minds of the people. To have finally excluded them from the execution of every priestly office, was the least, that Eli, as the High-Priest, and the judge of Israel, ought to have done: and if he had remembered the words of Moses, (*Deut.* c. xxxiii. v. 9,) and had honoured God more than his ungodly sons, he would have done it: for there were priests enough without employing such monsters of iniquity, in so sacred a service, and with such fatal consequences: and his neglect of this duty was chastised in the most terrible manner, in their destruction, with the slaughter of 30,000 Israelites, in the captivity of the ark, in his own violent death, and in the ruin of his family! However his words are worthy our consideration: he endeavoured to convince them, that their conduct was notoriously evil, that their characters were publicly infamous, that religion was scandalized, and the Lord's people, in various ways, were made to transgress: that, if their crimes had only injured their fellow-creatures, the judge might have appointed a penalty, which being paid, or submitted to, the guilt might have been taken away: or if their sin had been of an ordinary kind, the priest, who was judge in such cases, having offered their sin-offering, and intreated the Lord for them, they might have been forgiven. But their offence was so directly against the Lord, and so interwoven with their ministrations as priests, and was committed even in offering the sacrifices for sin; that, no expiation was appointed for such presumptuous crimes, no intreaty or intercession could be made for them; and none could dare to stand between them, and that wrath of God to which they were exposed: for the intercession for sinners with a holy God, is grounded upon the atonement of the promised Saviour, which the sacrifices, which they had so horribly polluted, were intended to typify; (*Heb.* c. x. v. 26—29.) This seems to have been the meaning, which was couched under Eli's words, though, perhaps through his timidity, not very plainly expressed. Every wilful deliberate sin contains such ingratitude, rebellion, and enmity against God, and such robbery, and contempt of him, that no creature could have dared to have intreated for a sinner, if the Son of God had not expiated guilt with his own sacrifice, and undertaken the office of mediator betwixt God, and man. But they, who sin against that remedy, by persisting in the neglect, contempt, or abuse of this great salvation, must perish without help, and without mercy, and without any one, at the last, so much as intreating the Lord for them. Their case was indeed bad, for whom their own father could not intreat the Lord, though he had not resolution to restrain, and punish them. It seems that they utterly disregarded their father's reproof; for the Lord was determined to restore the honour of his own ordinances by executing signal vengeance upon them, and therefore he left them to total obduracy.

V. 27. *A man of God*, &c.] (*Judges* c. vi. v. 8—10.) This prophet, as most of those in after ages were, was sent an extraordinary messenger from God, to reprove the neglect, and wickedness of his ordinary ministers, the priests. And this humiliating circumstance, of a man of God being sent to the High-Priest, and judge of Israel, was in itself a token of the Lord's displeasure, and a preparation to his being further warned and reproved from God by the mouth of the child Samuel.

V. 29. *Honourest thy sons*, &c.] As Eli was intrusted with authority, and bound by his combined offices to repress wickedness without partiality, and to maintain the worship of God in it's purity, he was deemed an accomplice in the crimes of his sons, because he connived at them; and was therefore with them accused of ingratitude for the singular favour, which God had shewn the family of Aaron in gene-



Taylor delet. &c.

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30 Wherefore the LORD God of Iſrael ſaith, I ſaid indeed *that* thy houſe, and the houſe of thy father, ſhould walk before me for ever: but now the LORD ſaith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed.

31 Behold, the days come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's houſe, that there ſhall not be an old man in thine houſe.

32 And thou ſhalt ſee an enemy *in my* habitation, in all *the wealth* which *God* ſhall give Iſrael: and there ſhall not be an old man in thine houſe for ever.

33 And the man of thine *whom* I ſhall not cut off from mine altar, *ſhall be* to conſume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart: and all the increaſe of thine houſe ſhall die in the flower of their age.

34 And this *ſhall be* a ſign unto thee, that ſhall come upon thy two ſons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they ſhall die both of them.

35 And I will raiſe me up a faithful prieſt, *that* ſhall do according to *that* which *is* in mine heart, and in my mind: and I will build him a ſure houſe; and he ſhall walk before mine Anointed for ever.

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ral, and their branch of it in particular; with "kicking at," and deſpiſing the ſacrifices, only regarding them, as the means of gratifying their avarice, and ſelf-indulgence, without any view to the glory of God, and the benefit of his people. All this aroſe from his partial regard to his ſons, whom he honoured, by continuing them ſtill in the prieſts office, notwithſtanding their crimes: nay he honoured them more than God himſelf, by preferring their ſafety, intereſt, and indulgence, to the glory of God, the honour of his ordinances and law, and the ſalvation of his people: whereas he ought not to have "known his own children," but to have diſregarded even their lives, and to have ſtifled all paternal tenderneſs, in his zeal for God, and his worſhip.

V. 30. *I ſaid indeed*, &c.] Eli was deſcended from Ithamar, the younger ſon of Aaron. It is not known why the High Prieſthood came to be tranſlated from the line of Eleazar, probably it was for ſome miſconduct; and perhaps the Lord had given a *conditional* promiſe that it ſhould continue in Ithamar's family, whilſt they continued to "walk before him in "true Godlineſs." But this promiſe was now forfeited by their crimes; and the Lord informed Eli, that office ſhould not be continued in his family; aſſigning a reaſon, of univerſal application, in the diſpenſations of God; "them "that honour me, I will honour, and they that deſpiſe me, "ſhall be lightly eſteemed." They, who chooſe the Lord for their portion, truſt him for their ſalvation, love him above all created objects, renounce worldly intereſts, and connexions for his glory, and count nothing too good to part with, too hard to do, or too ſharp to ſuffer for his ſake, and to promote his cauſe, ſhall be honoured by him, perhaps in this world, certainly in the world to come: but they who deſpiſe his authority, his favour, his frown, his ſalvation, his cauſe, or his glory; in compariſon of the intereſts, eaſe, credit, or pleaſure of themſelves, or their families, ſhall ſink into contempt in this world, or in the world to come, or in both.

V. 31—34. *I will cut off thine arm*, &c.] The Lord declared that he would impoveriſh his family, and reduce the remains of it to the moſt debaſed condition; with this peculiar circumſtance, that as Eli had in old age ſo miſbehaved himſelf, all his family ſhould die young. This began to take place, when the Philiſtines invaded, and plundered Iſrael, made dreadful havock, and took the ark of God, (thus as it were ſpoiling his habitation of the chief glory, and treaſure of Iſrael,) and ſlew his two ſons in one day. And had Eli lived to ſee the miſerable ſlaughter, which Saul made of his deſcendants; (c. xxii. v. 17—20;) and Abiathar's being depoſed by Solomon for treaſon, (1 *Kings*, c. ii. v. 27,) and the conſequent indigence, and miſery of his family, the ſight would have been painful to his eyes, and grieving to his heart.

V. 35. *A faithful prieſt*, &c.] This was fulfilled, when Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, was made High-Prieſt, whoſe poſterity continued in that office during the reigns of the deſcendants of David, and concurred with the pious princes in promoting true religion; to whom the deſcendants of Eli, crouched and petitioned for the loweſt ſervice; not for love of the work, but out of mere indigence, and in order to earn the ſmalleſt wages, or meaneſt maintenance. The concurrence of the prieſts of Aaron's line, with the kings of David's family, whilſt they thus walked before the anointed of the Lord, to fulfil the will of the Lord, typified the union of the kingly and prieſtly offices in Jeſus Chriſt.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The mercies, which we receive in anſwer to our prayers, ſhould not only be acknowledged with thankful praiſe, but ſhould lead us to rejoice in the Lord, as the fountain of felicity, and the God of ſalvation, and to anticipate with chearful hope, our complete deliverance from, and victory over all the enemies of our ſouls. From what the Lord hath done *for us*, we ſhould be led to meditate upon his glorious perfections, as diſplayed in all his works, but eſpecially in his dealings with ſinners, who hope in his mercy. An eſtabliſhed judgment, concerning his perfect wiſdom, power, love, and faithfulneſs, as exerciſed with ſovereign authority in all the adminiſtrations of his kingdom of providence, and grace; and an habitual regard to his operations in all theſe events, which take place through the inſtrumentality of ſecond cauſes, or rational agents, of whatever kind or character, will confirm our belief, that they, and they only are ſafe and happy, who truſt in him, and enjoy his favour; that the preſent ſucceſs, boaſtings, and confidence of the wicked will ſhortly iſſue in diſappointment, miſery, and deſpair; and the troubles of every humble believer, in triumph, and exultation. Vain and tranſitory are all other diſtinctions

36 And it ſhall come to paſs, *that* every one that is left in thine houſe ſhall come *and* crouch to him for a piece of ſilver and a morſel of bread, and ſhall ſay, Put me, I pray thee, into one of the prieſt's offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.

except that, betwixt the godly, and the ungodly, which will ſurvive, and ſwallow up all the reſt, and will endure to all eternity. The Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions "are weighed:" and he knoweth, and approveth his people, and he marketh with abhorrence the preſumptuous offender: with uncontrolable authority he diſpenſeth to every man, as he pleaſes; and in his own moſt wiſe, and gracious time, and manner, he will terminate the afflictions, and advance the comforts of his people, and overrule every event, for their good. In him let them therefore truſt, and to him ſubmit, and wait his time, and they ſhall acknowledge at laſt, that he hath done all things well. All the circumſtances of our life, and death are already appointed in the ſecret purpoſe of our God, and we ſhall live, however expoſed, till he pleaſes to take our breath; and then we muſt die, whatever efforts may be made to prolong our lives. As this unknown period cannot be far diſtant, our wiſdom and duty is to prepare for it; to make it our one great buſineſs to obtain the Lord's favour, and do his will: and then, we ſhall at length inherit the throne of glory, however abject our condition may be in this world. And though our path be dark, and ſlippery, and beſet with ſnares, and enemies, the Lord will keep our feet, and uphold our goings, by the ſame power, which eſtabliſheth the earth: nor can any power prevail againſt his ſaints, or prevent the deſtruction of his enemies. And may the Lord haſten that day, when his anointed prieſt and king ſhall eſtabliſh his authority, throughout the earth, upon the ruins of all oppoſition. Our gracious God accepts our thanks for mercies received, as prayers for further benefits; and when we offer him his own, he conſiders the ſervice as a loan, and as ſuch will recompenſe it. Out of the mouth of babes he can perfect his praiſe, and by their example expoſe the ſhame of thoſe ſons of Belial, who, with every advantage, know him not, and rebel againſt him. There is great encouragement given us to devote our children to the Lord in prayer, from their birth, yea from their conception in the womb, to bring them early to his courts, and to train them up in his ways; for, generally he takes ſuch children into his ſervice, and gives them that *ſpiritual*, and *experimental* knowledge of himſelf, which fortifies the heart againſt temptation, and is the ſource of all true godlineſs. The feeble attempts of children to ſerve God are noticed with condeſcending regard, as peculiarly pleaſing to him; and in all caſes, "where "there is a willing mind, it is accepted according to what "a man hath, and not according to what he hath not:" and the grace of God is ſufficient for his feebleſt ſervants, in their proper place, though in the midſt of the worſt examples, and ſtruggling with the moſt powerful temptations. The neglect of properly educating children, and the indulgence of their wayward inclinations, is a ſin, which God ſeverely chaſtiſes in his own people: becauſe it ſeems to imply a contempt of his authority and ſpecial favour, and a diſregard to his glory, as well as to *their* immortal ſouls; and becauſe it tends to the moſt fatal abuſes, and apoſtaſies, and to the utter decay of true religion. None are generally more abandoned than the degenerate children of godly perſons, when they have broken through all the reſtraints of ſhame, conſcience, and regard to character: and thus the cauſe of godlineſs ſuffers in loſing thoſe families, which were it's ſupport, and in the prejudice, which their baſe conduct excites in the minds of beholders. And when ſuch children of Belial have been admitted into the ſacred miniſtry, and go on with the forms of godlineſs, for the ſake of the emoluments, or authority, whilſt they are real infidels, and profligates; they prove the moſt fatal enemies to the cauſe of God, and the moſt deſtructive murderers of the ſouls of men. Many they miſlead, but more they prejudice againſt all religion, and furniſh atheiſts, ſceptics, blaſphemers, and ſcoffers, with their moſt formidable weapons; they ſupply excuſes to the careleſs, and ſlothful; they diſcourage the hearts, and damp the zeal of thoſe, who are ſeriouſly diſpoſed, and cauſe even the Lord's people to tranſgreſs; they bolſter up the confidence of hypocrites, and by their enticements and examples tempt many to ſuch crimes, as they would otherwiſe have trembled to think of. Though we ſhould abhor the crimes of ſuch men; yet we ought not on that account to think the worſe of the ordinances, truths, or precepts of God's words; but by perſevering in a contrary conduct, we ſhould enter our proteſt againſt them, and evince the difference betwixt the name, and the reality of religion.—Abuſes in the ſervice of God, when once introduced, are ſoon ſanctioned by cuſtom, and conformed to without heſitation: and when wicked men have gained one point; for their own lucre, they will attempt another, and not ſhrink from the commiſſion of the baſeſt crimes, for the ſerving of their ſelfiſh purpoſes. In ſuch a caſe mild arguments, and gentle rebukes are feeble weapons: the coercive arm of authority ſhould impartially and deciſively interpoſe: for, though the magiſtrate muſt not uſe his ſword in matters of conſcience; yet he ought to uſe it in puniſhing atrocious immorality in perſons of every deſcription. However, if they eſcape with impunity, through the falſe tenderneſs, or partial negligence of thoſe, who ought to execute condign puniſhment upon them, they will not eſcape the vengeance of God: and wretched indeed is their caſe, who by their abuſe, or contempt of the ſacrifice of Chriſt, are excluded from the benefit of his interceſſion; and, who have ſo long hardened themſelves, as to be let alone of God to be hardened, becauſe he hath determined to deſtroy them. But when they, who have the grace of God in their hearts, yield to temptation, and repeatedly commit iniquity, the Lord will perſevere in his rebukes, and chaſtenings, till he hath brought them to repentance: and in this proceſs offenders will ſmart ſeverely; the diſhonour, which they have occaſioned to the name of the Lord, ſhall redound in diſgrace upon themſelves, and their families: the crimes, which they have connived at in others, through eaſe, ſelf-indulgence, or partial affection, ſhall be corrected in themſelves: their expectations ſhall be blaſted, their diſtinctions withered, their uſefulneſs precluded, and their honour laid in the duſt; or rather transferred to thoſe, who honour God: and perhaps the repeated and ſevereſt ſtrokes of the Lord's chaſtiſing rod, ſhall purſue them down to the grave. That improper regard to the intereſt of their families, which induces men to offend God, often proves

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Contains, 1st. The Lord calling Samuel, and informing him of his purposes against the house of Eli, v. 1. 14. 2d. Samuel telling Eli of them, and Eli's submissive reply, v. 15—18. 3d. Samuel established to be a prophet of the Lord, v. 19—21.

AND the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose, and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD, for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went, and lay down in his place.

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the immediate cause of the ruin of their posterity; whilst that disregard to all personal, or relative interests, when the glory of God is concerned, which his word requires, forms the best method of promoting their welfare. Many of the Lord's offending people live to see terrible effects of their misconduct; but how would it grieve their hearts, if they could foresee all the future consequences of every kind, upon their families, upon the church of God, and in hardening sinners to their destruction! Let us endeavour to conceive of them, that we may be induced to greater abhorrence and dread of sin, and to more constant watchfulness and prayer: for these things were written for our warning, that we might more earnestly resist temptation, and strive against the beginnings of iniquity, and train up our families in the nurture, and admonition of the Lord. But whosoever misbehaves, or is degraded from the Lord's service, the work shall not be stayed for want of instruments: and though others have been, and are useful, and faithful, as servants, in their several generations; yet the Son of God is the faithful and merciful High Priest, who doeth according to all, that is in the heart of his heavenly Father, and whose priesthood shall be unchangeable and eternal. The meanest office under him, is great preferment; his pleasant service recompenses itself; he will here feed, and hereafter glorify all, who disinterestedly serve him: but the hirelings he will utterly exclude. May he furnish, and send forth many faithful ministers, who may seek his glory, and follow his example; and may he never henceforth suffer any, who resemble Hophni, and Phinehas, to prostitute the sacred ministry to their avarice, and ambition, or to disgrace it by their crimes!

NOTES.

CHAP. III.] V. 1. *And the word of*, &c.] We have only read of the prophetess Deborah, and of two other prophets since the death of Moses, (*Ch.* ii. v. 27. *Judg.* c. vi. v. 8:) and they seem only to have delivered an occasional message, and to have retired; so that their names are not recorded. But in Samuel prophecy was openly established, and continued, after his days, for many ages in Israel. But before his days, "there was no open vision;" *i. e.* extraordinary persons raised up statedly to declare the will of God to the people by immediate revelation, were not openly known amongst them; so that any occasional discovery of it, was more precious in their estimation, than when prophecy was more common.

V. 3. *Ere the lamp*, &c.] The lamps of the golden candlestick ought never to have gone out: this appointment therefore was either neglected; or some other lamp was intended, which being lighted in the evening, went out during the night. Eli being old and infirm had laid down long before, but Samuel was just retired to rest, in some room near to Eli's chamber, whom he waited on, and to the tabernacle, about which he was daily occupied.

V. 4—6.] The Lord called him by name, in an audible voice, which he mistook for the call of Eli, who probably often disturbed him in the night, through the infirmities of old age. But when Eli assured him that he did not call him, he went again to his bed, and supposed that he had been mistaken; and this repeatedly: his humble diligence, and submissive respect for Eli should not pass unnoticed.

V. 7. *Not yet know the Lord*, &c.] Samuel was not unacquainted with the Lord in that sense, in which the sons of Eli knew him not; but he did not know his manner of making his will known to the prophets; and was not therefore sensible that this was the voice of God: but the Lord overruled his mistake, to make Eli acquainted with his intentions of revealing himself to Samuel, and to excite his inquiry about it.

V. 9. *That thou shalt say*, &c.] Eli could not but consider this preference shewn to a child, before himself, and his family, as a severe, and humiliating rebuke to him; especially as he was aware that it was a message from the Lord to himself, denouncing judgments upon him, and his

10 And the LORD came, and ſtood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel, Then Samuel anſwered, Speak, for thy ſervant heareth.

11 And the LORD ſaid to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Iſrael, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it ſhall tingle.

12 In that day I will perform againſt Eli all *things* which I have ſpoken concerning his houſe: when I begin, I will alſo make an end.

13 For I have told him, that I will judge his houſe for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: becauſe his ſons made themſelves vile, and he reſtrained them not.

14 And therefore I have ſworn unto the houſe of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's houſe ſhall not be purged with ſacrifice nor offering for ever.

15 And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the houſe of the LORD: and Samuel feared to ſhew Eli the viſion.

16 Then Eli called Samuel, and ſaid, Samuel, my ſon. And he anſwered, Here *am* I.

17 And he ſaid, What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath ſaid unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do ſo to thee, and more alſo, if thou hide *any* thing from me, of all the things that he ſaid unto thee.

18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he ſaid, It *is* the LORD; let him do what ſeemeth him good.

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Iſrael, from Dan even to Beerſheba, knew that Samuel *was* eſtabliſhed *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

21 And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himſelf to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

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houſe: yet without envy, reſentment, or impatience, he gave Samuel directions, how to behave upon the occaſion!

V. 10. *And ſtood, and called*, &c.] This ſeems to imply that there was a viſible appearance, as well as an audible voice: it is alſo mentioned that the name Samuel was twice repeated; and that Samuel omitted the word "Lord," in anſwering, as Eli had inſtructed him, probably through uncertainty, and timidity.

V. 11. *Shall tingle.*] The very report ſhould ſo affect the hearer, as to continue to thrill in his ears, long after; as very loud, and ſtupendous noiſes are uſed to do.

V. 12. *When I begin*, &c.] This meſſage was probably ſent to Eli ſome years before his death, and tradition reports that Samuel was at this time only twelve years of age. The forbearance of God tended to harden the hearts of Eli's ſons, in preſumptuous expectations of impunity: but the Lord aſſured them, that though he waited ſome time before he began, yet when the appointed period arrived, he would fully execute all his threatened vengeance.

V. 14. *Purged*, &c.] The ſins of individuals of Eli's houſe might be pardoned, through the ſacrifice of Chriſt, if they repented, and believed, for their ſalvation from eternal puniſhment: but the Lord had irrevocably determined, that no number of ſin-offerings, ſhould prevail with him to continue that family in the High-Prieſthood, or to deliver them from the awful temporal judgments, which had been denounced againſt them; as perhaps both Eli and his ſons had hoped would be the caſe.

V. 15. *Opened*, &c.] Early in the morning, Samuel opened the gates of the court of the tabernacle, into which the people came to worſhip, as if nothing had occurred; neither elated with the diſtinction, nor neglecting his buſineſs, nor mentioning the matter, nor ſhewing any diſreſpect to Eli; but rather through his great reſpect and affection for him, being reluctantly afraid to inform him of the diſtreſſing meſſage.

V. 18. *It is the Lord*, &c.] Eli, in this remarkable anſwer to ſo awful a denunciation, delivered to him in ſo humiliating a manner, adverted to the ſovereignty, juſtice, wiſdom, truth, and goodneſs of God; acknowledging that he had a right to do as he ſaw good, and being aſſured that he would do nothing wrong. He was conſcious that he deſerved the awful ſentence, and acquieſced in the will of God, caſting himſelf entirely upon his mercy. The meekneſs, patience, and humility contained in theſe words are very admirable; and ſatisfy the mind, that he was truly penitent: though in his old, and infirm age, he had not courage, vigour of mind, or even authority, to execute puniſhment upon his ſons, who would now ſet him at defiance.

V. 19—21.] Samuel, it ſeems, was after this immediately and frequently favoured with revelations from God to the people, which were punctually accompliſhed, and made very uſeful: and therefore his appointment to be the prophet of the Lord was known, and acknowledged, throughout the land.—"By the word of the Lord," may either mean, by an audible voice from God to him, or by the appearance of him, whoſe name is called "The Word "of God."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Men are ſeldom duly ſenſible of the value of their mercies, till they are convinced of it by the want of them. And this perverſity operates even in matters pertaining to religion: we, who are favoured with the written word, and with the public preaching of the goſpel, in plenty, and by miniſters of varied talents, and endowments, can ſcarce conceive the value, that our fore fathers, in days of ignorance, and perſecution, put upon a Bible, or upon the opportunity of hearing a faithful ſermon: and which many ſtill put upon them in different parts of the world. This humbling reflection ſhould teach us to be thankful for and to improve our privi-

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. Israel worsted by the Philistines, and sending for the ark; their total defeat with terrible slaughter, the death of Eli's sons, and the taking of the ark, v. 1—11. *2d. The tidings carried to Eli, his fall, and death, with that of the wife of Phinehas in childbirth, and the name that she gave her son, v.* 12—22.

AND the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

2 And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

3 And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the cove-

leges, lest the Lord should shew us their preciousness, by depriving us of them. The Lord disposes of his special favours in holy and wise sovereignty, without confining himself to age, station, or office in his church; but he orders every thing for their correction, who offend him, and to honour those, who honour him. Docility, diligence, respectful submission to superiors, and an humble, self denying disposition in youth, are happy indications, of an honourable, and useful life: and they, who reduce to practice what they have been already taught, shall be favoured with further discoveries of the Lord's truth, and will: and where the heart is upright, mistakes and infirmities will be pardoned, rectified, and over-ruled for good. Those spiritual gifts are like to be useful, which are accompanied with humility, and a willingness to be serviceable in the meanest situation, and to behave with due respect to superiors, though faulty, and under divine rebukes. However no deference to men, because superior in every respect to themselves, must influence those, whom the Lord employs, as his messengers, to conceal, or to mutilate their message. And they are most unwise in their spiritual concerns, who wish to be flattered: nay, who do not desire above all things to know the whole of the revealed will of God, and the worst of their own state and case: for though temporal punishment may be unalterably determined; yet, blessed be God, the blood of Jesus cleanses the believer's soul from all sin, and assuredly delivers him from eternal misery: and Jesus casts out none that come to him, however vile they have heretofore made themselves. Presumptuous hopes of impunity, because the Lord is long-suffering, ruin multitudes, who postpone repentance till God hath sworn in his wrath, that they shall not enter into his rest; and when he begins to take vengeance, he will also fully execute his most tremendous threatenings. And if temporal sufferings may be so terrible, as to cause the ears of all, who hear of them, to tingle, what will be the everlasting punishment of the wicked? For men *make themselves* vile by their sins, but God reduces them to an abject state of misery for their sins. Let us then humble ourselves before him, before the door of mercy be for ever shut; let us accept of his chastisement, however sharp; let us submit to the Lord, because he is a mighty sovereign, and because he is perfectly wise, righteous, and merciful; let us cast ourselves upon his mercy, and seek for his salvation; and study to shew our repentance, not only by good words, but by good works; by restraining others from sin, as well as avoiding it ourselves, and by faithfully improving every talent committed to us. Then, though the infirmities of old age disable us for usefulness, and though we meet with many humiliating dispensations, we may rejoice to see others like to be useful when we are gone; and willingly impart to them the best counsel we are able, though their rising reputation be attended with our dishonour. And even if the prospect for our families be gloomy, we may encourage ourselves in the hope of that state, where the "wicked shall cease from "troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *And the word*, &c.] This may either mean the word, which the Lord had spoken to him, concerning the ruin of Eli's family; or the word, which from time to time the Lord sent by him to the people, declaring his will, and calling them to repentance: these things they heard with attention, throughout the land, but were not duly influenced by them. According to the conjectural calculation of chronology before given, (*note*, *Jud.* c. xiv. v. 1;) it was supposed that the first six years of Eli were coincident with the last of Samson: according to which the several events have been dated: some have supposed that all the time allotted to Eli was coincident with that of other judges, and that this battle was fought immediately after Samson's death: but this is very improbable. Others have not allowed of any coincidence, either in this case, or that of Tola and Jair; (*Jud.* c. x.) But if we allow of none, we must begin the forty years, which the apostle mentions as the date of Saul's reign, from the death of Eli; (*Acts*, c. xiii. v. 21.) But *Samuel* does not appear to have been publickly acknowledged as judge, till twenty years after that event: (c. vii. ver. 2.) There are great difficulties in reconciling the different accounts, which it is not intended to enter upon, except very briefly upon the texts, in which they occur.

V. 3. *Wherefore*, &c.] The elders of Israel seem to have been miserably sunk in ignorance, and formality; and no wonder, when impiety was so prevalent in the courts of the Lord. Though ripe for terrible judgments, they had no idea that this rebuke was intended, as a warning to repent; but proposed a very foolish expedient, to secure the assistance of Jehovah. Whether it were allowable on any occasion to carry the ark of the covenant into the field of battle or not: (c. xiv. ver. 18. 2 *Sam.* c. xi. v. 11:) it cannot admit of a doubt, but that they acted very wickedly in this matter. They had heard what wonders had formerly been wrought for Israel, when this symbol of Jehovah's

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nant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may ſave us out of the hand of our enemies.

4 So the people ſent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hoſts, which dwelleth *between* the cherubims: and the two ſons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Iſrael ſhouted with a great ſhout, ſo that the earth rang again.

6 And when the Philiſtines heard the noiſe of the ſhout, they ſaid, What *meaneth* the noiſe of this great ſhout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they underſtood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp.

7 And the Philiſtines were afraid; for they ſaid, God is come into the camp. And they ſaid, Woe unto us! for there hath not been ſuch a thing heretofore.

8 Woe unto us! who ſhall deliver us out of the hand of theſe mighty Gods? theſe *are* the Gods that ſmote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderneſs.

9 Be ſtrong, and quit yourſelves like men, O ye Philiſtines, that ye be not ſervants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourſelves like men, and fight.

10 And the Philiſtines fought, and Iſrael was ſmitten, and they fled every man into his tent; and there was a very great ſlaughter: for there fell of Iſrael thirty thouſand footmen.

11 And the ark of God was taken, and the two ſons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were ſlain.

12 And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the ſame day, with his clothes rent, and with earth upon his head.

13 And when he came, lo, Eli ſat upon a ſeat by the way-ſide, watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came unto the city and told *it*, all the city cried out.

14 And when Eli heard the noiſe of the crying, he ſaid, What *meaneth* the noiſe of this tumult? and the man came in haſtily, and told Eli.

15 Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not ſee.

16 And the man ſaid unto Eli, I *am* he that

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preſence, was, *by his command*, carried before the people, under the care of *holy men*, who *truſted in, and glorified* God; and when Iſrael was *comparatively* an obedient people, fighting under the banner of the Almighty: and they diſcerned not between the outſide ſymbol, and the real inviſible preſence of God. They even made an idol of the ark; and imagined that by fetching it into the army, of their own accord, without conſulting the Lord, when carried by two ſons of Belial, who were doomed to deſtruction, and whoſe touch polluted the ark, and whoſe preſence brought a curſe into the camp, (*Joſh.* c. vii:) without any humiliation before God, or amendment of life, they could induce him to fight for them, though he was evidently contending againſt them. But he would not countenance their hypocriſy, and preſumption; for he could employ other methods of preſerving, and diſplaying the honour of the ark, and of his own inſtitutions.

V. 4, 5. *The two ſons*, &c.] Probably theſe wicked men did not ſo much as aſk the conſent of their aged father on this occaſion, whoſe heart foreboded the fatal conſequences. But they were hardened to their deſtruction, and were left to venture preſumptuouſly into the holy of holies, and to carry the ark into the army: and thus, without any proper call, they were found within the reach of the ſword of the Philiſtines, by which they were deſtined to be ſlain. Doubtleſs they were much pleaſed with, and proud of the office, of coming in as the ſuppoſed deliverers of Iſrael, bearing the ark of the covenant. And when they entered the camp, the whole army were infatuated with the ſame groundleſs preſumption; which only tended to render them more negligent of their proper duty, and more remiſs in their military arrangements; as if God were now engaged to fight for them, however wicked, and careleſs they were.

V. 7. *God is come*, &c.] No wonder the Philiſtines confounded all the diſtinctions betwixt the ark, and that inviſible God, whoſe preſence with *his believing* people it denoted; when the Iſraelites entirely overlooked them. It ſeems the Philiſtines, though idolaters, and enemies to the worſhippers of Jehovah, had at times ſome apprehenſions that he was the true God, and above all others; but thoſe were only tranſient convictions, not grounded upon true faith, and therefore they excluded not the hope of gaining the maſtery, and tended on this occaſion to increaſe their intrepidity, and reſolution. They ſpake of the works of Jehovah in Egypt, and in the wilderneſs, in language, very expreſſive of their partial information, and confuſed apprehenſions of them.

V. 13—18. *His heart trembled*, &c.] Though Eli had been ſinfully indulgent to his ſons, and had abundant reaſon to expect to hear of their death, as well as of the defeat of Iſrael; yet his chief anxiety was about the ark of God. Accordingly he bare the tidings of Iſrael's calamity, and of the death of his ſons, in the midſt of their unrepented crimes, with apparent fortitude, and reſignation; but when he heard that the ark of God was taken,

came out of the army, and I fled to-day out of the army. And he ſaid, What is there done, my ſon?

17 And the meſſenger anſwered and ſaid, Iſrael is fled before the Philiſtines: and there hath been alſo a great ſlaughter among the people; and thy two ſons alſo, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God is taken.

18 And it came to paſs, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he fell from off the ſeat backward, by the ſide of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died; for he was an old man, and heavy: and he had judged Iſrael forty years.

19 And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *near* to be delivered: and when ſhe heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, and that her father-in-law and her huſband were dead, ſhe bowed herſelf and travailed; for her pains came upon her.

20 And about the time of her death, the women that ſtood by her, ſaid unto her, Fear not, for thou haſt born a ſon. But ſhe anſwered not, neither did ſhe regard *it*.

21 And ſhe named the child I-chabod, ſaying, The glory is departed from Iſrael: (becauſe the ark of God was taken, and becauſe of her father-in-law, and her huſband:)

22 And ſhe ſaid, The glory is departed from Iſrael; for the ark of God is taken.

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the reflection upon the diſhonour to God, and to religion, and the dreadful loſs to his people, which his negligence had occaſioned, was more than he could ſupport; and he fell down in a ſwoon, and his neck brake and he died. Thus expiring in ſo terrible a manner, under the rebuke of God, he formed, and ſtill forms an uſeful warning to others: and yet, even in the manner of his death, he teſtified his ſupreme regard to the honour of God, and the intereſts of religion, above all perſonal, and relative conſiderations; and with all his faults he fell in, and even by a lively exerciſe of love to God, and his ordinances.

V. 19—22.] The wife of Phinehas alſo, though married to ſo wicked a prieſt, appears to have been a perſon of eminent piety. The death of her father-in-law, and of her huſband contributed to haſten her death; but her dying regret was for the captivity of the ark, and the departure of the glory from Iſrael; for with her parting breath ſhe named her ſon Ichabod, or "where is the glory?" In this her judgment was right; the preſence, and ordinances of the Lord were the chief glory of Iſrael; and the loſs of them was the departure of the glory. But if ſhe ſuppoſed that the Lord had finally departed from Iſrael, ſhe was under a miſtake. From Shiloh the ark, the glory of Iſrael, was finally removed, with every indication of deep diſpleaſure; for probably the inhabitants of that city had too much reſembled the abandoned prieſts, (*Pſalm* lxxviii. v. 59—68. *Jer.* c. xxvi. v. 6.) But it was reſtored to Iſrael, and eſtabliſhed elſewhere; nor was the ruin of Eli's family, the deſtruction of the Aaronic prieſthood. However theſe were events, which muſt make the ears of all, who heard of them to tingle.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the judgments, denounced in the word of God, do not bring ſinners to repentance, their ſpeedy execution may be expected. The nearer any perſons are to the Lord in profeſſion, and the more privileges they are favoured with, the more certain, and dreadful will be their puniſhment, if they thence take encouragement to commit iniquity. Unhumbled profeſſors of religion are apt to think, that they are entitled to help from God, becauſe they are called by his name, though they diſgrace it with their crimes; and to murmur at thoſe rebukes, by which they are warned to repent of their ſins, and to amend their lives. As their dependance is placed upon their external forms, the increaſe of their hypocriſies bolſters up their preſumptuous hopes, and they often take the name of the Lord in vain, and diſhonour his ordinances more, in attending on them, than they could do by neglecting them: ſo that he abhors thoſe ſervices, for which they expect his favour: but he will rather let his avowed enemies triumph for a ſeaſon, than encourage ſuch hypocrites, whoſe crimes ſtill more diſhonour his holy name; and all their forms will only ſerve to lull them into a fatal ſecurity, and precipitate their ruin. The moſt avowed infidels and atheiſts, and the moſt atrocious, and deſperate offenders, have their pangs of conviction, and diſquietude of mind; and with all their efforts they cannot utterly exclude forebodings of fatal effects from their contempt of, and rebellion againſt the God of heaven: and though they conceal, ſtifle, and get rid of this apprehenſion for a time, and may even proſper in their ungodlineſs; yet their fear will come upon them, and even worſe than they ever foreboded. Whilſt the impenitent are conſigned to final ruin; the offending ſervants of God, who tremble at his judgments, and for the diſhonour, which they have occaſioned to his name, may die in an awful manner, without comfort, for a warning to thoſe, who are left behind: yet when death in it's moſt formidable ſhape finds men, humbled for their ſins, crying for mercy, and more anxious for the cauſe of God and truth, than for the moſt idolized creature comforts, it will eventually prove a bleſſing; yea every diſpenſation is in mercy, which reſcues the immortal ſoul from hell. What miſeries do ſome ungodly men entail upon all thoſe, who are connected with them! And what an awful leſſon is here for parents, who are tempted to connive at the firſt appearances of vice in their children! Let them reflect on Eli's death, of his ſons more fatal end, of Phinehas' wife, of the ſlaughter of Iſrael, of the ark taken captive, the glory departed, and Shiloh forſaken; and let them tremble to think "how great a matter

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1ſt. The ark of God placed in the temple of Dagon, v. 1—2. 2d. Dagon falling before it, and broken in pieces, v. 3—5. 3d. The Philiſtines by ſore judgments made weary of the ark, v. 6—12.

AND the Philiſtines took the ark of God, and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Aſhdod.

2 When the Philiſtines took the ark of God, they brought it into the houſe of Dagon, and ſet it by Dagon.

3 And when they of Aſhdod aroſe early on the morrow, behold, Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and ſet him in his place again.

4 And when they aroſe early on the morrow morning, behold Dagon *was* fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, *were* cut off upon the threſhold; only *the ſtump of* Dagon was left to him.

5 Therefore neither the prieſts of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's houſe, tread on the threſhold of Dagon in Aſhdod unto this day.

6 But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Aſhdod, and he deſtroyed them, and ſmote them with emerods, *even* Aſhdod, and the coaſts thereof.

7 And when the men of Aſhdod ſaw that *it was* ſo, they ſaid, The ark of the God of Iſrael ſhall not abide with us: for his hand is ſore upon us, and upon Dagon our God.

8 They ſent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philiſtines unto them, and ſaid, What ſhall we do with the ark of the God of Iſrael? And they anſwered, Let the ark of the God of Iſrael be carried about unto Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Iſrael about *thither*.

9 And it was *ſo*, that after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was againſt the city with a very great deſtruction: and he ſmote the men of the city, both ſmall and great, and they had emerods in their ſecret parts.

10 Therefore they ſent the ark of God to Ekron. And it came to paſs as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried

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" this apparently little fire hath kindled!" " In the midſt " of life we are in death;" but ſome ſituations peculiarly remind thoſe placed in them, to be ready for a ſudden call, and few more than pregnancy. But they, who belong to the Lord, need not deſire to ſurvive, when the ordinances of God are withdrawn, and the cauſe of God is run down: little comfort can they take in their children, or even in life itſelf, in ſuch circumſtances: yet even ſuch trials ſhall prove bleſſings, where the ark, and cauſe of God are thus dear to the heart. And, though the glory may be withdrawn from one ſinful nation, city, or village after another; yet it ſhall never depart from Iſrael, but ſhall ſhine forth in one place, when it hath been eclipſed in another: for Jeſus, our High Prieſt, ever liveth to maintain his own cauſe, and the gates of hell ſhall never prevail againſt his church; whatever may be the triumphing boaſts of his enemies, or the deſponding fears of his people.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 2. *They ſet it by Dagon.*] The Philiſtines placed the ark beneath Dagon in his temple, as a trophy of their victory by his ſuppoſed aſſiſtance, over the God, and people of Iſrael, (*Judges* c. xvi. v. 23, 24.) But as they did not deſtroy it, as Iſrael had deſtroyed the images of the Canaanites, nor ſhew it any other tokens of contempt, it hath been conjectured, that they alſo intended to have worſhipped it, in conjunction with, and ſubordination to their former idol.

V. 3—5. *Dagon was fallen,* &c.] Though the workmen doubtleſs had taken care to faſten up the image to keep it from falling, (*Iſaiah* c. xli. v. 7;) yet in the morning they found it proſtrate before the ark, as utterly unable to withſtand the power of the God of Iſrael: but attributing this to ſome accident, they ſet the image again in his place; and the next morning, when they aroſe early to pay their devotions, they found it fallen, and broken to pieces. The image of Dagon is ſuppoſed to have been framed above like a man, and beneath like a fiſh; but when the head, and hands were broken off, a deformed trunk alone remained. By this the utter helpleſſneſs, and inſenſibility of the dumb idol were made apparent; and alſo the comparative weakneſs and folly of thoſe evil ſpirits, who thus courted worſhip to themſelves: and yet the Philiſtines, as if they were as ſenſeleſs, as their idol, inſtead of learning to deſpiſe ſo contemptible a ſtock, and worſhipping the God of Iſrael, revered as ſacred the very threſhold, on which their idol, had been diſgraced, and broken; and thus perpetuated the memory of Jehovah's triumph, by their own fooliſh ſuperſtition! And they either continued to worſhip the ſtump of Dagon, or got a new image of him formed, as ſoon as poſſible.

V. 6—12.] The Philiſtines, not being by this defeat of their idol convinced of their folly in attempting to impriſon the ark of the God of Iſrael, were next ſmitten with ſore judgments, by which multitudes died, (v. 12;) and others were afflicted with emerods, ſuppoſed to be of the nature of the piles, very dreadful, and general amongſt all thoſe, who eſcaped death. By theſe judgments, they were rendered out,

out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and our people.

11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go again to his own place, that it slay us not, and our people: for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there.

12 And the men that died not were smitten, with the emerods; and the cry of the city went up to heaven.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. The manner, in which the Philistines dismissed the ark with presents, and it's conveyance to Beth-shemesh. v. 1—12. 2d. It's reception there with joy, and sacrifices, v. 15—18. 3d. The sin, punishment, and terror of the Beth-shemites, v. 19—22.

AND the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months.

2 And the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners, saying, What shall we do to the ark of the LORD? tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place.

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desirous of getting rid of the ark, but were not induced to renounce their idolatry, or to worship Jehovah. Thus, whilst Israel was punished for their hypocrisy, and wickedness, and were become so basely degenerate as not to attempt the recovery of the ark of the Lord, and indeed were unworthy of being employed in such a service; Jehovah vindicated his own glory, and made the captivity of the ark the occasion of exposing idolatry to contempt, and of convincing his enemies that his instituted worship could not be profaned with impunity. (*Psalm* lxxviii. v. 65, 66.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The Lord may for a season permit his cause to be run down, in order to expose the hypocrisy, to undermine the vain confidence, or to chastise the wickedness of his professed people: for he knows how, without any human help, and in defiance of all enemies, to recover it from the ruins, and to establish it in greater splendour. But the short-lived triumphings of the wicked on such occasions will issue in their greater contempt, and punishment. Men may be convinced by the judgments of God, that he is a terrible enemy, and that it is in vain to contend with him, and may be constrained to render him a feigned submission; (*Psalm* lxvi. v. 3. lxxxi. 15:) but nothing, except his renewing grace, will produce genuine repentance, faith, and love, and conversion from every idol, to his worship, and service. Yet those confessions, which are extorted by torment, or terror, are honourable to God, though useless to the impenitent sinner; (*Mark* c. v. ver. 7;) and he will glorify his name in the punishment of his enemies, as well, as in the salvation of his people. When he contendeth, he will overcome, and all endeavours to evade, or escape his wrath, will only increase man's misery, till the sinner be either brought to true repentance, or sunk under final condemnation; and the contempt, shall equal the torment of his despisers. When the Lord's appointed time shall arrive, all attempts to uphold the falling kingdom of idolatry, infidelity, superstition, or profaneness, will be utterly unavailing; and destruction will overtake those, who are not led to repentance by the discoveries of his power, justice, truth, and love, which will be made in that day of setting up his kingdom throughout the earth. Equally dangerous is it to oppose those partial revivals of true religion, which take place from age to age: for the ark of God will cause every Dagon to fall down before it, until they be broken in pieces; notwithstanding the insolent triumphs of those, who attempt to set them up, and secure them in their place: and the zeal, and pertinacity, with which the grossest idolatries, and most stupid superstitions, have been supported against the cause of God and truth, display the blindness of fallen man's understanding, as much as the depravity of his affections. Thus convinced sinners also with perverse assiduity set up again those false confidences, and worldly idols, which seemed to be thrown down under the preaching of the gospel; or when the old delusion will no longer sooth their conscience, they will exchange it for another, equally absurd, as long as they continue to love sin, and to hate the spiritual service, and humbling truth of God. But when Christ, the true ark of the covenant, really enters the heart of fallen man, (which is indeed satan's temple,) every idol will fall before his presence, and power, every endeavour to set them up again shall be in vain; every iniquity will be forsaken, and unrighteous gain restored; and the Lord will claim, and possess the throne. But pride, self-love, and worldly lusts, though dethroned, and crucified, like the stump of Dagon still remain within us. Let us then watch, and pray against their prevalency, let us seek to have them more entirely destroyed, and let us consider death, as the final destruction of our worst enemy, "the "sin, that dwelleth in us."

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 1. *Seven months.*] So long the Philistines endured the judgments of God, before they yielded to restore the ark: so long the Israelites neglected all endeavours to recover it. But it was more honourable to the Lord, to constrain the Philistines to send it back of their own accord, than that war should wrest, or money should ransom it out of their hands.

V. 2—9.] When they could no longer endure the anguish of the emerods, the desolation of the pestilence, or the depredations of the mice, which had now begun to mar their land, (v. 5.) they consulted their priests, and diviners upon the business: and their answer contains such inconsistencies, as aptly develope the workings of the human heart, in such circumstances. From the tradition of Pharaoh's rebellion, and destruction, they exhorted the people very seriously not to harden their hearts, but to let the ark go; but they did not advise them to repent, to renounce idolatry, and to worship Jehovah: nay they were unwilling

3 And

3 And they ſaid, If ye ſend away the ark of the God of Iſrael, ſend it not empty; but in any wiſe return him a treſpaſs-offering: then ye ſhall be healed, and it ſhall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you.

4 Then ſaid they, What *ſhall be* the treſpaſs-offering which we ſhall return to him? They anſwered, Five golden emerods, and five golden mice, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philiſtines: for one plague *was* on you all, and on your lords.

5 Wherefore ye ſhall make images of your emerods, and images of your mice that mar the land; and ye ſhall give glory unto the God of Iſrael: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land.

6 Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?

7 Now therefore make a new cart, and take two milch-kine, on which there hath come no yoke, and tie the kine to the cart, and bring their calves home from them:

8 And take the ark of the LORD, and lay it upon the cart; and put the jewels of gold, which ye return him *for* a treſpaſs-offering, in a coffer by the ſide thereof; and ſend it away, that it may go.

9 And ſee, if it goeth up by the way of his own coaſt to Beth-ſhemeſh, *then* he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we ſhall know that *it is* not his hand *that* ſmote us; it *was* a chance *that* happened to us.

10 And the men did ſo; and took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart, and ſhut up their calves at home:

11 And they laid the ark of the LORD upon the cart, and the coffer with the mice of gold and the images of their emerods.

12 And the kine took the ſtraight way to the way of Beth-ſhemeſh, *and* went along the high-way, lowing as they went, and turned not aſide *to* the right hand or *to* the left; and the lords of the Philiſtines went after them unto the border of Beth-ſhemeſh.

13 And *they of* Beth-ſhemeſh *were* reaping their wheat-harveſt in the valley: and they lifted up their eyes, and ſaw the ark, and rejoiced to ſee *it*.

14 And the cart came into the field of Joſhua a Beth-ſhemite, and ſtood there, where *there was* a great ſtone: and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the LORD.

15 And the Levites took down the ark of the LORD, and the coffer that *was* with it, wherein the jewels of gold *were*, and put *them* on the great ſtone: and the men of Beth-ſhemeſh offered burnt-offerings and ſacrificed ſacrifices, the ſame day unto the LORD.

16 And when the five lords of the Philiſtines had ſeen *it*, they returned to Ekron the ſame day.

17 And theſe *are* the golden emerods, which the Philiſtines returned *for* a treſpaſs-

to conclude that their afflictions were from him, and framed an artful device for putting it to the trial; and if they were not convinced by another miracle, they determined to keep the ark, and aſcribe all their ſufferings to chance. Some treſpaſs-offerings they ſuppoſed to be neceſſary, if the ark was reſtored, in order that the Lord might "lighten his "hand from off them:" or that they might know wherefore "he did not;" but they were ſuch oblations as were utterly unfit for that purpoſe, though monuments of their perpetual ſhame, and of the Lord's triumph over them. In ſhort they evinced how unwilling they were to yield, and how unable to reſiſt, and the whole tended to magnify this ſymbol of the Lord's preſence. As the Egyptians hired Iſrael with jewels of gold to depart from them, yet were unwilling to let them go quite away; ſo did the Philiſtines by the ark, in taking which, they had ſo triumphed.

10—15.] That two kine, which had never been yoked, and whoſe calves were left at home, ſhould draw quietly, and keep the road without a driver, for ſeveral miles, neither ſtopping, turning aſide, or attempting to return: and that, whilſt they ſhewed the force of inſtinct in lowing for their calves, they ſhould be urged forward with a ſtronger impulſe to the very place, which the Philiſtines had mentioned, was certainly miraculous: and the obedience of the animals, in carrying back the ark, reproached the negligence of Iſrael. The preſumption of the Philiſtines in requiring this additional proof of Jehovah's power, was very great; but it was overruled for the manifeſtation of his glory, and to their deeper condemnation in perſiſting in their idolatry. The triumph of the ark was completed, when it was thus miraculouſly reſtored, with oblations, and the diſtant attendance of the Lords of the Philiſtines. Beth-ſhemeſh was a city of prieſts, in the border of the land; and they very properly offered the kine in ſacrifice before the ark; for nothing, which had been uſed in this ſacred ſervice, could lawfully have been employed to any common uſe: their

offering

offering unto the LORD; for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon one, for Gath one, for Ekron one:

18 And the golden mice, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* of fenced cities, and of country villages, even unto the great *stone of* Abel, whereon they set down the ark of the LORD; *which stone remaineth* unto this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite.

19 And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD, even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men. And the people lamented, because the LORD had smitten *many* of the people with a great slaughter.

20 And the men of Beth-shemesh said, Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? and to whom shall he go up from us?

21 And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjah-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the LORD; come ye down, *and* fetch it up to you.

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other sacrifices also were proper expressions of joy and gratitude; but their placing the ark upon this great stone, in the open air, without either taking it into their houses, or preparing a tent for it, seems to have been improper. The inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim gave it a different reception, and were accepted in so doing; probably they intended to forward it without long delay to Shiloh, but this was not the Lord's intention.

V. 19—21.] The Bethshemites availed themselves of this opportunity of gratifying their curiosity, by presumptuously looking into the ark, the outside of which was not to be seen uncovered by the Levites, who carried it. (*Num.* c. v. ver. 6.) Perhaps they pretended to examine whether the Philistines had taken away the tables of the law; perhaps some presumed upon their priestly office, which aggravated their offence; and others upon they having first received the ark, and offered sacrifices before it. But the Lord was provoked by their irreverent intrusion to punish many of them with sudden death. The number, as it stands in our version, is so large to be found in one small city, and the expression in the original is so uncommon, that many have conjectured that there is some misapprehension respecting it: and Josephus mentions only seventy, who were slain. However we are not much interested in the decision of the question. It does not appear that the Bethshemites were humbled for their offence; but they were so terrified, that like the Philistines, they wanted to have the ark removed from them, and solicited the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When men under divine rebukes, harden themselves in sin, they are sure to prolong and multiply their own miseries: and it is so much more pleasant to learn wisdom in such things, by the experience of others, than by our own, that it would be deemed madness to do otherwise, were it not so general! Those convictions which spring from terror, without humiliation, will never produce more than an unwilling obedience: and the indignant heart of proud rebels will catch at every pretence, to ascribe afflictions to chance, and not to the hand of God, and to infer, that it is not absolutely necessary to part with every sin. If correction be withdrawn, whilst the heart is thus disposed, the respite will prove an encouragement to proceed in transgression: if the affliction be continued after a partial amendment, it will be deemed an argument, that repentance, and reformation are useless; and every dispensation of providence will eventually tend to increasing guilt, and condemnation. Natural reason, and conscience, with some fragments of traditional revelation, may convince men, that some method should be used to appease the anger of God; and enable them to give plausible advice upon that subject: and when men are smarting under afflictions, and under the terrors of an awakened conscience, they will bid high, and do much to purchase peace with the Lord: but faith alone, appropriating the information of the word of God, can discover what oblation he will accept, or in what way he will be approached by his sinful creatures. But the inconsistencies, and superstitions of idolaters, and the lukewarmness of his professing people, shall in due season combine to display his glory, to greater advantage. The very brute creation, when he pleases, shall shame man's ingratitude and disobedience; his enemies shall furnish memorials of their own disgrace, and all shall be constrained to say, "this hath God "wrought." Many will appear joyful at the revival of religion, and favourable to it's truths, and ordinances, who are too busy about the world, to put themselves to much trouble, or expence about them: and many will unite in external observances, who have no inward reverence for the divine majesty. The true glory of religion consists in it's spiritual excellency; and that simplicity, which the carnal mind, despises, forms it's highest ornament. But presumptuous intrusion into the secret things, which belong to God, forms a heinous provocation, and springs from a careless, and impenitent heart: and the nearer to the Lord such intruder is, in profession, and in office, the greater his guilt, and the more terrible will be his punishment: for though we are not under such a dispensation of darkness, and distance, as Israel was; yet our God is still a consuming fire, and must be worshipped with reverence, and godly fear. Instead of this reverence the carnal heart will substitute a slavish fear, and when rebuked for presumption, and contempt, or alarmed with discoveries of the justice, and holiness of God, will with the Gadarenes, or these Bethshemites, request the Saviour to depart out of their coasts, and vainly seek to escape the Lord's displeasure, by an entire neglect, and forgetfulness of him. Thus many stifle their convictions, and put away salvation from them; and by running into one extreme, or another, the very truths, and ordinances of God, which are means of life, and salvation to some, become the occasion of deeper condemnation to others. May the Lord give us a spirit of humble fear,

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1ſt. The removal of the ark to Kirjath-jearim, v. 1, 2. 2d. Samuel inſtrumental to an extenſive revival of religion, v. 3—6. 3d. Iſrael attacked by, and victorious over the Philiſtines, v. 7—11. 4th. Samuel recording the memory of the Lord's goodneſs, and Iſrael proſperous under his government, as their judge, v. 13—17.

AND the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched up the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the houſe of Abinadab in the hill, and ſanctified Eleazar his ſon to keep the ark of the LORD.

2 And it came to paſs, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the houſe of Iſrael lamented after the LORD.

3 And Samuel ſpake unto all the houſe of Iſrael, ſaying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the ſtrange gods and Aſhtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and ſerve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philiſtines.

4 Then the children of Iſrael did put away Baalim and Aſhtaroth, and ſerved the LORD only.

5 And Samuel ſaid, Gather all Iſrael to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.

6 And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD, and faſted on that day, and ſaid there, We have ſinned againſt the LORD. And Samuel judged the children of Iſrael in Mizpeh.

7 And when the Philiſtines heard that the children of Iſrael were gathered together to Mizpeh, the lords of the Philiſtines went up againſt Iſrael. And when the children of Iſrael heard *it*, they were afraid of the Philiſtines.

8 And the children of Iſrael ſaid to Samuel, Ceaſe not to cry unto the LORD our God for us, that he will ſave us out of the hand of the Philiſtines.

9 And Samuel took a ſucking lamb, and

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filial love, and heavenly hope, that we may be preſerved from ſuch fatal miſtakes, and profit by the ſalvation of the goſpel, and the ordinances of his worſhip, with which we are favoured in his providence!

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—2.] Kirjath-jearim lay in the road betwixt Beth-ſhemeſh, and Shiloh, but was not a city of prieſts. The inhabitants of it, being convinced that the ark was indeed the pledge of their proſperity, and only dangerous, when treated with irreverence, were ready to entertain it, until it's intended removal to Shiloh. It doth not appear, that either Abinadab, or Eleazar his ſon, were prieſts, or Levites; and there ſeems to have been an intentional neglect ſhewn to that tribe for their wickedneſs; ſo that no notice was taken of them in a buſineſs, which properly belonged to them wholly: we are not ſo much as informed whether any of them were employed to fetch the ark to Kirjath-jearim, or whether the Lord diſpenſed with the irregularity of the inhabitants of that city in carrying it themſelves. Here the ark remained, until David removed it in the beginning of his reign, which was more than ſixty years after this time. The apoſtle ſays, (*Acts*, c. xiii. v. 21,) "That God gave them Saul by the ſpace "of forty years:" but it is ſuppoſed that this term includes Samuel's government alſo, from the time of the events recorded in this chapter, which was twenty years after the ark was removed to Kirjath-jearim. (*Note, Judg.* c. xiv. ver. 1.) During this ſpace the Iſraelites continued in ſubjection to the Philiſtines, and in general careleſs about the ark, or the worſhip of the Lord: but we muſt ſuppoſe that the prophet Samuel was labouring inceſſantly, and ſucceſsfully, from town to town, throughout the whole land, to bring them to repentance, and to revive true religion amongſt them.

V. 3—4. *Samuel ſpake*, &c.] When he had brought numbers of the people to a ſenſe of their ſin, and of their duty, he urged the heads of their ſeveral tribes to concur in a public, and avowed reformation, and re-eſtabliſhment of the worſhip of Jehovah. Few words are indeed uſed, but they are ſo expreſſive, that we cannot heſitate in pronouncing this to have been one of the moſt general, and effectual revivals of religion, which ever took place in the church of Iſrael.

V. 5, 6.] (*Note, Judg.* c. xx. v. 1.) This ceremony of drawing water, and pouring it out before the Lord, might be an emblem of the effects of divine grace upon the heart, which diſpoſes it to pour forth itſelf as water, before the Lord, in penitential confeſſions, with tears of godly ſorrow, and in fervent prayers, and thankſgivings. On this occaſion, Samuel ſeems to have been firſt publicly acknowledged as judge of Iſrael.

V. 7. *And when*, &c.] The Philiſtines conſidered this general convention of Iſrael, as the ſignal for ſhaking off their yoke, and determined immediately to attack them, before they were prepared for reſiſtance: but their repentance of ſin, and earneſtneſs in ſeeking and ſerving the Lord formed the beſt preparation for war: and the event ſhewed their enemies the difference, betwixt attacking them, whilſt thus diſpoſed, and employed, and when buoyed up with preſumption, though impenitent, and under condemnation.

V. 9. *Samuel took*, &c.] Samuel was not a prieſt, but he acted by an extraordinary authority in this, and many other inſtances, as a prophet of the Lord, and under his

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offered *it for* a burnt-offering wholly unto the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him.

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh, and pursued the Philistines, and smote them, until *they came* under Beth-car.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.

13 So the Philistines were subdued, and they came no more into the coast of Israel, and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

14 And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath; and the coasts thereof did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

16 And he went from year to year in circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places.

17 And his return *was* to Ramah; for there *was* his house: and there he judged Israel; and there he built an altar unto the LORD.

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immediate direction. This single lamb, offered in humble faith, was immensely more acceptable, than the most costly sacrifices offered in pride aud hypocrisy.

V. 12. *Eben-ezer*, &c.] The transgressions and chastisements of Israel had been many; they had repeatedly humbled themselves before God, and obtained deliverance; and they had again relapsed into sin, and fallen into distress: but they had not been given up to total apostacy, or utter ruin; and had now once more been brought to repentance, and made partakers of a singular deliverance, by the immediate interposition of the Almighty. This Samuel, and the people acknowledged with gratitude; and set up this stone to be a monument of the Lord's goodness, for his glory, and the encouragement of themselves, and their descendants to future ages. The word Eben-ezer, signifies "the stone of help." The church of God, and every believer have continually occasion to set up Eben-ezers, on the same account, and for the same purposes.

V. 14.] After this success the Philistines were constrained to restore such cities of Israel, as they had seized, even those, which were situated in the neighbourhood of Ekron and Gath: and though we do not suppose that the Israelites entered into treaty with the Amorites, who dwelt amongst them, they were so kept under, as to create them no disturbance.

V. 15. *All the days of his life.*] That is, from this time, which probably was near thirty-eight years, and within about two years of the death of Saul: for Samuel seems to have retained considerable influence during the reign of that king, especially in the neighbourhood of Ramah.

V. 17. *And there he built an altar*, &c.] It is very remarkable, that in this great revival of true religion the ark was neither removed to Shiloh, nor placed with the tabernacle in any other situation. It is uncertain whether the sanctuary service was carried on at Shiloh, or not, during this period: but probably it was either neglected, or very improperly conducted; and as to the ark, it's glory, was departed, the more pious Israelites disregarded it; and preferred joining with Samuel in the sacrifices, and worship, which doubtless by divine direction, he performed near his own house. This disregard to the Levitical institutions, surely intimated that their typical meaning formed their chief use; and that, when that was overlooked, they became a lifeless carcase, by no means to be compared with repentance, faith, and the love of God, and man.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When the stated ministers of God's word neglect their duty, and scandalize their profession, the Lord will render them contemptible in the eyes of the people, (*Mal.* c. ii. v. 8, 9;) and employ others to reform the state of religion, and uphold his worship! for every external institution had better be dispensed with, than irreligion be permitted to diffuse it's baneful influence. The truths and ordinances of God are dangerous only to those, who despise, and abuse them, and are always comfortable, and profitable to the humble believer: the threatenings therefore of God's word, and the judgments, that he hath executed upon such, as have profaned them, should not induce us to reject, or neglect them; but to be more circumspect, and jealous of ourselves, in our professed regard to, and attendance on them. When the cause of God is deserted in one place, it will be supported in another; and, though the public, and regular administration of divine ordinances be very desirable, yet the same blessing may redound to individuals, when in God's providence, they are driven into corners, and confined to private houses. The word of God may be faithfully preached, and other proper means of promoting true religion be used for a long time, without producing visible, or extensive effects: but they, who are employed in such a work, should sow the seed in faith, and hope, and water it with prayers, and tears; they should be instant in season, and out of season; persevere without weariness, or yielding to despondency, and wait the Lord's time: and their labour will not be in vain; nay perhaps the seed, which hath been long sown, and considered as lost, will at length spring up with so large an increase, as to exceed their own most sanguine expectations. It is a pleasing prospect to the faithful labourer, when he perceives the hearers convinced of their sins, and mourning for the tokens of the Lord's displeasure: and this will also afford him the long-wished opportunity, of pressing matters still more closely, and particularly upon their consciences; that

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1ſt. Samuel grown old, making his ſons judges, their miſconduct, the people's complaint, and deſire of a king, v. 1—5. *2d. Samuel diſpleaſed, and praying; the Lord directing him to ſhew the people the effects of kingly government; and, as they perſiſted in their requeſt, to comply with it; and his diſmiſſing the people, v.* 6—22.

AND it came to paſs, when Samuel was old, that he made his ſons judges over Iſrael.

2 Now the name of his firſt-born was Joel, and the name of his ſecond Abiah: *they were* judges in Beer-ſheba.

3 And his ſons walked not in his ways, but turned aſide after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment.

4 Then all the elders of Iſrael gathered themſelves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah,

5 And ſaid unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy ſons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

ſuch good impreſſions may not wear off through procraſtination, or produce only a partial, or external reformation: but that the people may be prevailed upon to "return to the "Lord with all their hearts, and to ſerve him only," expecting all their ſalvation, and comfort from him, and renouncing every falſe dependance, and worldly luſt. Though this bleſſed frame of mind be the effect of divine grace, yet it is our duty; and in the uſe of means, we are required to prepare our hearts, and arm our ſouls with a ſtedfaſt determination thus to truſt in, and to ſerve the Lord: (*Acts*, c. xi. v. 23. 1 *Pet.* c. iv. ver. 1.) When in the firſt place every one hath "taken heed unto himſelf," he ought next to employ his beſt endeavours to engage his family, and his neighbour to the ſervice of God alſo: and when thoſe in the high ſtation, and public employments in ſociety unite in uſing their influence for theſe purpoſes, the moſt extenſive bleſſings may be expected. The effectual fervent prayer alſo of a righteous man availeth much: and the more men know of God, and of themſelves, the more will they deſire, and value the prayers of every Chriſtian, and of thoſe eſpecially, who are moſt eminent for faith, and holineſs; at all times, but particularly in ſeaſons of temporal, or ſpiritual diſtreſs. Bleſſed be God that Jeſus ever liveth to intercede for us, and at all ſeaſons pleadeth his own atoning blood in the behalf of all, who come to God through him! And through his ſacrifice, and mediation all our prayers for ourſelves, and others, are accepted of the Father. But neither his merits, nor the prayers of his ſervants for us, ſuperſede the neceſſity of our perſonal repentance, confeſſions of ſin, cries for mercy, and holy obedience: and ſeaſons of deep humiliation for ſin, and prayer for ſpecial bleſſings, are very properly attended with faſting, and other indications of ſelf-diſplacency, and diſregard to animal indulgence; that we may pour out our whole ſouls before the Lord, without having our attention diſtracted by any outward concern. When we are thus employed in earneſt devotion, ſatan, and his agents, may be eſpecially excited to aſſault us, as hating ſuch holy engagements, and envying our felicity: but they cannot do us any harm, except they can fright us from our duty. Nor can any hoſtile preparations prevail againſt that nation, which, in a ſpirit of true repentance, and reformation, and the fervent prayer of faith, hath entruſted itſelf unto the Lord's protection. Through ſucceſſive generations the church of God hath had occaſion to ſet up Eben-ezers for renewed deliverances: for neither outward perſecutions, nor internal corruptions have yet prevailed againſt her; becauſe "hitherto the Lord hath helped her;" and he will help her, even unto the end of the world. Every believer ſhould review the records of this preſervation, and theſe deliverances with admiring gratitude, and joyful hope; and then looking back into his own experience, he will find an abridgment of the ſame hiſtory: notwithſtanding temptation, and outward oppoſition. Notwithſtanding the deceitfulneſs of his own heart, and the power of his inbred luſts; through ſeaſons of ſlackneſs, and revival; through many tranſgreſſions, corrections, deliverances, and relapſes; through many fears, conflicts, and difficulties, he hath ſtill been preſerved from apoſtacy, and perhaps from diſgracing his profeſſion; "for hitherto hath the Lord helped him." If this be our happy caſe, let us raiſe up our Eben-ezers, in rendering the Lord our unreſerved praiſe: let us renew our application to God our Saviour for increaſing ſtrength in our ſoul, and power againſt our enemies: let us ſpeak to the encouragement of others of his love, and truth, that they may be animated to truſt and rejoice in the Lord: let us puſh ſtill farther every advantage againſt our enemies, aſpiring after entire liberty, and complete deliverance: let us ſubmit to thoſe, who have approved themſelves faithful, and have been made uſeful to us, in watching for our ſouls: let us keep cloſe to the means of grace, and the worſhip of God, and diligently improve our talents, and lay ourſelves out for the good of all around us. At ſtated ſeaſons, as at the concluſion of the year, or when about to approach the Lord's table, &c, or when we have received ſome remarkable mercy, we ſhall find it peculiarly uſeful thus to review our ways, and to wait upon the Lord to renew our ſtrength: in ſo doing we may hope ere long to ſet up our laſt Eben-ezer in the realms above, and to begin our eternal ſongs of joyful praiſe, to him, who hath helped us quite through, and made us more than conquerors.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1—5. *He made his ſons*, &c.] We do not find that either God, or the people cenſured Samuel in this affair: we may thence infer, that he had properly educated his ſons, and that they appeared properly qualified for this office, and were appointed to it, for the good, and by the approbation of the people; though they deceived theſe expectations, and through love of money, became unjuſt judges. This was Samuel's affliction, rather than Iſrael's grievance; for had they conferred with him, he would doubtleſs have agreed to their deprivation, and cenſure, and to the appointment of more proper perſons in their places:

6 But

6 But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD.

7 And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

8 According to all the works which they have done, since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods; so do they also unto thee.

9 Now therefore, hearken unto their voice: howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them.

10 And Samuel told all the words of the LORD unto the people that asked of him a king.

11 And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you; He will take your sons, and appoint *them* for himself, for his chariots, and *to be* his horsemen; and *some* shall run before his chariots.

12 And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties, and *will set them* to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots.

13 And he will take your daughters *to be* confectionaries, and *to be* cooks, and *to be* bakers.

14 And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, *even* the best *of them*, and give *them* to his servants.

15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.

16 And he will take your men-servants, and your maid-servants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put *them* to his work.

17 He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants.

18 And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the LORD will not hear you in that day.

19 Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, Nay, but we will have a king over us,

20 That we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the LORD.

22 And the LORD said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king.

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but they were more displeased at this small injury to their temporal interests, than they had been by all the dishonour done to God by the impious debaucheries of Eli's sons. They were weary of being ruled by pious judges, and prophets, raised up of God to reform religion; and wanted to look great in the eyes of the surrounding nations, by the external grandeur of kingly government: and this circumstance served them for an occasion of proposing the matter to Samuel.

V. 6—18.] Israel never had had so much reason to be satisfied with the government of judges, as under Samuel, who had been the instrument of exceeding great advantages to them: he was therefore much displeased to see them thus evidently actuated by an impatient discontented spirit; and felt with great sensibility, their ingratitude to himself. But he did not vent his displeasure in reproaches, but in prayer, not knowing what answer to return to their demand, till he was instructed by the Lord; for if he had endeavoured to dissuade them from their purpose, they would have ascribed it to his ambition. Accordingly the Lord reminded him, that in rejecting him their judge, they actually rejected the Lord, who as king appointed their judges, according to all their former rebellions; and that therefore they were to be allowed their choice, for their correction. However he was directed to inform them, not *how a king ought to rule*, but *of the manner, in which they generally do rule*; by what heavy taxes, and oppressive measures, they support their luxury, and magnificence; and by what methods they perform their ostentatious works, and keep up their military force; perverting authority into tyranny, and changing subjection into slavery. As these are the natural effects of too great power entrusted with a fallen creature, we ought consequently to prefer those limitations, and restrictions, which are equally beneficial to the governors, and the governed. He was also directed to warn them, that if they obstinately persisted in their request, they would certainly be sorry for it, and would cry unto the Lord to redress their grievances, but that he would not hear them.

V. 19—22.] After such a protestation from their aged prophet in the name of the Lord, the people were so madly set upon their own measures, that they would have a king; accordingly they were dismissed with the assurance of being gratified. Amidst all this evil, we must note to their commendation, that they shewed great respect to Samuel: they

And Samuel ſaid unto the men of Iſrael, Go ye every man unto his city.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1ſt. The perſon, and parentage of Saul, v, 1, 2. 2d. His ſeeking his father's aſſes, and coming to Samuel, v. 3—14. 3d. His reception, and entertainment by him, v. 15—27.

NOW there was a man of Benjamin, whoſe name *was* Kiſh, the ſon of Abiel, the ſon of Zeror, the ſon of Bechorath, the ſon of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power.

2 And he had a ſon whoſe name *was* Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly; and *there was* not among the children of Iſrael a good-

did not ſet up a king for themſelves of their own chooſing, but ſought his counſel, and concurrence; and they put ſuch confidence in his word, that upon an intimation from him, that a king ſhould be given them, they were willing to wait, and departed quietly to their own houſes. The hiſtory of the world cannot produce another inſtance, in which a public determination was formed to appoint a king; and yet no one perſon either propoſed himſelf, or ſome other to be king, but referred the determination entirely to the providence of God! Ambition of authority was certainly not the motive in the leading men, who ſupported this meaſure.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our lives are ſo ſhort, and our faculties are ſo ſoon impaired, that we ought to be active in the ſervice of God, whilſt we poſſeſs health of body, and vigour of mind: then under diſqualifying infirmities, it will be our comfort to reflect, that our youth, and ſtrength were ſpent to ſome uſeful purpoſes. No inſtructions, or examples of men can overcome the bias of nature to evil: and the Lord communicates his ſanctifying grace by wiſe, and righteous rules, of which he doth not deign to inform us: duty is our part, and conſequences muſt be left with him. External reſtraints may produce appearances, which impoſe upon the moſt diſcerning Judges; yet when they are withdrawn, and temptations are met with, the evil heart will diſcover itſelf: and proſperity has a natural tendency to increaſe evil propenſities. Parents ſhould therefore prepare to bear with reſignation diſappointments reſpecting their children; and they ſhould not be anxious to prefer, or enrich them, leſt they ſhould aſſiſt in inflaming their luſts. The love of money is the root of all evil, and is peculiarly odious, and miſchievous in magiſtrates, and miniſters. They, who have been moſt active, diſintereſted, and uſeful, muſt expect to meet with ingratitude, and neglect, as man's recompence for their ſervices; but every loſs, and injury will prove a real gain to thoſe who expect their gracious recompence from God alone. And ſurely we may chearfully ſubmit to be rejected, deſpiſed, and hated by thoſe, who reject, deſpiſe, and hate the Lord; nay we ſhould conſider it as an honourable teſtimony, that we are acknowledged to ſtand on his part. Grace will change, and convictions will reſtrain human depravity; but in itſelf it is the ſame from generation to generation; and is now prone to the ſame rebellions, which heretofore provoked the Lord to anger. Diſcontent, and fondneſs of change, and a deſire of conformity to the world, and of outward ſplendour, are natural to man, and follow him from the cradle to the grave, unleſs ſubdued by divine grace: no change of circumſtance can cure theſe diſeaſes; the diſſatisfaction of the preſent ſituation is impatiently felt, the comfort of ſome other is eagerly, and ignorantly conceived; and neither the counſels of wiſe men, nor the teſtimony of God will ſuppreſs the cravings of inordinate deſires. When the mind is thus diſpoſed, the ſlighteſt circumſtance will ſerve as a pretext for ruſhing upon gratification; yet a godly man would grieve to give others by his conduct ſuch an occaſion of ſin. Nay the Lord requires his ſervants rather to yield to the unjuſt, and unreaſonable deſires of men, than to ſeem attached to earthly objects. And he frequently gives them their wiſhes in anger, (*Hoſea* c. xiii. v. 10, 11.) to chaſtiſe their iniquity, and convince them of their folly. When our grief, or diſpleaſure ſends us to prayer, nothing can injure, or even long diſtreſs us; for the conſolations of God will richly repay the injuries of men. Under the troubles, which the providence of God hath allotted us, we may expect the ſupports of his grace: but if we abſolutely perſiſt in chooſing for ourſelves; when we have exchanged ſlight inconveniences for real grievances, we ſhall have the aggravation of an accuſing conſcience, and the divine rebuke: and this will often be the caſe; for thoſe things which at a diſtance look pleaſant, are generally moſt bitter, when in actual poſſeſſion. The *law of God*, and *the manner* of men are widely different from each other; the former ſhould be our rule in the ſeveral relations of life; the latter the meaſure of our expectations from others. As magiſtracy is God's appointment, and a great bleſſing; and as every form is liable to abuſes; our wiſdom is to be thankful for the advantages, and patient under the inconveniences of that government, which we live under; and to pray continually for our rulers, that they may govern us in the fear of God, and that we may live under them in all godlineſs, and honeſty; thus honouring God, and the king, and not meddling with them, that are given to change, or diſpoſed, upon every imaginary grievance, to ſpeak evil of the ruler of the people: for many deſired alterations are only from bad to worſe. But the Lord's people ſhould behave ſo unexceptionably, that even thoſe that injure them may not be able to impeach their integrity, or to withhold from them reſpect, and confidence. And it is an hopeful ſymptom, when our deſires of worldly objects can brook delay; and when we can refer the time, and manner of their being granted to the determination of God's providence.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1, 2. *Now there*, &c.] It is wonderful, that ſome chief of the tribe of Judah did not now claim the kingdom, in virtue of Jacob's bleſſing; but it was of the Lord, that he might firſt give them *ſuch a king*, as they had ſet their hearts upon, for their correction, before he raiſed up for them a king after his own heart. The tribe of Benjamin, by the fatal cataſtrophe of Gibeah's wickedneſs, was reduced to be the leaſt in Iſrael; but the indivi-

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lier perſon than he: from his ſhoulders and upward *he was* higher than any of the people.

3 And the aſſes of Kiſh, Saul's father, were loſt; and Kiſh ſaid to Saul his ſon, Take now one of the ſervants with thee, and ariſe, go ſeek the aſſes.

4 And he paſſed through mount Ephraim, and paſſed through the land of Shaliſha, but they found *them* not: then they paſſed through the land of Shalim, and *there they were* not; and he paſſed through the land of the Benjamites, but they found *them* not.

5 *And* when they were come to the land of Zuph, Saul ſaid to his ſervant that *was* with him, Come, and let us return; leſt my father leave *caring* for the aſſes, and take thought for us.

6 And he ſaid unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he ſaith cometh ſurely to paſs: now, let us go thither: peradventure he can ſhew us our way that we ſhould go.

7 Then ſaid Saul to his ſervant, But behold, *if* we go, what ſhall we bring the man? for the bread is ſpent in our veſſels, and *there is* not a preſent to bring to the man of God: what have we?

8 And the ſervant anſwered Saul again, and ſaid, Behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a ſhekel of ſilver; *that* will I give to the man of God to tell us our way.

9 (Before-time in Iſrael, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he ſpake, Come, and let us go to the ſeer: for *he that is* now *called* a Prophet, was before-time called a Seer.)

10 Then ſaid Saul to his ſervant, Well ſaid; come, let us go: ſo they went unto the city where the man of God *was*.

11 *And* as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water, and ſaid unto them, Is the ſeer here?

12 And they anſwered them, and ſaid, He is; behold, *he is* before you: make haſte now, for he came to-day to the city; for *there is* a ſacrifice of the people to-day in the high place.

13 As ſoon as ye be come into the city ye ſhall ſtraightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat: for the people will not eat until he come, becauſe he doth bleſs the ſacrifice; *and* afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore, get you up; for about this time ye ſhall find him.

14 And they went up into the city: *and* when they were come into the city, behold, Samuel came out againſt them, for to go up to the high place.

15 Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, ſaying,

16 To-morrow about this time I will ſend thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou ſhalt anoint him *to be* captain over my people Iſrael, that he may ſave my people

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duals were enriched in proportion. Even if Kiſh were of an inferior family in this tribe, (v. 21,) he might be a very wealthy perſon; and his ſon was poſſeſſed of all external accompliſhments, ſuited to that carnal principle, which had dictated Iſrael's requeſt. Though Saul had ſons grown up, he was ſtill in the full vigour of manhood, which is all that is implied in the expreſſion, that is tranſlated "a choice "young man."

V. 5. *Zuph*, &c.] (ch. i. v. 1.) The land, where Ramah ſtood.

V. 6—10.] It is obſervable that the ſervant knew more of Samuel, than Saul did, and ſpake very reſpectfully of him: yet they both looked upon him rather as a diviner, than as a prophet of God, whoſe office it was to inſtruct them in his truth and will: and though it might be cuſtomary to ſhew their reſpect in thoſe days to prophets, and even to princes, by a preſent; yet when they concluded, that Samuel would not be approached without ſome gift, they judged of him by themſelves, or rather by the mercenary pretenders to divination. The ninth verſe was evidently inſerted, as a comment, in after ages, perhaps by Ezra, who is ſuppoſed to have collected, and ſet forth a correct edition of the Scriptures then extant, under the ſuperintendency of the Spirit of prophecy. In the days of Samuel, prophets were emphatically ſtiled "Seers," or perſons, who ſee further into divine things than other men do.

V. 12—14.] (*Note* c. vii. v. 17.) Samuel having burned upon the altar the appointed portion of the peace-offerings, previous to the ſacred feaſt upon the remainder, poured out fervent prayers to the Lord for his acceptance, and for his bleſſing on the ſervice, as a religious ordinance, to the good of their ſouls; as well as on their food for the refreſhment of their bodies. And doubtleſs this was the general obſervance in all the ſacrifices at the tabernacle, and temple, at thoſe times when true religion flouriſhed; though at other times it would degenerate into a form.

V. 16. *Out of the hand*, &c.] When Iſrael grew ſlack in ſerving God, the Philiſtines recovered their authority: and though Saul did not reform their religion, yet in many inſtances he ſucceſsfully fought their battles.

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out of the hand of the Philiſtines: for I have looked upon my people, becauſe their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel ſaw Saul, the LORD ſaid unto him, Behold the man whom I ſpake to thee of: this ſame ſhall reign over my people.

18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and ſaid, Tell me, I pray thee, where the ſeer's houſe *is*.

19 And Samuel anſwered Saul, and ſaid, I *am* the ſeer: go up before me unto the high place; for ye ſhall eat with me to-day; and to-morrow I will let thee go, and will tell thee all that *is* in thine heart.

20 And as for thine aſſes that were loſt three days ago, ſet not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom *is* all the deſire of Iſrael? *is it* not on thee, and on all thy father's houſe?

21 And Saul anſwered and ſaid, *Am* not I a Benjamite, of the ſmalleſt of the tribes of Iſrael? and my family the leaſt of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore then ſpeakeſt thou ſo to me?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his ſervant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them ſit in the chiefeſt place among them that were bidden, which *were* about thirty perſons.

23 And Samuel ſaid unto the cook, Bring the portion which I gave thee, of which I ſaid unto thee, Set it by thee.

24 And the cook took up the ſhoulder, and *that* which *was* upon it, and ſet *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* ſaid, Behold that which is left, ſet *it* before thee, *and* eat; for unto this time hath it been kept for thee, ſince I ſaid, I have invited the people. So Saul did eat with Samuel that day.

25 And when they were come down from the high place into the city, *Samuel* communed with Saul upon the top of the houſe.

26 And they aroſe early: and it came to paſs about the ſpring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the houſe, ſaying, Up, that I may ſend thee away. And Saul aroſe, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad.

27 *And* as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel ſaid to Saul, Bid the ſervant paſs on before us, (and he paſſed on,) but ſtand thou ſtill a while, that I may ſhew thee the word of God.

V. 24. *Behold that, which is left*, &c.] Or "reſerved;" being ſet apart, the beſt portion for Saul, as the chief gueſt, whom Samuel had expected before he came. All theſe circumſtances were calculated to prepare Saul's mind for what followed, and to ſhew him the interpoſition of God therein.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We are never more like to be unhappy, than when we have our outward portion, or connexions, according to the choice, and wiſh of our own hearts: we ought therefore to beg of God in every thing to chooſe for us, and to teach us to acquieſce in his appointment. True excellency of character doth not reſult from external accompliſhments; nor true felicity from proſperous circumſtances, and outward ſplendour: inattention to theſe obvious truths occaſions the moſt fatal miſtakes of mankind. Diligence in buſineſs, and good behaviour in relative life, are commendable, but no ſure tokens of true piety, or acceptance with God. We ſenſibly feel our temporal loſſes, and beſtow much pains to retrieve them: but how little do we attempt, and how ſpeedily are we weary, in ſeeking the ſalvation of our ſouls! Nay, if miniſters could inform men how to ſecure their property, or to acquire wealth, they would be more reſpected, and conſulted, than they now are, when they are employed in teaching them how to eſcape eternal miſery, and to obtain eternal life! Indeed we all are naturally more deſirous to learn our fortune, than our duty; and curioſity, or worldly motives are generally the *firſt* means of bringing men acquainted with the miniſters, and the word of God: and were they not providentially brought to them, they would ſeldom go out of their way to enquire after them: this is the reaſon that poor ſervants, and mechanics are ſo often better acquainted with, and have more reſpect for the men of God, than the rich and great; as they have not ſo many things to take off their thoughts from, or prejudice their hearts againſt them, and their meſſage. But many will ſpeak of miniſters, as men of God, and honourable men, whoſe words will certainly come to paſs, who neither comply with their exhortations, nor imitate their examples: and whilſt they are conſcious, that they do not chooſe to be at any expence in religion; they ſuſpect, that the miniſters teach for hire, and will do no more, than they are paid for. And indeed there always have been ſo many of this temper, that inattentive obſervers will not readily underſtand the difference betwixt ſuch *mercenary diviners*, and the true ſervants of the Lord, who ſeek not their's but them; nor between the blind watchmen, and guides, and thoſe, who are *ſeers* indeed, whoſe eyes the Lord hath opened, and thus qualified to ſhew others the way of ſalvation. But the ſeeing eye, and the hearing ear are, in this ſenſe alſo, from the Lord, and to thoſe, that wait on him, he will communi-

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CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. Samuel anointing Saul, and diſmiſſing him with directions; and tokens, which accordingly came to paſs, v. 1—13. *2d. Saul's anſwer to the inquiries of his uncle, v.* 14—16. *3d. Samuel convening the people; who ſingle out Saul, as their appointed king; and his, and their behaviour on the occaſion, v.* 17—27.

THEN Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured *it* upon his head, and kiſſed him, and ſaid, *is it* not becauſe the LORD hath anointed thee *to be* captain over his inheritance?

2 When thou art departed from me to-day, then thou ſhalt find two men by Rachael's ſepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah; and they will ſay unto thee, The aſſes which thou wenteſt to ſeek are found: and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the aſſes, and ſorroweth for you, ſaynig, What ſhall I do for my ſon?

3 Then ſhalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou ſhalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there ſhall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine:

4 And they will ſalute thee, and give thee two *loaves* of bread, which thou ſhalt receive of their hands.

5 After that thou ſhalt come to the hill of God, where *is* the garriſon of the Philiſtines: and it ſhall come to paſs, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou ſhalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place, with a pſaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they ſhall propheſy:

6 And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou ſhalt propheſy with them, and ſhalt be turned into another man.

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cate thoſe truths, which he would have them communicate to the people. True grace will teach us to honour thoſe, whom God hath honoured, though their advancement be attended by our degredation; but it is always right to regulate that reſpect in ſuch a manner, as to endeavour to bring them acquainted with the truths, and worſhip of God. Without fervent prayer and praiſe, ſpringing from a penitent believing heart, a ſolemn ſacrifice would have degenerated into a profane meal; and with them an ordinary meal becomes a ſpiritual ſacrifice: but they, who eat their food without thanking the Lord for it, or craving his bleſſing on it, are ſcarce diſtinguiſhable from brutes, or from Atheiſts: and the examples of eminent perſons, even in ſuch matters as theſe, may have a ſalutary effect on thoſe around them. Before honour is humility, and they, who have well learned to obey, are moſt likely to be advanced to command, and to do it properly. But how different are the Lord's purpoſes reſpecting us, to our intentions for ourſelves! perhaps Saul was the only man, who ſet out to ſeek aſſes, and literally found a kingdom: but many have ſet out, and moved their habitations, &c, to ſeek riches and pleaſures, who have been guided to ſuch places, where they have found the ſalvation of their ſouls: having met with thoſe, who have addreſſed them, as if informed of the ſecrets of their lives, and hearts; and having been thereby led ſeriouſly to regard the meſſage of the Lord delivered by them. If this hath been our caſe, though our worldly projects have all been fruſtrated, let us ceaſe caring about it; for the Lord has given, or prepared for us that, which is infinitely better.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 1. *Then Samuel took*, &c.] In the converſation of thepreceding evening, and of that morning, Samuel had doubtleſs given Saul all needful information, preparatory to this ceremony; and probably with exhortations, counſels, and prayers. The prieſts were anointed to their office, as types of Chriſt, and as implying their need of the communication of the Holy Spirit, to furniſh them for their ſacred work; for the ſame reaſons, the kings alſo were anointed. In performing this ſacred rite Samuel aſſured Saul of the Lord's choice of him to be the king of Iſrael, and of his own hearty concurrence: the kiſs denoted affection, and ſubjection to him as the Lord's anointed king, (*Pſalm* ii. v. 12.) The vial of oil hath been conſidered as an emblem of the feebleneſs, frailneſs, and ſhort continuance of the kingdom in Saul's family: (c. xvi. v. 13.)

V. 2. *When thou art departed*, &c.] We may ſuppoſe that Saul was exceedingly ſurpriſed, and ſcarce able to believe what Samuel had ſaid to him: to convince him therefore, that the matter was from the Lord, Samuel prophetically informed him of ſome incidents, which he would meet with in his return.

V. 3, 4. *To Bethel*, &c.] In the preſent derangement of the Levitical inſtitutions, high places were connived at, where ſacrifices were offered to Jehovah, and where prieſts attended to receive their oblations, and miniſter in their office. Theſe perſons carrying their offerings to Bethel, were ſecretly diſpoſed of God to preſent two loaves to Saul, as the firſt tribute paid him, after he was anointed king; which hath been thought an emblematic inſtruction to him, ſtill to be content with plain fare, and not to covet luxuries.

V. 5, 6.] This hill of God, which was kept by a garriſon of the Philiſtines, ſeems to have been near Gibeah, where Saul lived; and an high-place for the worſhip of God was ſituated there, (v. 13.) From the time of Samuel there appear to have been ſeminaries, where pious young men were educated under the tuition of ſome approved prophets, in the knowledge of divine things; upon whom God was frequently pleaſed to beſtow the ſpirit of prophecy: and they were very uſeful in preſerving ſome ſenſe of true religion in the land, when the prieſts, and Levites

7 And let it be, when theſe ſigns are come unto thee, *that* thou do as occaſion ſhall ſerve thee; for God *is* with thee.

8 And thou ſhalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, *and* to ſacrifice ſacrifices of peace-offerings: ſeven days ſhalt thou tarry, till I come to thee, and ſhew thee what thou ſhalt do.

9 And it was *ſo*, that, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all thoſe ſigns came to paſs that day.

10 And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he propheſied among them.

11 And it came to paſs, when all that knew him before-time ſaw that, behold, he propheſied among the prophets, then the people ſaid one to another, What *is* this *that* is come upon the ſon of Kiſh? *Is* Saul alſo among the prophets?

12 And one of the ſame place anſwered, and ſaid, But who *is* their father? Therefore it became a proverb, *Is* Saul alſo among the prophets?

13 And when he had made an end of propheſying, he came to the high place.

14 And Saul's uncle ſaid unto him and to his ſervant, Whither went ye? And he ſaid, To ſeek the aſſes: and when we ſaw that *they were* no where, we came to Samuel.

15 And Saul's uncle ſaid, Tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel ſaid unto you?

16 And Saul ſaid unto his uncle, He told us plainly that the aſſes were found. But of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel ſpake, he told him not.

17 And Samuel called the people together unto the LORD to Mizpeh;

18 And ſaid unto the children of Iſrael, Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, I brought up Iſrael out of Egypt, and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians, and out of the hand of all kingdoms, *and* of them that oppreſſed you:

19 And ye have this day rejected your God, who himſelf ſaved you out of all your adverſities and your tribulations; and ye have ſaid unto him, *Nay*, but ſet a king over us. Now therefore preſent yourſelves before the LORD by your tribes, and by your thouſands.

20 And when Samuel had cauſed all the tribes of Iſrael to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken.

21 When he had cauſed the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the fa-

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too generally neglected their duty. The garriſon of the Philiſtines did not, it ſeems, diſturb them in their devout ſtudies, and exerciſes. The prophets frequently uſed ſolemn muſic to compoſe their minds for the illapſes of the Spirit of God; (2 *Kings*, c. iii. v. 15.)

V. 8. *And thou ſhalt*, &c.] The deliverance of Iſrael from the oppreſſion of the Philiſtines, though one great end of Saul's appointment to the kingdom, was not attempted, till the ſecond year of his reign, in which probably he ſinfully procraſtinated. At that time Saul, at Gilgal, neglected to wait for Samuel, according to directions given him, which correſpond with theſe, (c. xiii. v. 8.) To that event therefore this paſſage ſeems to refer, and to imply an inſtruction from God, that as ſoon as Saul was confirmed in the kingdom, he ſhould aſſemble the Iſraelites at Gilgal, and there wait till Samuel came to offer ſacrifices for him: his delay might make way for his acting contrary to his inſtructions; and perhaps the latter clauſe was intended as a rule to be obſerved on every occaſion.

V. 9. *Another heart*, &c.] That is, another diſpoſition of mind: he was inſpired with fortitude, and reſolution, and his mind enlarged to great deſigns of governing, and delivering Iſrael, and deſtroying their enemies, &c. Perhaps he was alſo brought under religious impreſſions, which might be termed another, though not a new heart. And indeed his conduct for a ſeaſon appeared very promiſing, though he afterwards proved very vile.

V. 10—13.] When he came among the prophets the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he ſpake ſo pertinently and fluently in divine things; that thoſe, who before had known him, were aſtoniſhed to hear him: and one ſaid, "But who is their father?"—This may be interpreted, is not God the father, or former of prophets? Why need you then be ſurpriſed to ſee Saul, though before an unlikely perſon, become one of them? Or, is not Samuel the father, or inſtitutor of this ſeminary? and Saul has been all night with him, and is thus become one of them. It cauſed greater aſtoniſhment many ages afterwards to ſee another Saul among the apoſtles of Jeſus! Some imagine that Saul went to the High Place to perform his devotions, before he returned home.

V. 16. *He told him not*, &c.] This may be aſcribed to a commendable modeſty, and prudence, by which he would avoid oſtentation, ſhun envy, and patiently wait the event in God's providence.

V. 20. *The tribe*, &c.] The determination was probably

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mily of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken, and when they sought him he could not be found.

22 Therefore they enquired of the LORD further, if the man should yet come thither. And the LORD answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff.

23 And they ran and fetched him thence: and when he stood among the people, he was higher than any of the people, from his shoulders and upward.

24 And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king.

25 Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote *it* in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.

26 And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched.

27 But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents: but he held his peace.

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by lot; for God's appointment was thus ascertained, not the people's election. His hiding himself seems to have arisen from an improper diffidence, and distrust of God.

V. 25. *The manner of the kingdom*, &c.] That is, the rules of the government; or in modern language, the prerogatives of the prince, and the privileges of the people. We may be sure this *manner of the kingdom* would differ considerably *from the manner of the king* before mentioned: the one being the appointment of God, and the other, the depraved disposition of human nature, when entrusted with authority.

V. 26, 27.] The greatest part of the people treated the matter with indifference: Saul modestly went home to his own house, but was attended by a band of men, whose hearts God had disposed to support his authority; whilst others despised him, and would not acknowledge him king. But he very wisely held his peace, and resented not their affront: by which means civil discords were prevented.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Many are called to, fitted for, and employed in outward services to the Lord's people, who are not anointed with the unction of sanctifying grace; yet the most eminent Christians, or ministers must honour, and obey God's authority in them. The attentive believer comparing the dispensations of Providence with the word of God, will perceive his hand in the most ordinary concerns of life, as fulfilments of the Scripture, answers of Prayer, and evidences of the Lord's peculiar kindness to him. A superior *care* in common life swallows up a lesser; the tender parent ceases from his anxiety about his property, when solicitous for the welfare of his son: children therefore should be careful not to distress such kind friends: but we are also reminded hereby, that a due concern about eternal things would moderate our care about the interests of this life. No incumbent evils can mar their comfort, who enjoy communion with God; no enemy can annoy them, when he wills them to be at peace; and he will teach them, to use in subserviency to godliness those things, wherewith carnal minds inflame their passions, and dissipate all serious reflection. Many changes may take place in a man's language, conduct, and disposition, who is not born of God: another man he may become, and not a new creature! another heart he may have, but not an holy heart! he may be qualified for ruling, or preaching, and not be made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; nay he may prophesy, and work miracles, and yet be a child of the devil! Sudden changes are indeed generally to be suspected: but when we consider who makes the Christian, and the prophet, we need not be offended, should we number amongst professors, or preachers of the gospel, some ungodly Saul of our former acquaintance: for true conversion makes so great a change in a man's character, &c, that former friends can scarce believe him to be the same; whether they admire and love, or whether they despise and hate the change. As far as we depend upon the guidance of the Spirit of God, we may regulate our general conduct, as circumstances require, and may act with humble confidence in perplexing situations, being assured that God is with us: but every enterprize should be entered upon, with reference to the authority, and worship of God; his directions carefully observed, and his time waited for. We may freely speak of those things, which are honourable to others, but had ordinarily best be silent, as to those transactions, which tend to advance our own reputation. The Lord will bring to a seasonable determination those affairs, which are referred to him: but the joy of having inordinate desires gratified will be short lived. It is good to be conscious of our unworthiness, and insufficiency, for the services, to which we are called; and to avoid ostentation, and whatever may excite envy, and opposition: but men should be careful not to run into the opposite extreme, by refusing the employments, to which the Lord and his church call them, through meanness of spirit, and unbelief. Indeed high stations are heavy burdens, when the duties of them are conscientiously attended upon: and the comfort of them is but small; for the heart of man is prone to envy all, who are preferred. Our natural enmity to God disposes us to despise, and oppose the instruments, that he selects for the government of states, and for promoting the cause of his church: and if some approve, rejoice in, honour and help them; others will revile, and contemn them. But we should wait the Lord's will with patience, and without discouragement, and bear man's scorn and malice in silent meekness, and attend to the duties of our station, according to the manner of it; thus the fatal effects of discord will be prevented, and in due season the Lord will plead our cause, and all opposition will fall before us. Men seldom receive that with

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1st. Jabesh-gilead distressed by the Ammonites, v. 1—3. 2d. Rescued by the resolution, and dispatch of Saul, v. 4—11. 3d. His clemency to his despisers, and confirmation in the kingdom, v. 12—15.

THEN Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead: and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us, and we will serve thee.

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, On this *condition* will I make *a covenant* with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes, and lay it *for* a reproach upon all Israel.

3 And the elders of Jabesh said unto him, Give us seven days respite, that we may send messengers unto all the coasts of Israel: and then, if *there be* no man to save us, we will come out to thee.

4 Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul, and told the tidings in the ears of the people: and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept.

5 And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field; and Saul said, *What aileth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.

6 And the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings, and his anger was kindled greatly.

7 And he took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

8 And when he numbered them in Bezek, the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

9 And they said unto the messengers that came, Thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, To-morrow, by *that time* the sun be hot, ye shall have help. And the messengers came and shewed *it* to the men of Jabesh; and they were glad.

10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, To-morrow we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.

11 And it was *so* on the morrow, that Saul put the people in three companies, and they came into the midst of the host in the morning watch, and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day: and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together.

12 And the people said unto Samuel, Who *is* he that said, Shall Saul reign over us? bring

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thankfulness, which they sought with eagerness; for every particular doth not exactly answer their expectation, and that occasions dissatisfaction and sullen discontent. And if any welcome with unfeigned gratitude God's gracious appointment, and set themselves cordially to promote his cause; (especially the cause of Christ, our anointed king, whom so many children of Belial despise;) they are such, whose hearts he hath touched by his grace; and let him have all the praise.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—3. Jabesh-gilead had been desolated by the Israelites some time before: (*Jud.* c. xxi. v. 8—12:) but being now replenished, it was assaulted by the Ammonites, on whose borders it was situated; and it could in capitulation obtain no better terms, than for every man to have his right eye put out, and to be made a slave. Nor would their enemies have consented to a few days respite, but in confidence that they would not be helped, and that in consequence the nation of Israel would be the more disgraced.

V. 5. *After the herd*, &c.] Saul finding himself despised by some, and neglected by the most of the Israelites, returned quietly to his former occupations, and left the matter entirely to the providence of God. In this chapter he looks as great, as the much celebrated Roman dictator from the plough, and indeed greater; for he followed his herds after he was appointed to the kingdom by the Lord himself: yet when called forth to action, his vigour and success were not inferior to those of the renowned Roman.

V. 5—10.] Saul being fired with a generous indignation at the indignity offered Israel, in a very spirited, yet humble, and clement manner summoned the attendance of the people; and through the immediate influence of God upon their hearts a vast multitude assembled with surprising celerity: upon which he undertook, and performed a march perhaps of fifty miles, within the space of about twenty-four hours; and by this dispatch arrived in time to rescue their trembling brethren, and unexpectedly to assault, and destroy their insulting enemies.

V. 12—15.] Saul's success went further with the people, than either the Lord's appointment of him, or his personal accomplishments. And now the sons of Belial were saved from death, as well as Israel from the Ammonites, by him, whom they despised, as unable to save them. In this whole affair Saul's conduct was unexceptionable, and exemplary; and the whole was closed with such humanity, and piety, as promised better effects, than followed;

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the men, that we may put them to death.

13 And Saul said, There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to-day the LORD hath wrought salvation in Israel.

14 Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there.

15 And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal; and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1. *Samuel's protestation of his integrity, allowed of by the people,* v. 1—5. 2*d. His expostulation with them enforced by a thunder storm sent at his request,* v. 6—18. 3*d. The people's terror, and intreaties, and his assurances, and exhortations,* v. 20—25.

AND Samuel said unto all Israel, behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grey-headed; and, behold, my sons *are* with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day.

3 Behold, here I *am:* witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received *any* bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.

4 And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand.

for external good conduct doth not always prove a gracious heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Hasty settlements amongst bad neighbours often produce multiplied calamities: and when professed Christians act inconsistent with the covenant of God, they may expect to be forced to the basest subjection to man: when they dishonour God, he will disgrace them, and make them a reproach to their vilest enemies. To save their lives men will part with their liberty, and even consent to have their eyes put out: is it then no part of wisdom to part with our right eye, rather than to be cast into hell-fire? Lusts, or interests, thus dear to our carnal hearts, must be crucified, if we would covenant with God for the life of our souls; and whatever respite he gives us, none can save us out of his hand: We must consent to his proposals, or perish. But tender mercy is couched under this apparently severe requisition; the dreaded operation will not be very painful, the advantages immense, and his service is perfect freedom. His Providence will bring forth those, whom he hath designed, and prepared for usefulness: nor will any repent of humbly waiting in obscurity, and honest industry, till he is pleased to call them forth; for only pride, and impatience can conclude, that the Lord hath lighted a candle to leave it under a bushel. The reproach of the gospel, the distresses of God's people, and the insulting triumphs of their enemies should not only cause our sympathizing sorrows, but our most decisive exertions in our several stations to redress such evils, yea our keen, and generous indignation. But magistrates in all cases should be sparing of the lives of their subjects, and only punish them in their property, when that can be made effectual. When zeal for the glory of God, and love for the brethren prompt men to earnestness, and vigorous efforts; and when God is pleased to concur, great effects may speedily be produced: but in critical junctures ordinary measures of dispatch are unmeaning. Deliverance in extreme distress is doubly welcome, and it is oft vouchsafed to the true Christian: but the destruction, which frequently overtakes the wicked in the height of their triumphs, and security, is inexpressibly dreadful. Humility and clemency add superior lustre to the most splendid actions: he, who forgives his enemies, when he has them in his power, obtains the noblest victory; and by giving the praise of illustrious exploits to God, a man acquires the most solid honour. The Lord delighteth to plead their cause, who are dumb under injuries, and do not plead for themselves; to put to silence those, who contend with his servants; and to work by those instruments, which man despises. Thus the despised Saviour will at length be universally acknowledged as the Lord's anointed king, with songs of triumph and praise: as yet, upon a mercy-seat he receives the submissions and pleads the cause of rebels, who are willing that he should reign over and save them: but shortly from his righteous tribunal he will condemn to everlasting ruin all those, who persist in their contempt of, and opposition to him.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1. *And Samuel said,* &c.] The elders, and tribes of Israel being convened at Gilgal, where they had celebrated the late victory with sacrifices, &c, and confirmed the kingdom to Saul; Samuel embraced the opportunity of appealing to the people, and to their king, concerning his integrity, as their judge, when he was about to divest himself of his authority. By this he not only meant to clear his own character, but to set before Saul an instructive example, and to convince the people of their ingratitude to God, and to him.

V. 2. *And I am old,* &c.] If Samuel was about eighteen when Eli was killed, he would be thirty-eight when constituted judge at Mizpeh: from that event to the death of Saul we compute forty years. David was anointed not many years from the commencement of Saul's reign, we cannot suppose him to have been younger, than eighteen at that time, and he was thirty when Saul was killed; we may therefore suppose that Saul actually reigned about

5 And he said unto them, The LORD *is* witness against you, and his anointed *is* witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, *He is* witness.

6 And Samuel said unto the people, *It is* the LORD that advanced Moses and Aaron, and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt.

7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

8 When Jacob was come into Egypt, and your fathers cried unto the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt, and made them dwell in this place.

9 And when they forgat the LORD their God, he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor, and into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Moab, and they fought against them.

10 And they cried unto the LORD, and said, We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD, and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth: but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee.

11 And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side, and ye dwelled safe.

12 And when ye saw that Nahash, the king of the children of Ammon, came against you, ye said unto me, Nay, but a king shall reign over us; when the LORD your God *was* your king.

13 Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, *and* whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you.

14 If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the LORD your God.

15 But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD; then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

16 Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes.

17 *Is it* not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king.

18 So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day:

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sixteen, or seventeen years; and consequently that Samuel was at this time about sixty. From a child he had been labouring assiduously for their good, and was grown grey in their service; yet they had at last rejected him! His sons had indeed misbehaved, and had been set aside, and were there present, if they chose to call them to an account: but for himself he could appeal to the Lord, and to their consciences, and was even willing that their anointed king should decide, whether he had not acted with equity, impartiality, and disinterestedness, during his whole administration. When they had in consequence acknowledged his integrity, he did not expostulate further with them concerning their ill usage of him; but endeavoured to convince them of their wickedness in the sight of God.

V. 11, 12.] Bedan is probably another name for some of the judges, whose history hath been considered; perhaps for Samson: Samuel adjoins his own name, in attempting to convince them, that in rejecting him, after all his services, they had in effect rejected the government of God. It seems that the fear of Nahash influenced them in their peremptory demand of a king: whereas, if they had left it to the Lord, he would have protected them as effectually some other way.

V. 14, 15.] They might suppose, that under a king, to whom they might always apply for succour, their affairs would not be exposed to the same vicissitudes as before. But Samuel assured them, that there would be no difference in that respect: for obedience would still continue to ensure prosperity, and disobedience would bring down judgments upon them: and that their privileges, as the Lord's peculiar people would still be continued to them, as they had been before, by adhering to his service, and not otherwise.

V. 17. *Is it not wheat-harvest*, &c?] At that season rain was very uncommon, this thunder-storm was very violent; and being predicted, and prayed for, was an attestation of Samuel's word, and very suited to produce conviction, and alarm in their consciences.

V. 18, 19. *Feared the Lord, and Samuel*, &c.] Being terrified with the displays of the Lord's power in answer to Samuel's prayers, and perceiving how much he was honoured of God, they were afraid of some immediate judgment upon them, such as were inflicted on their forefathers for rebelling against Moses, and Aaron. In this terror they earnestly begged of him to pray for them, and not against them.

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and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19 And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins *this* evil, to ask us a king.

20 And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: (ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart;

21 And turn ye not aside: for *then should ye go* after vain *things*, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they *are* vain:)

22 For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.

23 Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way.

24 Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great *things* he hath done for you.

25 But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.

V. 20. *Fear not*, &c.] Samuel repeatedly exhorted them to fear the Lord, (v. 14. 23:) yet here he exhorted them not to fear; that is not to fear destruction, to their discouragement. A reverential fear of the divine Majesty, and a fear of his displeasure, when counterpoised by the hope of his favour, quicken men in seeking and serving him: but such a fear of wrath, as occasions despondency, and hard thoughts of God, drives men from their duty, and exposes them to manifold temptations. (*Note*, *Gen.* c. xlv. ver. 5.)

V. 22. *For the Lord*, &c.] In preferring the seed of Jacob to other families, to be his people, the Lord acted as a sovereign, who is not bound, and doth not deign to assign his reasons: but having made them his people, the honour of his perfections required that he should not forsake them, however severely he corrected them, till the promised seed was come.

V. 23. *God forbid*, &c.] The people had no occasion to fear Samuel's resentment; for he deemed himself bound in duty to persevere in praying for them, notwithstanding the affront, which they had put upon him. And though no longer their chief magistrate, he promised still to devote the remnant of his life to their service, as their religious instructor, and as determining their disputes in a subordinate station: in which senses he judged them all the days of his life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We cannot justify ourselves before God by our obedience to his holy law, which requires perpetual, unfailing perfection in heart and life; but we may justify our conduct before our fellow creatures, if we have conscientiously behaved ourselves towards them: and under reproaches, and ingratitude the testimony of our conscience to our integrity may prove a source of comfort, and rejoicing, if we are true believers. The favoured few, who have walked before God from their childhood to old age, whilst they look upon their past lives with gratitude, as the sure evidences of their acceptance, and as confirming their expectation of eternal glory; may receive this satisfaction as a gracious recompence from the Lord; and may use it as an argument with the young, to seek, and serve him without delay.—There may be seasons, when we may properly vindicate our own characters; but it should be always in subserviency to the conviction, and edification of others; and we may speak of our own conduct, when we can thus convey any useful hints to our juniors, or successors: and men may recede from public stations with comfort, when they can extort from their very despisers a testimony to their integrity. The honour rendered to those, who are concluding their course, differs widely from the applause, and congratulation, which many meet with, when they first step forth before the public eye, and which often terminates in disgrace and contempt; and is therefore unworthy our wishes, and ought surely never to move a wise man's envy, though it be rendered at his expense. Prosperity in sin, is no proof of impunity; and sinners therefore never need to be warned more, than when successful in their undertakings. But the servants of God, though ill treated, should be careful not much to expostulate with those, who have injured them, about their behaviour to them: but to reason with them of the righteous acts of the Lord, and his truth and mercy towards them, and of their conduct towards him, for their humiliation before God. Our safe, and happy state consists in a willing dependance on, and subjection to the Lord: but we affect independence, and refuse obedience, by which we change substantial good, for an empty shadow; for the greatest outward prosperity only contributes to our felicity, when it induces us to fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice. Disobedience ensures misery, from generation to generation; whatever our station, or circumstance in life may be: and to be enabled to continue following the Lord, as his accepted servants, is the highest privilege, which we can enjoy. The most useful benefactors of mankind, who have spent their lives, and worn out their constitutions, in unceasing labours for the good of others, must not be surprised, if they are at length cast off with contempt, and ingratitude: and if the perverseness of their brethren prevents them from doing all that good, which they desired to do, they should still do all the good they can: this is a general rule for us all; they, who cannot rule, may teach, and they, who cannot teach, may pray, and shew an edifying example; and no provocations should tempt us to sin against God in ceasing to pray for children, relations, friends, people, fellow sinners, or even inveterate enemies. Yet the prayers of the church, and the intercession of Christ will in the event appear to have been united against impenitent sinners; and the elements, and the whole creation will shortly be armed against them to their destruction. The belief of this alarming truth should warn them to flee from the wrath

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1*ſt. Saul diſmiſſing the people, and retaining a band of ſoldiers: after ſome delay ſmiting a garriſon of the Philiſtines, and ſummoning the people to meet him,* 1—3. 2*d. The numerous army of the Philiſtines, and the terror, and diſperſion of the Iſraelites,* 4—7. 3*d. Saul ſacrificing before Samuel's arrival, rebuked by him, rejected of God, and almoſt deſerted by the people,* 8—16. 4*th. The incurſions of the Philiſtines, and the diſtreſſed, diſarmed ſtate of Iſrael,* 13—27.

SAUL reigned one year: and when he had reigned two years over Iſrael,

2 Saul choſe him three thouſand *men* of Iſrael, *whereof* two thouſand were with Saul in Michmaſh, and in mount Beth-el, and a thouſand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the reſt of the people he ſent every man to his tent.

3 And Jonathan ſmote the garriſon of the Philiſtines that *was* in Geba: and the Philiſtines heard *of it*. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, ſaying, let the Hebrews hear.

4 And all Iſrael heard ſay *that* Saul had ſmitten a garriſon of the Philiſtines, and *that* Iſrael alſo was had in abomination with the Philiſtines. And the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal.

5 And the Philiſtines gathered themſelves together to fight with Iſrael, thirty thouſand chariots, and ſix thouſand horſemen, and people as the ſand which *is* on the ſea-ſhore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmaſh, eaſtward from Beth-aven.

6 When the men of Iſrael ſaw that they were in a ſtrait, (for the people were diſtreſſed,) then the people did hide themſelves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits.

7 And *ſome of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead: as for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling.

8 And he tarried ſeven days, according to the ſet time that Samuel *had appointed:* but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were ſcattered from him.

9 And Saul ſaid, Bring hither a burnt-offering to me, and peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering.

10 And it came to paſs, that as ſoon as he

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to come, to confeſs their ſins, to obey the goſpel of Chriſt, and to deſire the prayers, and counſels of his miniſters. But when ſinners are deeply convinced of their guilt, and danger, they will need encouragement, leſt their fear ſhould iſſue in deſpondency. In the day of judgment all thoſe things, which men have inordinately loved, and for which they have forſaken the Lord, will be found vain, and ſuch as cannot profit or deliver, even though they were the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them. Happy then are they, whom the Lord hath pleaſed to make his people! he will never leave or forſake them, but will glorify himſelf in their eternal ſalvation. But none can know aſſuredly, that theſe bleſſings belong to them, except they attend to "the good, and right way, and fear the Lord, and ſerve "him with all their heart:" and if "we conſider what "great things he hath done for us," eſpecially in the great work of redemption, we can neither want motive, encouragement, or aſſiſtance for ſo doing.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1—4.] After Saul had defeated Nahaſh, and been confirmed in the kingdom; after he had joined with Samuel in offering ſacrifices, and intreated the benefit of his prayers, he ſhould have marched his victorious army immediately againſt the Philiſtines: but elated with ſucceſs, pleaſed with the ſhew of royalty, and diſpoſed to eaſe, and indulgence, he, for the preſent, diſmiſſed the bulk of the people, retaining only a ſmall number for his guard, and the ſupport of his authority over the Iſraelites. Thus their ardour was abated, and probably many of them were diſguſted; and for above a year the Philiſtines had time to prepare for war, and to weaken, and diſarm the Iſraelites; which they did moſt aſſiduouſly, knowing that their king had been choſen on purpoſe to ſhake off their yoke. In the mean time Jonathan, probably by Saul's command, and as ſome imagine, contrary to treaty, deſtroyed a garriſon of the Philiſtines; and thus exaſperated them, before they were prepared to receive them. Nay Iſrael was had in abomination by the Philiſtines; they not only reſented the affront, but abhorred their perfidy. And when Saul at length ſounded the alarm, the people, diſſatisfied with his management, or terrified with the power of the enemy, either did not come to him, or ſpeedily deſerted him. In all this Saul was very impolitic: but the Lord intended to chaſtiſe the people for their ſins, to expoſe their folly in expecting, that a king could ſave them, and to prepare the way for a glorious deliverance, which he intended to effect for them.

V. 5. *Thirty thouſand chariots,* &c.] The Philiſtines had doubtleſs collected troops on this emergency from all the ſurrounding nations; but the number of chariots is ſo immenſely large, that commentators conjecture, that it included alſo all their carriages for baggage, &c.

V. 7. *All the people,* &c.] All the people, who were capable of bearing arms, who had not hid themſelves, or fled beyond Jordan.

V. 8—9. *And he tarried,* &c.] (*Note,* c. x. v. 8.) According to the direction before given, and perhaps ſince

had

had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue; the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.

15 And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people *that were* present with him, about six hundred men.

16 And Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people *that were* present with them, abode in Gibeah of Benjamin: but the Philistines encamped in Michmash.

17 And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies: one company turned unto the way that *leadeth to* Ophrah, unto the land of Shual:

18 And another company turned the way *to* Beth-horon: and another company turned *to* the way of the border, that looketh to the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderness.

19 Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel: (for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make *them* swords or spears:)

20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock.

21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.

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repeated, Saul tarried for Samuel until the seventh day: but before the close of it, being impatient of his situation, perhaps displeased with Samuel for not coming sooner, and attributing the people's terror and desertion to his absence, and the want of some token of the Lord's presence with them; he proceeded to offer sacrifices, contrary to the express injunction, that had been laid upon him: and, as no mention is made of any priest being employed, he is supposed to have officiated himself, as if his appointment to the kingdom would authorise his intrusion into the priesthood: and perhaps he was vainly pleased in asserting before the people that he could sacrifice for himself, and was not dependent on, and had no occasion for Samuel.

V. 12. *I forced myself*, &c.] When Samuel came, Saul went out to meet him, and salute, or bless him, as one well satisfied with what he had done, and who expected to be approved for it. But when he perceived that Samuel was displeased, he attempted to excuse himself by the plea of necessity, and the reluctance, with which he had done it, lest the Philistines should attack him before he had performed his devotions. But he might, without blame, have made his supplications unto the Lord, without presuming to offer sacrifices, and to disobey his command by his prophet, who had anointed him to the kingdom. His dependance on such performances detected the formality of his religion.

V. 13. *Thou hast not*, &c.] This commandment was probably intended as a test of Saul's disposition, and his transgression proved, that he regarded not the word of the Lord, when it interfered with his own inclinations or sentiments, whereby he was shewn to be unfit to rule as God's vicegerent over his people. He was weighed in this balance, and found wanting. Had he behaved properly, the kingdom would have been confirmed in his family; but now he was sentenced to be removed, to make way for one of a more tractable disposition. This the Lord foresaw, but his secret purpose was not the motive of Saul's conduct; which to the Searcher of all hearts might appear much more aggravated, than it doth to us. Though Samuel on this occasion departed from Saul: yet, as he went to Gibeah, and came to him afterwards, it is conjectured that the sentence was not irreversible; but that, if he had repented of this sin, and been more obedient in future, he might have been continued in the kingdom.

V. 19. *No smith found*, &c.] The Philistines had probably long practised this policy; but they had used peculiar assiduity, and success during the last year, whilst they were preparing for war: which displays the inattention of Saul, and the tameness of the people, in submitting to so great an oppression. As some parts of the land were very distant from the country of the Philistines, it hath been conjectured that smiths of that nation were sent amongst them; who both would impoverish them by demanding an exorbitant price for their work, and serve as spies and informers, if any Israelite attempted to learn or practise that trade.

22 So it came to paſs in the day of battle, that there was neither ſword nor ſpear found in the hand of any of the people that *were* with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his ſon was there found.

23 And the garriſon of the Philiſtines went out to the paſſage of Michmaſh.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains 1ſt. The Philiſtines marvellouſly routed by Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, and purſued by Saul and the Iſraelites, 1—23. *2d. Saul's raſh curſe, whereby the people were tempted to ſin; Jonathan's life was endangered, though reſcued by the people; and the further purſuit of their enemies was prevented,* 24—46. *3d. Saul's exploits and family,* 47—52.

NOW it came to paſs upon a day, that Jonathan the ſon of Saul ſaid unto the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over to the Philiſtines garriſon that *is* on the other ſide. But he told not his father.

2 And Saul tarried in the uttermoſt part

V. 22. *There was neither ſword*, &c.] The Iſraelites uſed bows, ſlings, and javelins in war, and with theſe perhaps the people were armed: perhaps the Philiſtines had ſeized the armour, which they had uſed againſt Nahaſh, after they were diſperſed; and many, who had armour, might have deſerted. However, in the providence of God, it was ſo ordered, that none but Saul, and Jonathan, had either ſword, or ſpear. Thus they, who expected to look formidable, under kingly government, were made to appear very contemptible: not that the Lord had forſaken his people; but becauſe he would humble them, and ſhew them, that the victory did not depend upon ſwords, and ſpears, but upon the favour and aſſiſtance of the Almighty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our ſanguine expectations from creatures are ſure to iſſue in diſappointment: and when we reſolve to chooſe for ourſelves, we ſhall certainly have cauſe to repent of our ſelf-will. And when men are lifted up in ſelf-ſufficiency, they are often left to the moſt unaccountable infatuation. The chief advantages of the enemies of the church, are derived from the miſconduct of it's profeſſed friends: for when theſe act inconſiſtent with equity and fidelity, religious people without diſcrimination are looked upon with abhorrence, and contempt. Yet whilſt ſinners are ſtudying to revenge themſelves, the Lord often reſtrains their malice by inviſible boundaries, and uſes their machinations for the chaſtiſement of his people. When deep reſentment and great power are united, they occaſion great conſternation, and men thus terrified will flee, or hide themſelves from their fellow-creatures: How then will the terror of the Almighty appal the wicked in the approaching day of his inevitable, and intolerable wrath? At that awful time there will be no place to flee to, or take refuge in: let us then in the believing expectation of it, without delay ſeek the Lord upon a mercy-ſeat, through the great peace-maker Jeſus Chriſt. When men in trouble are counſelled by their pride, and impatience, they will involve themſelves in ſtill deeper guilt, and miſery, by their fooliſh expedients to extricate themſelves: our obſervance of the Lord's directions will always bear an exact proportion to our faith in his protection, and our ſubmiſſion to his will: and they who are moſt dilatory in doing their duty, are commonly the moſt impatient of delay in waiting the Lord's time of deliverance from trouble. Our diſpoſition to obey, or diſobey God will often be deciſively proved, by our behaviour, in apparently ſmall things: and they, who moſt neglect the duties of their own ſtation in life, are moſt forward to cenſure the ſuppoſed negligence of others, and to intrude into the work, which belongs to their fellow-ſervants: but by minding, and keeping to our own buſineſs, we ſhall beſt approve ourſelves to our common Lord. Men deſtitute of inward piety, are frequently moſt ſcrupulouſly attached to the forms of godlineſs: nay they fancy that the Lord will accept them, becauſe they force themſelves to act contrary to their own inclinations, or even to the dictates of their natural conſcience! We are commanded not to ſpeak evil of rulers; yet they, who are called to ſpeak to them in God's name, muſt point out to them very plainly, the folly, and evil of their conduct, and remind them of the anger of the Lord againſt workers of iniquity, without reſpect of perſons: for though a prince may not in this life loſe his throne, or his dignity, by his offences againſt God; yet if he die impenitent he will certainly loſe his ſoul in the world to come: how empty then are thoſe diſtinctions, from which ſo many are hurried into everlaſting miſery? Whatever is our ſtation in life, may we by divine grace be made men after the Lord's own heart, and we ſhall certainly inherit the throne of glory in the bliſsful regions above. Sin hath indeed forfeited our felicity; but unbelief, and impenitency ratify that forfeiture: and they, who have undeniably broke the commandments of God, yet perſiſt in excuſing, and juſtifying themſelves, are evidently both impenitent and unbelievers. The trouble of ſuch perſons muſt certainly increaſe upon them, whilſt they continue in that temper; and as they refuſe to ſubmit to God, they may be reduced to the moſt abject miſery in the ſlavery of ſin. But, whilſt the Lord pours contempt upon proud princes, and brings to nought all the honourable of the earth, he will deliver his people by his own power: and whilſt he ſhames thoſe who truſt in man, he will honour thoſe who expect help from him alone.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 3. *And Ahiah*, &c.] After Samuel had left Saul, he probably ſent to Shiloh for Ahiah, or Abimelech, (*Ch.* xxii. v. 9,) Eli's great grandſon, who was inveſted with the High Prieſthood. Having him in the camp, with his prieſtly garments, and the breaſt-plate of judgment, and having fetched the ark thither alſo; (though the fate of Eli's ſons might have ſhewn him the folly of that preſumptuous meaſure,) Saul appeared to himſelf, and to the people to be very religious, and to have abundant tokens of the Lord's preſence with him: and he

of Gibeah, under a pomegranate-tree which *is* in Migron: and the people that *were* with him *were* about ſix hundred men;

3 And Ahiah, the ſon of Ahitub, I-chabod's brother, the ſon of Phinehas, the ſon of Eli, the LORD's prieſt in Shiloh, wearing an ephod. And the people knew not that Jonathan was gone.

4 And between the paſſages by which Jonathan ſought to go over unto the Philiſtines garriſon, *there was* a ſharp rock on the one ſide, and a ſharp rock on the other ſide: and the name of the one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh.

5 The fore-front of the one *was* ſituate northward over againſt Michmaſh, and the other ſouthward over againſt Gibeah.

6 And Jonathan ſaid to the young man that bare his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garriſon of theſe uncircumciſed; it may be that the LORD will work for us: for *there is* no reſtraint to the LORD to ſave by many or by few.

7 And his armour-bearer ſaid unto him, Do all that *is* in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I *am* with thee according to thy heart.

8 Then ſaid Jonathan, Behold, we will paſs over unto *theſe* men, and we will diſcover ourſelves unto them.

9 If they ſay thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will ſtand ſtill in our place, and will not go up unto them.

10 But if they ſay thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand; and this *ſhall be* a ſign unto us.

11 And both of them diſcovered themſelves unto the garriſon of the Philiſtines: and the Philiſtines ſaid, Behold the Hebrews come forth out the holes where they had hid themſelves.

12 And the men of the garriſon anſwered Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and ſaid, Come up to us, and we will ſhew you a thing. And Jonathan ſaid unto his armour-bearer, Come up after me, for the LORD hath delivered them into the hand of Iſrael.

13 And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him: and they fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer ſlew after him.

14 And that firſt ſlaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made, was about twenty men, within as it were an half-acre of land, *which* a yoke *of oxen might plow.*

15 And there was trembling in the hoſt, in the field, and among all the people; the garriſon, and the ſpoilers, they alſo trembled;

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could now inquire of the Lord, as he thought, without being liable to Samuel's ſharp reproofs, as Ahiah would be more compliant towards him. But the Lord poured contempt upon this formal preparation, whilſt Saul's heart was unhumbled, and impenitent; and in delivering Iſrael he ſelected another inſtrument, who neither conſulted Saul or the High-Prieſt in reſpect of his conduct.

V. 4—5.] The hand of God was very viſible in reſtraining this vaſt army of the Philiſtines from aſſaulting, and diſperſing the ſmall remaining company of the Iſraelites; and in their keeping entrenched in their camp, in an almoſt inacceſſible ſituation, as if they ſtill feared the enfeebled Iſraelites.

V. 6—10.] The faith of Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, was doubtleſs very ſtrong at other times: but the thought of marching againſt this vaſt army, and attacking them, was doubtleſs ſuggeſted to Jonathan's mind immediately from God, and his faith, and expectation increaſed in proportion to the extraordinary attempt: and he was enabled *with reference to his own conduct*, to view the almighty power of God, as ſufficient for his ſafeguard in the midſt of the Philiſtines; and alſo to ſave Iſrael by him, and his armour-bearer, as well as by the moſt numerous, and powerful army, (2 *Chron.* c. xiv. v. 11:) and conſidering the Iſraelites as the covenant people of God, who were oppreſſed by the uncircumciſed Philiſtines, he expected that the Lord would appear for them in the ſame wonderful manner on this occaſion, as he had for their fathers in former times; and in this hope he was confirmed by the chearful concurrence of the armour-bearer, whoſe mind had been raiſed to the ſame faith and expectation: thus they, as it were, ſaid, "Here we are, Lord ſend us." But for their fuller ſatisfaction in this matter, they agreed upon a token, according to which their proceedings were to be determined: if adviſed by the Philiſtines to tarry till they were attacked, they would conſider it as a divine monition, to keep their ground, and act upon the defenſive; but if they called to them to come up, they would take it as a ſignal to climb the rock, and attack them. Such extraordinary attempts, and triumphs of faith are recorded for our admiration, and encouragement in our more ordinary ſervices; and not for our imitation.

V. 11—15.] It ſeems to have been early in the morning, when Jonathan, and his armour-bearer placed themſelves in the view of the Philiſtines, who in contempt challenged them "to come up, and they would ſhew them a "thing," meaning that they would cauſe them to repent of their audacity; which being the expected token from God, Jonathan was perſuaded himſelf, and aſſured his ar-

and

and the earth quaked: ſo it was a very great trembling.

16 And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked: and behold the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down *one another*.

17 Then ſaid Saul unto the people that *were* with him, Number now, and ſee who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold Jonathan and his armour-bearer *were* not *there*.

18 And Saul ſaid unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God: (for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Iſrael.)

19 And it came to paſs, while Saul talked unto the prieſt, that the noiſe that *was* in the hoſt of the Philiſtines went on and increaſed; and Saul ſaid unto the prieſt, Withdraw thine hand.

20 And Saul and all the people that *were* with him aſſembled themſelves, and they came to the battle: and behold every man's ſword was againſt his fellow, *and there was* a very great diſcomfiture.

21 Moreover the Hebrews *that* were with the Philiſtines before that time, which went up with them into the camp, *from the country* round about, even they alſo *turned* to be with the Iſraelites that *were* with Saul and Jonathan.

22 Likewiſe all the men of Iſrael which had hid themſelves in mount Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philiſtines fled, even they alſo followed hard after them in the battle.

23 So the LORD ſaved Iſrael that day: and the battle paſſed over unto Beth-aven.

24 And the men of Iſrael were diſtreſſed that day: for Saul had adjured the people, ſaying, Curſed *be* the man that eateth *any* food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies. So none of the people taſted *any* food.

25 And all *they of* the land came to a wood; and there was honey upon the ground.

26 And when the people were come into the wood, behold the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath.

27 But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath: wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that *was* in his hand, and dipped it in an honey-comb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened.

28 Then anſwered one of the people, and ſaid, Thy father ſtraitly charged the people with an oath, ſaying, Curſed *be* the man that eateth *any* food this day. And the people were faint.

29 Then ſaid Jonathan, My father hath troubled the land: ſee, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, becauſe I taſted a little of this honey.

30 How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the ſpoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater ſlaughter among the Philiſtines?

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mour-bearer, that the Lord would deliver them by their means into the hand of Iſrael: and ſo they both without heſitation climbed up the rock, into the enemy's camp, apparently ruſhing into the jaws of deſtruction: but by the immediate interpoſition of God, the Philiſtines were ſo confounded at this daring aſſault, that they fell down without reſiſtance before Jonathan, and were diſpatched by his armour-bearer; till twenty were ſlaughtered in a ſmall ſpace, without attempting either to fight, or to flee. Upon which the whole army was ſeized with trembling and conſternation, and an earthquake, which took place at the ſame moment, increaſed their terror; ſo that it was "a trembling of "God," the whole being, not only very great, but altogether miraculous: in conſequence of which, they ſuppoſed the Iſraelites to have been in the midſt of the camp, and began to ſlay one another, in every part of it.

V. 16—23.] This being obſerved by the centinels of Saul's ſmall army, and none being abſent from the camp, but Jonathan, and his armour-bearer, great ſurpriſe was occaſioned: and Saul prepared to conſult the Lord, whether he ought to attack the Philiſtines or no; but his impatient ſpirit could no more wait for Ahiah's anſwer, than for Samuel's arrival: but perceiving the commotion ſtill increaſing, he haſtily determined to march againſt them: though he might juſtly have queſtioned, whether the Lord, who had begun the work without him, would accept of his aſſiſtance; at leaſt there could not be ſuch want of it, but that he might ſtay till he had inquired the Lord's will, and received orders to engage, (c. xxx. 7, 8.) And though the Lord in ſaving Iſrael, was pleaſed to make uſe of theſe forces, as well as of the deſerters and fugitives; yet his haſty interpoſition, and his ſubſequent raſhneſs were rebuked in ſuch a manner, as to prevent the complete deſtruction of their enemies.

V. 24—35.] The abſolute prohibition of all food to the ſoldiers for the whole day was very impolitic; though

31 And

31 And they ſmote the Philiſtines that day from Michmaſh to Aijalon: and the people were very faint.

32 And the people flew upon the ſpoil, and took ſheep, and oxen, and calves, and ſlew *them* on the ground: and the people did eat *them* with the blood.

33 Then they told Saul, ſaying, Behold, the people ſin againſt the LORD, in that they eat with the blood. And he ſaid, Ye have tranſgreſſed: roll a great ſtone unto me this day.

34 And Saul ſaid, Diſperſe yourſelves among the people, and ſay unto them, Bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his ſheep, and ſlay *them* here, and eat; and ſin not againſt the LORD in eating with the blood. And all the people brought every man his ox with him that night, and ſlew *them* there.

35 And Saul built an altar unto the LORD: the ſame was the firſt altar that he built unto the LORD.

36 And Saul ſaid, Let us go down after the Philiſtines by night, and ſpoil them until the morning light, and let us not leave a man of them. And they ſaid, Do whatſoever ſeemeth good unto thee. Then ſaid the prieſt, Let us draw near hither unto God.

37 And Saul aſked counſel of God, Shall I go down after the Philiſtines? wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Iſrael? But he anſwered him not that day.

38 And Saul ſaid, Draw ye near hither all the chief of the people; and know and ſee wherein this ſin hath been this day:

39 For *as* the LORD liveth, which ſaveth Iſrael, though it be in Jonathan my ſon, he ſhall ſurely die. But *there was* not a man among all the people *that* anſwered him.

40 Then ſaid he unto all Iſrael, Be ye on one ſide, and I and Jonathan my ſon will be on the other ſide. And the people ſaid unto Saul, Do what ſeemeth good unto thee.

41 Therefore Saul ſaid unto the LORD God of Iſrael, Give a perfect *lot*. And Saul and Jonathan were taken: but the people eſcaped.

42 And Saul ſaid, Caſt *lots* between me and Jonathan my ſon. And Jonathan was taken.

43 Then Saul ſaid to Jonathan, Tell me what thou haſt done. And Jonathan told him, and ſaid, I did but taſte a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in mine hand, *and*, lo, I muſt die.

44 And Saul anſwered, God do ſo, and more alſo: for thou ſhalt ſurely die, Jonathan.

Saul might properly have cautioned them not to waſte their time about taking food, on penalty of his diſpleaſure: but to accompany the prohibition with that awful curſe, whereby the enemies of God were devoted to utter deſtruction, was profane, and raſh in the extreme: and it was the more inexcuſable, in that he did not ſay, "that the Lord may "avenge Iſrael on his enemies;" but "that I may be "avenged on mine enemies." The people fearing the curſe abſtained from the honey, which was laid in their way, and with which without any loſs of time, they might have refreſhed themſelves, and been enabled to have made a much greater ſlaughter of the Philiſtines: and in the evening, being almoſt fainting with labour and hunger, they were tempted haſtily to kill the cattle, which they had taken, and to eat the fleſh, without evacuating the blood, as the law commanded them, until they were reſtrained by Saul's authority. And Jonathan, ignorant of the curſe, when ready to faint with fatigue, having eaten a little honey, by which he was ſenſibly, and viſibly revived, ſo that his eyes which were dim and languiſhing, were enlightened, and looked lively, found himſelf caught in a ſnare, and expoſed to the moſt imminent danger.

V. 35. *And Saul built*, &c.] He converted the great ſtone, on which the cattle had been ſlaughtered, into an altar, on which ſacrifices were probably offered, before they attempted to proceed any further. He built this his firſt altar, when diſregarding Samuel, he had begun to apoſtatize from God.

V. 36—44. *Let us draw near*, &c.] Ahiah, having been before interrupted by Saul's impatience, very properly propoſed on this occaſion to reſume his enquiring of the Lord: and when no anſwer was returned, Saul juſtly concluded, that the Lord was offended, and he deſired to diſcover the cauſe: but, if he had been humbly ſenſible of the evil of his own paſt conduct, he would not have needed to enquire any further. However the Lord was pleaſed, that the conduct of Jonathan, who had unwarily expoſed himſelf to his father's curſe, ſhould be diſcovered, as the cauſe, why he would not anſwer the High Prieſt's inquiries: that the people might underſtand how much they were intereſted in the conduct of their king; and be convinced of their folly in rejecting the government of a pious prophet, whoſe prayers brought down bleſſings upon them; for that of a king, whoſe curſes brought down wrath upon them. In the ſame raſh, and profane ſpirit, Saul, before the lots were caſt, ſware by the Lord, that if Jonathan were the offender, (ſuſpecting any one more than himſelf,) he ſhould ſurely die; without knowing whether the crime committed deſerved death, or whether it might not be expiated by a ſin-offering: and after the lots had been caſt,

45 And the people ſaid unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great ſalvation in Iſrael? God forbid: *as* the LORD liveth, there ſhall not one hair of his head fall to the ground; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people reſcued Jonathan, that he died not.

46 Then Saul went up from following the Philiſtines: and the Philiſtines went to their own place.

47 So Saul took the kingdom over Iſrael, and fought againſt all his enemies on every ſide, againſt Moab, and againſt the children of Ammon, and againſt Edom, and againſt the kings of Zobah, and againſt the Philiſtines, and whitherſoever he turned himſelf he vexed *them.*

48 And he gathered an hoſt, and ſmote the Amalekites, and delivered Iſrael out of the hands of them that ſpoiled them.

49 Now the ſons of Saul were Jonathan, and Iſhui, and Melchi-ſhua: and the names of his two daughters *were theſe*; the name of the firſt-born Merab, and the name of the younger Michal:

50 And the name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz; and the name of the captain of his hoſt *was* Abner the ſon of Ner, Saul's uncle:

51 And Kiſh *was* the father of Saul; and Ner the father of Abner *was* the ſon of Abiel.

52 And there was ſore war againſt the Philiſtines all the days of Saul: and when Saul ſaw any ſtrong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him.

(with prayer, as probably was the conſtant practice,) and Jonathan was taken, with an affected ſternneſs; without any humiliation for his own ſin, in thus raſhly troubling Iſrael: as one, who pretended to be very zealous for God's glory, and for the obligation of an oath; but who was really very tenacious of his own will, and authority, and as regardleſs of Juſtice, as of natural affection, he with tremendous execrations upon himſelf, proceeded to denounce the ſentence of death upon his own pious ſon.

V. 45. *And the people ſaid,* &c.] They judged very rightly, that the guilt was contracted by, and the rebuke intended for Saul, who raſhly vented ſuch tremendous curſes; not for Jonathan, who innocently was brought within the reach of them: and therefore they reſcued the inſtrument of their extraordinary deliverance from the hands of his ſevere parent. And though Saul could not but deſire the life of his ſon: yet conſidering him, as decidedly preferred before himſelf, both by the Lord, and Iſrael; and knowing that Jonathan's deliverance was a ſevere rebuke of his raſhneſs; and perhaps apprehending, as was indeed the caſe, that his own repeated curſes would light on his own head; he returned home evidently diſſatisfied, and diſpleaſed: thus the opportunity of completing the deſtruction of the Philiſtines was loſt; nor could it be expected, that an expedition, which was begun, and conducted ſo very ill, ſhould terminate without ſome evident tokens of the divine diſpleaſure againſt Saul; though the Lord's love to Iſrael was diſplayed in an unparalleled manner, through the faith, and courage of his pious ſon Jonathan. Through Saul's miſconduct, and as if in anſwer to his imprecations, Jonathan was excluded from the kingdom, and ſlain with him by the Philiſtines, when the Lord did unto him as he intended to do unto his ſon, "and more alſo;" having indeed devoted him to utter deſtruction. Yet after this Saul was proſperous in many of his wars, as appears in the cloſe of this chapter.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſame principle, which induces men to ſeek relief from the accuſations of their conſciences, by abounding in the externals of religion, will lead them to ſeek refuge from the warnings, and reproofs of faithful miniſters, by paying court to others, who, with ſome ſemblance of truth, and piety, prove more compliant to their will; and either, out of miſtake, timidity, or unfaithfulneſs, give them leſs diſturbance in their ſins: but God will ſhew a marked diſapprobation of ſuch attendance on his own ordinances, or profeſſion of his truths, as are intended to quiet the conſcience, or ſupport the credit of ſinners, who perſiſt in diſobeying the plain precepts of his holy word. Such hypocrites often ſhew their indifference about the religion, which they profeſſedly chooſe; for as it has no practical energy upon them, a ſmall matter induces them to diſpenſe with the uſeleſs form: and in ſearching the ſcriptures, or hearing the word preached, they evidence, that they do not really enquire the will of God, that they may do it; but only deſire to have their curioſity gratified, their ſentiments corroborated, and their ſelf flattery increaſed: for they diſregard, or reject all, that anſwers not theſe purpoſes. No warnings or examples are ſufficient to convince men of the folly, and danger of truſting in the forms of godlineſs, whilſt they neglect the power of it; but from age to age numbers will proceed in the ſame deſtructive path. But bleſſed be God, every age alſo produces illuſtrious inſtances of thoſe, who being ſtrong in faith, give glory unto God; and its triumphs are proportioned to its ſtrength. Whilſt we are obeying the commands, truſting in the protection, and ſeeking the glory of God, neither the ſenſe of our own weakneſs, nor the power of our enemies ſhould diſmay us; "for there is no reſtraint to the Lord to ſave by many or "by few." Though we may not now expect miraculous interpoſitions; yet the feebleſt inſtrument, who ſincerely, and in faith uſes the appointed means, in order to ſubvert ſatan's kingdom of ignorance, error, and wickedneſs, may expect conſiderable ſucceſs; for "it may be that the Lord will "work with him:" and then the weapons of his warfare will prove mighty, and no force of the enemies of our God

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1st. Saul commissioned to destroy Amalek, v. 1—3. 2d. His preparation, caution to the Kenites, success, and partiality in executing his commission, v. 4—9. 3d. Samuel sent to him, their conference, and Saul convicted of disobedience, and sentenced to lose his kingdom, v. 10—31. 4th. Samuel slaying Agag king of Amalek, and finally departing from Saul, v. 32—35.

SAMUEL also said unto Saul, The LORD sent me to anoint thee *to be* king over his people, over Israel: now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the LORD.

2 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember *that* which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid *wait* for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.

3 Now go, and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass

4 And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred

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and his Christ, can stand before him. Before his frown the mightiest armies melt away, or prove instruments of each other's destruction: what then will be the consternation and horror, when the whole world shall be assembled before his tribunal, and the wicked shall be cast into hell, yea all the nations that forget God? His cause will at last appear the strongest; and all men shall either be emboldened to embrace it, or be convinced of their madness in refusing to do so, when invited by his gracious word. But in the midst of the most glorious successes one sinner often destroyeth much good: and rash zeal is as hurtful, as timid inaction. It indeed becomes an Israelite to be superior to the cravings of his appetites: but there is neither prudence, or piety in restraining men, from partaking of the bounty of God's providence, when placed honestly within their reach; and when it is so used, as not to take men off from, but to prepare them for, and encourage them in his service. They are indeed troublers of Israel, who prohibit such use of God's good creatures: and the curses, with which they sanction their antichristian mandates, will fall upon their own heads; and they will be answerable for all the consequences; for restraints from things lawful prove temptations to forbidden indulgences; and a superstitious zeal about externals hath often hindered men from performing essential services to the church of God. When rulers by authority would withhold men from transgression, and yet in their own conduct give them an example of disobedience to God, they can expect but little success. We are too much in haste in our most important employments, if we cannot allow ourselves time to consult the Lord, and seek his blessing; and ministers should plainly remind those, who are running into this common mistake. When our prayers are not answered, we may safely conclude, that iniquity withholds good from us, and we should make diligent search for it; but we should always first suspect, and examine ourselves: whereas an unhumbled heart, suspects every other person, and looks every where, but at home, for the sinful cause of calamity. They, who are most indulgent to their own sins, are generally most severe in animadverting upon the faults of others: and they, who most disregard God's authority, are most impatient when their own commands appear to be slighted, or their reputation eclipsed; and by severity against small sins, they will endeavour to varnish over their own enormous transgressions. Such as delight in cursing, will have enough of it, and the habit of swearing will be sure to involve a man in the guilt of perjury, as well as of profaneness; and though now concealed, his iniquity will be sure to find him out. But no oath can bind a man to commit injustice: the rash swearer should repent of his iniquity, and not add one crime to another: and all men should join to rescue the innocent from punishment: and in this world, if they, who have wrought with God, and been remarkably useful to his people, escape persecution, and death, as their recompence, they are more favoured than those, who have gone before them, and need not expect much advantage to themselves from their usefulness, till they come to heaven. In the midst of mercy the Lord will rebuke his people for their sins; and by mismanagement men lose the comfort of their successes, and are discontented, and filled with vexation, in the midst of blessings. But the Lord employs even wicked men as instruments of providential good to his people; and in temporal prosperity they forget their sins, and the threatened wrath of God; and thus blaze for a moment, like a meteor, and then are put out in utter darkness. Lord, let us rather be chastened here, than thus prosper, and be condemned with the world!

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 1—3.] For some time Saul seems to have taken no notice of Samuel in his wars, and successes; perhaps resenting the sharp rebuke, that he had before given him, (c. xiii. v. 13.) But now Samuel was sent to him with an express command to go, and utterly destroy the Amalekites. In delivering his message the prophet reminded him, that he had been sent by the Lord to anoint him king, and that he now came by the same authority: and he intimated plainly, that if he did not "hearken to the "voice of the words of the Lord," he should be authorised to denounce the sentence of rejection against him; and he gave him his instructions in the most explicit, and particular manner. The Amalekites had long before been condemned (*Ex.* c. xvii. v. 14:) but they had been hitherto spared, till they had filled up the measure of their iniquities. We are sure, that the righteous Lord did no injustice to any individuals; and the example was of a salutary tendency, to deter others in future ages from meddling to their hurt with the servants of the living God.

V. 4. *Two hundred thousand*, &c.] This vast number, which was collected, when Samuel directed the enterprize, shews that the people had much more confidence in their rejected prophet, than in the king, whom they had so inordinately desired. The disproportionate number of Judah,

thouſand footmen, and ten thouſand men of Judah.

5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley.

6 And Saul ſaid unto the Kenites, Go, depart, get you down from among the Amalekites, leſt I deſtroy you with them: for ye ſhewed kindneſs to all the children of Iſrael when they came up out of Egypt. So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites,

7 And Saul ſmote the Amalekites from Havilah, *until* thou comeſt to Shur, that *is* over againſt Egypt.

8 And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly deſtroyed all the people with the edge of the ſword.

9 But Saul and the people ſpared Agag, and the beſt of the ſheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all *that was* good, and would not utterly deſtroy them: but every thing *that was* vile and refuſe that they deſtroyed utterly.

10 Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, ſaying,

11 It repenteth me that I have ſet up Saul *to be* king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.

12 And when Samuel roſe early to meet Saul in the morning, it was told Samuel, ſaying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he ſet him up a place, and is gone about, and paſſed on, and gone down to Gilgal.

13 And Samuel came to Saul; and Saul ſaid unto him, Bleſſed *be* thou of the LORD: I have performed the commandment of the LORD.

14 And Samuel ſaid, What *meaneth* then this bleating of the ſheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?

15 And Saul ſaid, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people ſpared the beſt of the ſheep and of the oxen, to ſacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the reſt we have utterly deſtroyed.

16 Then Samuel ſaid unto Saul, Stay, and I will tell thee what the LORD hath ſaid to me this night. And he ſaid unto him, ſay on.

17 And Samuel ſaid, When thou *waſt* little in thine own ſight, *waſt* thou not *made* the head of the tribes of Iſrael, and the LORD anointed thee king over Iſrael?

18 And the LORD ſent thee on a journey,

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was perhaps the effect of their diſſatisfaction with a king of another tribe.

V. 8, 9.] The Lord had devoted the whole multitude, and all their ſubſtance to utter deſtruction, asa ſacrifice to his juſtice: but Saul, though compaſſion did not induce him to ſpare the women or children; yet in complaiſance to royalty, and to grace his victory, he ſpared Agag their king; and in covetouſneſs he ſpared the beſt of their flocks, and herds, deſtroying only the refuſe of them. As the commandment had been expreſs, and particular, and a teſt of his diſpoſition to obey God, his conduct was evidently the effect of a proud rebellious ſpirit. As many Amalekites eſcaped, probably without his fault, we ſhall read of them, as a people hereafter.

V. 11. *It repenteth*, &c.] (*Note*, *Gen.* c. vi. v. 6.) The Lord's change of conduct towards Saul was ſimilar to that change in our conduct, which ſprings from repentance: though by the whole he accompliſhed his wiſe and righteous purpoſes. Samuel was ſoon reconciled to the people's rejection of him, and his family, and chearfully anointed Saul to ſuperſede himſelf. But he had hoped that the change would have proved a bleſſing to Iſrael; and from Saul's firſt actions he had framed a favourable opinion of him. When therefore Saul was rejected, he was exceeding grieved, both on his account, and that of the people; and he interceded all night for the reverſal of the ſentence, and that he might not be charged with this painful commiſſion.

V. 12. *Set him up a place*, &c.] That is ſome trophy, as a monument of his victory: the whole verſe implies, that Saul took great ſtate upon himſelf, and was not a little elated with his ſucceſs.

V. 13. *Bleſſed be thou*, &c.] Saul was conſcious of having done wrong, and addreſſed Samuel in this reſpectful language, in order to conciliate his good-will, and to ward off the rebuke, which he was afraid of.

V. 15. *To ſacrifice*, &c.] We cannot determine whether Saul, or the people had any intention to offer all this cattle in ſacrifice; but probably it was a mere pretence: however, if it were ſo, to ſpare thoſe, whom the Lord had devoted to deſtruction, was to oppoſe man's will, and wiſdom againſt the Lord's: and doubtleſs they intended to ſave their own cattle by means of them. It is obſervable, that Saul took all the merit of his obedience to himſelf; but he threw all the blame of the diſobedience upon the people: and though Samuel charged it upon his greedineſs of the ſpoil, he returned to the ſame plea again, and again. But had he exerted his authority with as much deciſion in ſupport of God's command, as he had done before in enforcing his own prohibition; and had he been as determined in executing vengeance upon Agag, as he was diſpoſed to be in putting his ſon to death, no oppoſition, it may be ſuppoſed, would have been made to his orders.

V. 18. *On a journey*, &c.] The expedition was ſo

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and ſaid, Go, and utterly deſtroy the ſinners the Amalekites, and fight againſt them until they be conſumed.

19 Wherefore then didſt thou not obey the voice of the LORD, but didſt flee upon the ſpoil, and didſt evil in the ſight of the LORD?

20 And Saul ſaid unto Samuel, Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and have gone the way which the LORD ſent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek, and have utterly deſtroyed the Amalekites.

21 But the people took of the ſpoil, ſheep and oxen, the chief of the things which ſhould have been utterly deſtroyed, to ſacrifice unto the LORD thy God in Gilgal.

22 And Samuel ſaid, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt-offerings and ſacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than ſacrifice; *and* to hearken than the fat of rams.

23 For rebellion *is as* the ſin of witchcraft, and ſtubbornneſs *is as* iniquity and idolatry: becauſe thou haſt rejected the word of the LORD, he hath alſo rejected thee from *being* king.

24 And Saul ſaid unto Samuel, I have ſinned: for I have tranſgreſſed the commandment of the LORD, and thy words; becauſe I feared the people, and obeyed their voice.

25 Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my ſin, and turn again with me, that I may worſhip the LORD.

26 And Samuel ſaid unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou haſt rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Iſrael.

27 And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the ſkirt of his mantle, and it rent.

28 And Samuel ſaid unto him, The LORD

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proſperous, that it was more like a ſafe, and eaſy journey, than a laborious, and perilous warfare.

V. 22. *Behold, to obey*, &c.] The ſubmiſſion of the underſtanding to divine inſtruction, and of the will to the authority of God muſt be eſſential to true religion under every diſpenſation: but there is a great difference betwixt the ſubmiſſion of an holy, and that of a ſinful creature. The external obedience to the precepts of the moral law is good, only ſo far as it ſprings from a willing internal ſubmiſſion to the divine authority: the profeſſion of the truths of the goſpel is good, only when it ariſes from this internal ſubmiſſion to the divine teaching, to the juſtice of the condemnation, under which ſinners are concluded, and to the wiſdom, ſuitableneſs, and grace of the method of ſalvation therein revealed. All inſtituted worſhip derives its value from the expreſs appointment of God, from the honour, which it renders to his name, from the diſpoſition of the worſhipper, and from the grace and ſpiritual bleſſings, which are thereby communicated. Sacrifices eſpecially declared the deſert of the offender, and typified the ſufferings of the Saviour: their value was derived from the divine appointment; and they were not acceptable, except offered in *obedience* to his authority, and with a penitent and pious mind. When therefore they were ſubſtituted in the place of true piety, or truſted in as meritorious; when the means were uſed to compenſate for the neglect of the end, and the ſign was exalted into the place of the thing ſignified, they became an abomination, however coſtly, and numerous they were. Had Saul offered thouſands of bullocks, and rams of his own herds, and flocks, exactly according to the divine ritual, in his preſent impenitent, and ſelf-confident diſpoſition; God would have abhorred them: how much more then, when the animals to be ſacrificed, were ſpared for that purpoſe, in direct diſobedience to the expreſs command of God! What could this have been, but proudly pretending to know what was for the glory of God, better than he himſelf had done? And attempting to bribe him with coſtly oblations, to diſpenſe with the violation of his own commandments?

V. 23. *For rebellion*, &c.] The heinouſneſs of a ſin is not to be judged of by the magnitude of the object, in which it is committed, or the groſſneſs of the outward action; but from the deliberate, and determined diſobedience of the will, from whence it ariſes. When the Lord expreſsly ſays "thou ſhalt;" and his rational creature dares to perſiſt in ſaying, "I will not;" whether the conteſt be about an apple, or a kingdom, it is ſtubbornneſs, and rebellion; a contempt of the commandment, and a daring inſult to the majeſty, and authority of God; and has in it all the eſſential malignity, which, in other circumſtances, conſtitutes idolatry, witchcraft, or the moſt flagrant injuſtice. This is abundantly illuſtrated in the conſequent hiſtory of Saul himſelf.

V. 24. 25. *I have ſinned*, &c.] Saul could no longer deny or entirely excuſe his offence; and therefore he reluctantly confeſſed it: yet in ſuch a manner, as detected an unhumbled, and hypocritical heart. He perſiſted in transferring the blame to the people; "for he feared them, and "obeyed their voice:" yet he was not ſo timid, or obedient to them, when his own intereſt, or authority were concerned. He was more diſquieted, becauſe Samuel was offended, leſt he ſhould alienate the people, than becauſe the Lord was angry with him: and he prayed *of him* to pardon him, as if forgiveneſs of ſins had belonged to him; (*Pſal.* c. li. v. 4.)

V. 27, 28.] Saul perſonally cared not for Samuel; but he was ſenſible what influence he poſſeſſed over the people; and he feared, that if he departed in diſpleaſure, he would proceed to anoint another king, and would ſtir up the people to revolt from him, and thus immediately execute the ſentence againſt him: therefore he thus earneſtly oppoſed his departure; and by renting Samuel's mantle,

hath rent the kingdom of Iſrael from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, *that is* better than thou.

29 And alſo the Strength of Iſrael will not lie, nor repent: for he *is* not a man, that he ſhould repent.

30 Then he ſaid, I have ſinned; *yet* honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Iſrael, and turn again with me, that I may worſhip the LORD thy God.

31 So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worſhipped the LORD.

32 Then ſaid Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites: and Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag ſaid, Surely the bitterneſs of death is paſt.

33 And Samuel ſaid, As thy ſword hath made women childleſs, ſo ſhall thy mother be childleſs among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to Ramah; and Saul went up to his houſe to Gibeah of Saul.

35 And Samuel came no more to ſee Saul until the day of his death; nevertheleſs, Samuel mourned for Saul: and the LORD repented that he had made Saul king over Iſrael.

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afforded a ſignificant token of the kingdom being rent from him, and given to a more worthy perſon; as Samuel by divine inſpiration interpreted it.

V. 29. *The Strength of Iſrael*, &c.] "Or the victory "of Iſrael:" Saul took the honour of the victory, and of Iſrael's protection to himſelf, and raiſed a trophy of it, before he offered thank-offerings to God: but Samuel covertly rebuked his vanity, and reminded him that the Lord, who had irreverſibly condemned him to loſe his kingdom, was Iſrael's ſtrength, and victory.

V. 30. *Honour me now*, &c.] When he ſhould publicly have taken ſhame to himſelf for his ſin, he was anxious for Samuel to honour him before the people, that his example might influence their conduct!

V. 31. *So Samuel*, &c.] Samuel, perhaps by divine direction, changed his mind, that he might not occaſion any inſurrection amongſt the people, and that he might execute the juſtice of God upon Agag: ſo he witneſſed Saul's worſhip, but it doth not appear that he took any part in it.

V. 32. *Delicately*, &c.] That is, affecting the ſtate, and dignity of a monarch, as if he would over-awe the aged prophet: and either he ſpake as one, who deemed himſelf in no danger of death, as he had eſcaped the ſword of a conquering king, and could have nothing to fear from Samuel: or elſe, as one, who had got over the fear of death, and was determined to meet it with intrepidity. He was the chief perſon, who was to have been ſlain, both as to the head of the devoted nation, and for his own crimes: and therefore Samuel hewed him to pieces before the Lord, near his altar, and as a ſacrifice to his juſtice. Thus Samuel, who was of a lenient ſpirit, and prayed all night for Saul, heſitated not to execute that ſentence of God upon this condemned criminal, which Saul, who afterwards proved himſelf very cruel, refuſed to do. After this Samuel withdrew entirely from Saul, as one rejected of God; and though Saul once came to him, he never went to Saul any more.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They are not well qualified to rule over men, who have not learned to obey God; eſpecially to rule over his people. The righteous vengeance of God may be long delayed, but will certainly be executed, according to his moſt tremendous threatnings, upon all impenitent ſinners; but with the moſt marked ſeverity upon the ring-leaders in perſecution, and ſuch, as have endeavoured to hinder thoſe, who were ſetting out in the ways of godlineſs. When the Lord calls us to our work, and his time is come, he will provide us helpers, and give us ſucceſs; but he will at the ſame time make trial of our ſpirits. We may not avenge ourſelves without expreſs command; but we may at any time requite the kindneſs of our benefactors: and they, who do good to God's people for his ſake, treaſure up bleſſings for their poſterity. It is dangerous living amongſt wicked people, and if we would not periſh with them, we muſt keep ſeparate from them. The pride of man's heart can admit the blaſphemous idea of being in ſome caſes more merciful than God, and of cenſuring the threatened puniſhment of ſinners, as too ſevere: and covetouſneſs deems the vile, and refuſe good enough to be ſpent wholly in the ſervice of the Lord: and hypocriſy is detected by partiality in obedience, and paying more honour to wicked great men, than to the commandments of God. Many go far in the external appearance of religion, who go back from following the Lord, and are given up to be hardened, and periſh. Over ſuch perſons faithful miniſters are often conſtrained to grieve, and they pour out many prayers for them, which return into their own boſom. However they muſt, and will deliver the Lord's meſſage, though their hearts be pained by ſo doing: and if ſinners knew their ſecret ſorrow and prayers for them, and conſidered, that they ſpeak no more, than God hath required them to ſay, they would not reſent their moſt faithful reproofs. When men are ſolicitous to perpetuate the memory of their religious ſervices, they ſhew that they only ſought the praiſe of men, and verily they have their poor reward: and when they boaſt of their obedience, and by fair ſpeeches would extort commendation from the ſervants of God, be ſure their conduct will not endure a ſcrutiny. Many obſervable circumſtances betray the hypocriſy of ſome confident profeſſors of godlineſs. If you are true diſciples of Chriſt, what mean theſe evil tempers, this covetouſneſs, this luxury, and pride of life, this conformity to the world, this contempt and neglect of the poor? Was this the mind, and life of Chriſt? Is this the ſcriptural character of a Chriſtian? By ſelf-examination, and circum-

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

Contains, 1st. Samuel sent to anoint a king of the sons of Jesse, and directed to conceal his business by a sacrifice, v. 1—5. 2d. Jesse's seven elder sons passed by, and David, from the flock, anointed, 6—13. 3d. Saul troubled by an evil spirit, and David sent for, to play on the harp before him, 14—23.

AND the LORD said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons.

2 And Samuel said, How can I go? if Saul hear *it*, he will kill me. And the LORD said, Take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the LORD.

3 And call Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will shew thee what thou shalt do: and thou shalt anoint unto me *him* whom I name unto thee.

4 And Samuel did that which the LORD spake, and came to Beth-lehem: and the elders

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spection men should render it unnecessary for ministers to press home upon their consciences such convincing questions. But the unhumbled heart will never want an excuse, or palliation of the most evident criminality; and it always will be necessary, for the preachers of God's word, to drive sinners from their subterfuges; to shew them the malignity, and aggravations of their offences; to silence their objections, and excuses, and to urge conviction upon their hearts: though the convincing spirit of God alone can render the means effectual to the desired end. In exercising this part of the sacred ministry, nothing is of more importance, than an accurate knowledge of the relative and comparative value of the truths, precepts, and ordinances of religion; about which hypocrites so mistake, and thereby impose upon themselves. An obedient heart is in one way or other essential to all religion; and in that of a sinner implies a willing obedience to the command given to all men to repent; an obedient reliance on the Saviour's merits; an obedient attendance on all instituted ordinances, as means of grace; and a willing obedience to the commands of Christ, out of love to his name, and to adorn his gospel. The expression of this temper in the most minute concerns, and with much infirmity, and mistake is accepted of a merciful God: but a proud, stubborn, rebellious will renders the most splendid services, and the most specious profession, abominable in the sight of the Lord, and ranks them with the most atrocious crimes. The impenitent sinner may be detected even in his confessions, and concomitant behaviour: he hath always some reserve; he *will* throw the blame off from himself; he will shew an anxiety about the esteem of man, and a fear of temporal loss, shame, and suffering, more than about the future wrath of an offended God; and will attempt to quiet his conscience with external forms, and a partial reformation. In vain will such men endeavour to prevail with faithful ministers, to afford them countenance; and the more they attempt it, the more awful warnings will they receive of approaching ruin: and when the servants of God despair of doing them good, they will withdraw from them, and leave them to themselves, whatever their rank in life may be, that they may interpret their silence, and absence into a constant reproof. The fear of man is no excuse for disobeying God; and yet it often is a mere pretence; for many will plead the fear of man for neglecting self-denying duties, who fear not their displeasure in the gratification of their own passions. When the sentence of final rejection is irreversibly denounced, repentance will be unavailing: and though our God be now ready to forgive, he will neither repent, nor change his purposes of vengeance hereafter; and the *strength of Israel* will be eternally engaged to punish his stoutest, proudest foes. If they, who were regarded, when little in their own eyes, are elated by prosperity, and forget the Lord, he will contemn them: and when one instrument is rejected, another shall be sought out more fit for the work. The mighty of the earth are so accustomed to flattery, and distinction, that they can scarce suppose that any will dare to withhold it from them; but with God there is no respect of persons: and, though he requires his servants to honour those, who are in authority; yet he teaches them to be of his judgment concerning comparative excellency. Neither dignity, delicacy, or vain confidence, give the sinner any security: the bitterness of death may meet them when and where they least expect it; but the bitterness of future misery is the most to be feared. Our warfare however is of somewhat a different nature, than Saul's: But if we therein spare one domineering lust, or profitable iniquity, we shall forfeit the promised kingdom with deep disgrace: for our sincerity must be approved by devoting every sin to utter destruction, by the power of God's grace, and for the glory of his name. For this in all ages, and nations, is the line of distinction betwixt Samuel, and Saul, betwixt the Christian and the hypocrite; that the one levels his whole force against Agag, against that lust, which by constitution, and custom, has got the greatest ascendancy over him, that he may hew it in pieces before the Lord: whilst the other is anxious to preserve his master sin, however willing he may appear to mortify, or refrain from those sins, to which he hath been less addicted.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 2. *How can I go*, &c.?] Saul was now become very suspicious, fierce, and tyrannical, and enraged against Samuel for the sentence, that he had denounced against him: This question therefore might not result wholly from unbelieving fear, but from a desire to receive instructions, for the more prudent management of the affair: accordingly he was directed to go to Beth-lehem to *sacrifice*, as he probably did from time to time, in many different places: the answer, which he was instructed to return, was the truth, and he was not bound to divulge all his intentions.

V. 4. *Trembled*, &c.] They were conscious, it is likely, of some iniquity committed amongst them, and feared, lest Samuel was sent to denounce the wrath of God upon them.

of the town trembled at his coming, and ſaid, Comeſt thou peaceably?

5 And he ſaid, Peaceably: I am come to ſacrifice unto the LORD; ſanctify yourſelves, and come with me to the ſacrifice. And he ſanctified Jeſſe and his ſons and called them to the ſacrifice.

6 And it came to paſs when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and ſaid, Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before him.

7 But the LORD ſaid unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his ſtature; becauſe I have refuſed him: for *the LORD ſeeth* not as man ſeeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

8 Then Jeſſe called Abinadab, and made him paſs before Samuel. And he ſaid, Neither hath the LORD choſen this.

9 Then Jeſſe made Shammah to paſs by. And he ſaid, Neither hath the LORD choſen this.

10 Again, Jeſſe made ſeven of his ſons to paſs before Samuel. And Samuel ſaid unto Jeſſe, The LORD hath not choſen theſe.

11 And Samuel ſaid unto Jeſſe, Are here all *thy* children? And he ſaid, There remaineth yet the youngeſt, and, behold, he keepeth the ſheep. And Samuel ſaid unto Jeſſe, Send and fetch him: for we will not ſit down till he come hither.

12 And he ſent and brought him in. Now he *was* ruddy, *and* withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the LORD ſaid, Ariſe, anoint him: for this *is* he.

13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midſt of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel roſe up, and went to Ramah.

14 But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil ſpirit from the LORD troubled him.

15 And Saul's ſervants ſaid unto him, Behold now, an evil ſpirit from God troubleth thee.

16 Let our lord now command thy ſervants, *which are* before thee, to ſeek out a man *who is* a cunning player on an harp: and it ſhall come to paſs, when the evil ſpirit from God is upon thee, that he ſhall play with his hand, and thou ſhalt be well.

V. 5. *He ſanctified*, &c.] He inſtructed them in the nature of this ſacred ordinance, and by his counſels, and prayers aſſiſted them in preparing for acceptably, and profitably attending upon it.

V. 7. *Look not*, &c.] Samuel did not fully underſtand, that the Lord in anger gave Iſrael their firſt king, after *their own heart*, but that he now intended in mercy to give them one after *his own heart*; being chiefly remarkable for his ſtrong faith and fervent piety.

V. 11. *He keepeth*, &c.] David being young, not more than eighteen or twenty years of age, and being of a contemplative diſpoſition, was not thought by Jeſſe to be capable of tranſacting buſineſs of importance, and was not therefore kept at home on this occaſion: ſo different doth the Lord ſee, than man does!—His name ſignifies "Beloved," and he was an eminent type of the beloved Son of God.

V. 13. *An horn*, &c.] The quantity of oil, ſuppoſed to be greater, than had been uſed about Saul, and the durable horn, contraſted with the brittle vial, are ſignificant of David's fuller meaſure of endowments for governing, and of the perpetuity of his kingdom. He was anointed "in the midſt of his brethren," though it was kept ſecret from others, and yet none of them rivalled, oppoſed, or injured him: from that time he was evidently endowed with the Spirit of the Lord, qualifying him for great things; nevertheleſs he returned to his humble and laborious occupation, waiting therein the Lord's time for being called to action.

V. 14. *But the Spirit*, &c.] About the ſame time it became evident that the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, and that he was deprived of his capacity for public buſineſs, performing nothing prudently, or ſucceſſfully: nay that an evil ſpirit was *judicially* permitted to impel him to the moſt furious ſallies of rage, or jealouſy, to oppreſs his ſpirits to a deep melancholy, and to render him at times diſtracted.

V. 16. *A cunning*, &c.] This might be a proper method of ſoothing his melancholy and calming his paſſions; but the cauſe of his malady lay much deeper. It had been better advice, if his ſervants had perſuaded him to ſend for Samuel to converſe with, and pray for him; for without repentance, and forgiveneſs of ſins, his diſorder could not be cured, though the ſymptoms might be mitigated. The hand of the Lord was manifeſt in thus bringing David to court. After his anointing he had in one way or other ſo ſignalized himſelf, that he was much taken notice of, c. xvii. v. 34—36:) and eſpecially his ſkill in muſic was remarked by ſome perſon, who attended on Saul. Thus he was introduced to him, and his ſolemn ſacred muſic was much more ſuitable to his caſe, than more amuſing ſtrains would have been. He came to Saul with a high character, which he did not diſgrace; he was uſeful to, and beloved by him; and yet, when Saul no longer wanted him, he returned back to his flocks as contented as ever, and was ſoon forgotten at court.

17 And

17 And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring *him* to me.

18 Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, *that is* cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD *is* with him.

19 Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which *is* with the sheep.

20 And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent *them* by David his son unto Saul.

21 And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer.

22 And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me: for he hath found favour in my sight.

23 And it came to pass, when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1st. The Philistines warring against Israel, Goliath's challenge, and the people's dismay, 1—11. *2d. David sent to the army; hearing and resenting the reproach of God's people; rebuked by his brother, introduced to Saul, undertaking to fight Goliath, and answering Saul's objections,* 12—37. *3d. David's arming for the conflict, Goliath's contempt of him; his believing confidence in God, and glorious victory; with the death of Goliath, and the rout of the Philistines,* 38—53. *4th. His return with Goliath's head, and Saul's enquiry concerning him,* 54—58.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our most disinterested sorrow may be excessive, and imply rebellion against the righteous will of God: and he will then rebuke us for, as well as encourage us under, our distress.—We ought not inconsolably to mourn for those, whom the Lord hath rejected, but should rather rejoice in those, whom he is calling forth to usefulness: and no partial affection should interfere with present duty. The most eminent believers are not entirely superior to the fear of man, when dangerous services are assigned them. But the Lord will inwardly strengthen, and outwardly protect them: and without immediate revelation, he can by his word and Spirit shew them step by step what they ought to do. The guilty conscience trembles at a message from heaven: yet the ministers of Christ all come peaceably, proposing salvation, through the sacrifice of the Redeemer, and speaking terror to none, except those, who neglect so great salvation. There is a preparation of heart required for the receiving of this atonement, as well as for attending on divine ordinances; and the instruction, converse, and prayers of faithful ministers are very useful, in both cases, to those, who desire to profit by them; and parents ought not needlessly to permit their children to miss such favourable opportunities: for through the sacrifice of Christ, and the ordinances of his worship, the unction of the holy Spirit is communicated, according to the will of God. It is difficult wholly to divest ourselves of partiality for those, who are recommended by external accomplishments; and we often frame an erroneous judgment of characters: but the Lord values nothing *comparatively*, but that holy faith, fear, and love, which are implanted in the heart, beyond the reach of human penetration. And He doth not favour our children according to our fond partialities; but often most honours, and blesses those, who have been least regarded. The Lord's method of educating men for important stations of usefulness differ much from those, which human wisdom hath devised. Humble industry, and obedient attention to obscure duties; contemplation, and retired devotion; and a patient self-denying assiduity, are the best preparatives for serving the cause of God and his church. When sinners, by resisting the Holy Ghost, have provoked his final departure, they are exposed to every incursion of satan, and are likely to become tormentors of themselves, and of others: nay some may perceive, that they are given up of God, in his righteous displeasure, without taking warning by their awful case. Indeed we none of us have the least security either for our bodies or souls, against the malignity of evil spirits, except in the protection of that God, whom alas! we are continually provoking. When conscious guilt and fears of divine vengeance disorder the minds of men, they, who perceive their distress, but understand neither the cause, nor the cure, are apt to propose very fatal methods of relief: and music, diversion, company, or business, have *for a season* been frequently employed as a successful quietus for a wounded conscience: but nothing can effect a real cure, but the blood of Christ, applied in faith, and the sanctifying Spirit sealing the pardon, by his holy comforts: and all these expedients to dispel religious melancholy are sure methods of increasing distress, either in this world, or in the next.—Every endowment, which admits of an useful exercise, in subserviency to godliness, is to be ascribed to the energy of the divine Spirit: and opportunities will be afforded for its being displayed; and if the Lord be graciously with us, they will be suitably improved: and good behaviour in inferior stations is the best introduction to higher advancement.—Thus Jesus was obedient unto death, ere he was exalted to his glorious throne: and thus he trains up his people, by obedience, in the midst of temptation, and trouble, for their future inheritance in the region of purity and felicity.

NOW the Philiſtines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which *belongeth* to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephes-dammim.

2 And Saul and the men of Iſrael were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and ſet the battle in array againſt the Philiſtines.

3 And the Philiſtines ſtood on a mountain on the one ſide, and Iſrael ſtood on a mountain on the other ſide: and *there was* a valley between them.

4 And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philiſtines, named Goliath of Gath, whoſe height *was* ſix cubits and a ſpan.

5 And *he had* an helmet of braſs upon his head, and he *was* armed with a coat of mail: and the weight of the coat *was* five thouſand ſhekels of braſs.

6 And *he had* greaves of braſs upon his legs, and a target of braſs between his ſhoulders.

7 And the ſtaff of his ſpear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his ſpear's head *weighed* ſix hundred ſhekels of iron: and one bearing a ſhield went before him.

8 And he ſtood and cried unto the armies of Iſrael, and ſaid unto them, Why are ye come out to ſet *your* battle in array? *Am* not I a Philiſtine, and ye ſervants to Saul? chooſe you a man for you, and let him come down to me.

9 If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your ſervants: but if I prevail againſt him, and kill him, then ſhall ye be our ſervants, and ſerve us.

10 And the Philiſtine ſaid, I defy the armies of Iſrael this day; give me a man that we may fight together.

11 When Saul and all Iſrael heard thoſe words of the Philiſtine they were diſmayed, and greatly afraid.

12 Now David *was* the ſon of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whoſe name *was* Jeſſe; and he had eight ſons: and the man went among men *for* an old man in the days of Saul.

13 And the three eldeſt ſons of Jeſſe went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three ſons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firſt born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.

14 And David *was* the youngeſt: and the three eldeſt followed Saul.

15 But David went, and returned from Saul, to feed his father's ſheep at Beth-lehem.

16 And the Philiſtine drew near morning and evening, and preſented himſelf forty days.

17 And Jeſſe ſaid unto David his ſon, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 1. *Now the Philiſtines*, &c.] Saul had repeatedly allowed the Philiſtines time to recover their ſtrength, and courage: and perhaps the report of the diſordered ſtate of his mind had emboldened them to this invaſion: yet the Lord ſo ordered it, that he was in ſome meaſure recovered, ere the war was begun.

V. 4. *A champion*, &c.] "Or a dueller," one who wiſhed to diſtinguiſh himſelf in ſingle combat, confiding in the greatneſs of his ſtrength. He was of the race of the Anakims, and upon the *moſt moderate computation* was ten feet high; and the weight of his armour ſhews that his bulk, and ſtrength were proportionable. Probably men in general were about the ſame ſize as at preſent; for ſuch giants then cauſed as much ſurpriſe, as they now would. (*Num.* c. xiii. v. 33.)

V. 8, 9. *Then will we be*, &c.] By this propoſal the conſternation of the Iſraelites was increaſed; as if they muſt needs become ſlaves to the Philiſtines, unleſs ſome one of them could overcome their champion: but no nation will ever ſuffer its liberties, and intereſts to be diſpoſed of in ſuch a manner.

V. 11. *They were diſmayed*, &c.] When the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, he loſt his former courage: or, depending on the God of Iſrael, he might have aſſaulted the army of the Philiſtines, and at once have ſilenced the proud boaſtings of Goliath: but his timidity diſheartened the army; for faith, and piety were evidently at a low ebb amongſt them. Nor had Jonathan the ſame inward intimation to engage in this ſervice, that he formerly had to undertake one, at leaſt equally perilous; for the Lord had reſerved it for David.

V. 12. *Went among men*, &c.] Being far advanced in years he was exempted from war; but he ſent three of his ſons with Saul.

V. 15. *But David went*, &c.] Saul's diſorder being relieved, and his mind engaged in public buſineſs, David's muſic was not wanted, and therefore he very contentedly returned to his former laborious, and obſcure occupation: Probably he had only *nominally* been appointed Saul's armour-bearer, and had not been employed in actual ſervice.

corn,

corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren:

18 And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of *their* thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.

19 Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, *were* in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him: and he came to the trench as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel and the Philistines had put the battle in array, army against army.

22 And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren.

23 And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, (the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name) out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*.

24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

25 And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.

26 And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?

27 And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him.

28 And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.

29 And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause?

30 And he turned from him towards another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

31 And when the words were heard which David spake, they rehearsed *them* before Saul; and he sent for him.

32 And David said to Saul, Let no man's

V. 18. *Take their pledge.*] Some concerted token of their welfare, as was customary, whilst epistolary correspondence was infrequent.

V. 19. *Fighting with*, &c.] They seem to have had frequent skirmishes, though it came not to a general engagement.

V. 22. *His carriage*, &c.] That, which he had brought for his brethren, and their captain.

V. 25, 26.] It does not appear that Saul consulted the Lord, or offered sacrifice, or even made supplications, on this occasion; but he employed mere carnal policy. To this conduct, David's speech, glowing with confidence in God, zeal for his glory, and resentment of Israel's disgrace, formed a noble contrast. However terrible the gigantic Goliath might appear, he was an uncircumcised Philistine; and those whom he defied, were not merely "the servants of "Saul," (v. 8,) but "the armies of the living God." And in this view, who, or what was he, that any true Israelite should fear him? The very enquiry implied the most pointed reproof of the unbelief, and cowardice of Saul, and of the whole army.

V. 28. *Eliab's anger*, &c.] Eliab was acquainted with David's anointing, and understood at least, that it was an indication of his future superiority; and he was doubtless moved by envy on this occasion: he also considered the spirit of his younger neglected brother as a tacit reproach of his own timidity. He therefore falsely accused him of leaving his flock without a keeper, and of coming without being sent, out of curiosity, or ambition; and intimated that he was notoriously of a proud, aspiring wicked disposition: by these insinuations he meant both to discourage David, and to prejudice the hearers, that he might be disregarded.

V. 29. *Is there not a cause?*] This answer was as admirable for the meekness of wisdom, as the former question was for the courage of faith. David took no notice of the reproach cast upon his character; or of the false reason assigned for his coming into the army: it was no time to enter into such altercations. But, says he, "what have I "now done? Is there not a cause?" Should not every Israelite feel a holy indignation to hear an uncircumcised Philistine defy the armies of the living God? And ought not some Israelite to step forward and venture his life, to wipe away this reproach?

heart

heart fail becauſe of him: thy ſervant will go and fight with this Philiſtine.

33 And Saul ſaid to David, Thou art not able to go againſt this Philiſtine to fight with him: for thou *art but* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth.

34 And David ſaid unto Saul, Thy ſervant kept his father's ſheep, and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock;

35 And I went out after him, and ſmote him, and delivered *it* out of his mouth: and when he aroſe againſt me, I caught *him* by his beard, and ſmote him, and ſlew him.

36 Thy ſervant ſlew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumciſed Philiſtine ſhall be as one of them, ſeeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.

37 David ſaid moreover, The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philiſtine. And Saul ſaid unto David, Go, and the LORD be with thee.

38 And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of braſs upon his head; alſo he armed him with a coat of mail.

39 And David girded his ſword upon his armour, and he aſſayed to go; for he had not proved *it*. And David ſaid unto Saul, I cannot go with theſe; for I have not proved *them*. And David put them off him.

40 And he took his ſtaff in his hand, and choſe him five ſmooth ſtones out of the brook, and put them in a ſhepherd's bag which he had, even in a ſcrip, and his ſling *was* in his hand; and he drew near to the Philiſtine.

41 And the Philiſtine came on, and drew near unto David; and the man that bare the ſhield *went* before him.

42 And when the Philiſtine looked about and ſaw David, he diſdained him; for he was *but* a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance.

43 And the Philiſtine ſaid unto David, *Am* I a dog, that thou comeſt to me with ſtaves? And the Philiſtine curſed David by his gods.

44 And the Philiſtine ſaid to David, Come to me, and I will give thy fleſh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beaſts of the field.

45 Then ſaid David to the Philiſtine, Thou comeſt to me with a ſword, and with a ſpear, and with a ſhield; but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hoſts, the God of the armies of Iſrael, whom thou haſt defied.

46 This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand, and I will ſmite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcaſes of the hoſt of the Philiſtines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beaſts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Iſrael.

47 And all this aſſembly ſhall know that the LORD ſaveth not with ſword and ſpear: for the battle *is* the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.

V. 34—37. *A lion and a bear*, &c.] In defence of his flock David had been enabled at different times, to ſlay a lion and a bear; and he looked upon this as an earneſt of victory over this uncircumciſed Philiſtine, whom he meant to attack, out of zeal for the glory of God, and the intereſts of Iſrael. Goliath was in himſelf no more terrible to any Iſraelitiſh ſoldier, than a lion, or a bear, bereaved of their prey, would be to an unarmed ſhepherd; his deliverance from them was of the Lord, who would alſo deliver him from the Philiſtine. Thus when the Spirit of the Lord was upon Samſon, he rent the lion, before he deſtroyed the Philiſtines.

V. 38—40.] David not being accuſtomed to ſuch armour, as Saul put upon him, was not ſatisfied to go in that manner: but this was from the Lord, that it might more evidently appear, that he fought and conquered in faith; and that the victory was from him, who works by the feebleſt, and moſt deſpiſed means, and inſtruments.

V. 42—44. *A youth*, &c.] Perhaps David might at this time be twenty-two, or twenty-three years of age; but his unwarlike appearance excited contempt and diſdain in Goliath's breaſt; and he was affronted to be oppoſed by ſuch a ſtripling, accoutred in ſuch a manner. But though he curſed him by his gods, he evidently truſted not in them, but in the might of his own arm.

V. 45—47.] Nothing can exceed the humility, the faith, the piety and the zeal for the glory of God, and the cauſe of Iſrael, and of true religion, which glow in this moſt beautiful ſpeech. David therein expreſſed with peculiar animation his aſſured expectation of ſucceſs; he gloried in his own contemptible appearance and armature, that the victory might the more unqueſtionably be aſcribed to the Lord: and he anticipated the effects of this tranſaction; he even conceived a hope that it might produce a ſalutary conviction in the minds of the Philiſtines, that the God of Iſrael was the only true God: and he predicted that his power and glory would by means thereof be made known to all the earth.

48 And

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Ryley del. Page sc.

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I. SAMUEL. CH. XVII. VE. LVII.

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48 And it came to paſs, when the Philiſtine aroſe, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David haſted and ran toward the army to meet the Philiſtine.

49 And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a ſtone, and ſlang *it*, and ſmote the Philiſtine in his forehead, that the ſtone ſunk into his forehead; and he fell upon his face to the earth.

50 So David prevailed over the Philiſtine with a ſling and with a ſtone, and ſmote the Philiſtine, and ſlew him; but *there was* no ſword in the hand of David.

51 Therefore David ran, and ſtood upon the Philiſtine, and took his ſword, and drew it out of the ſheath thereof, and ſlew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philiſtines ſaw their champion was dead, they fled.

52 And the men of Iſrael and of Judah aroſe, and ſhouted, and purſued the Philiſtines, until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron: and the wounded of the Philiſtines fell down by the way to Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron.

53 And the children of Iſrael returned from chaſing after the Philiſtines, and they ſpoiled their tents.

54 And David took the head of the Philiſtine, and brought it to Jeruſalem: but he put his armour in his tent.

55 And when Saul ſaw David go forth againſt the Philiſtine, he ſaid unto Abner, the captain of the hoſt, Abner, whoſe ſon *is* this youth? And Abner ſaid, *As* thy ſoul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.

56 And the king ſaid, Enquire thou whoſe ſon the ſtripling *is*.

57 And as David returned from the ſlaughter of the Philiſtine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philiſtine in his hand.

58 And Saul ſaid to him, Whoſe ſon *art* thou, *thou* young man? And David anſwered, *I am* the ſon of thy ſervant Jeſſe the Bethlehemite.

V. 49. *The ſtone ſunk*, &c.] Either Goliah in fearleſs preſumption had neglected to faſten on his helmet; or the ſtone, directed, and impelled by the power of the Almighty, penetrated both the helmet and his ſkull, as a ſtone ſinks into the water.

V. 51. *They fled.*] Perceiving ſo evident a proof of the power, and preſence of the God of Iſrael, they had not courage to ſtand their ground after their champion's death, but yielded Iſrael a complete victory.

V. 54. *To Jeruſalem*, &c.] Either David carried the head of Goliath to Jeruſalem, as a terror to the Jebuſites, and put his armour in his own tent, until it was removed to the tabernacle of God (c. xxi. v. 8—9.) Or this is ſpoken by anticipation; and means, that afterwards Goliath's ſkull was preſerved in Jeruſalem, and his armour in that tent, which David there formed for the ark; as a monument of the victory to the glory of God.

V. 55. *Whoſe ſon*, &c.] The diſordered ſtate of Saul's mind, the multiplicity of his affairs, the intervening time, and a variety of new objects might combine to occaſion his forgetfulneſs of David; who before had been uſeful to, and favoured by him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When they, to whom it belongs *officially* to defend the cauſe of God, and his church, are deſtitute of his Spirit; and are given up to ambition, covetouſneſs, envy, malice, or luſt; no wonder if open enemies are encouraged, and friends diſpirited: and as the fear of God declines, the fear of man, in one form or other, will gather ſtrength. But when one inſtrument is thrown aſide, another ſhall be prepared, and produced for the work of the Lord: for though Iſrael be caſt down, and his enemies for a ſeaſon triumph, yet ſhall he be raiſed up again, and *their* ſucceſs ſhall terminate in deeper diſgrace, and ruin. Every gift of God to man, inſtead of inſpiring gratitude, naturally increaſes his proud ſelf-admiration, and confidence, and his diſpoſition to deſpiſe, and inſult over others. But what are human wiſdom, ſtrength, or courage, unleſs preſerved by him, that gave them? When they are withdrawn from their dependance on him, or employed in rebellion againſt him; the haughty poſſeſſor becomes more expreſsly the enemy, and rival of the Almighty, and is prepared for a more diſtinguiſhed monument of his righteous vengeance. Degenerate profeſſors often receive juſt rebukes from the mouths of the moſt decided enemies of true religion: nor need either perſecutor, or hereſiarch fear defying the diſciples of man, any more than Goliath feared defying the ſervants of Saul; *were they only ſuch*, as their names, and conduct on ſome occaſions ſeem to imply. For in human accompliſhments the oppoſers of the truth of God have frequently poſſeſſed an undiſputed ſuperiority: confiding therein they have defied, and ſtill do defy the advocates of ſcriptural truth, to engage with them, and ſeem to dream of a total and decided victory. But they have the armies of the living God, and their invincible Captain himſelf, to contend with; and who are theſe uncircumciſed Philiſtines, that a true Iſraelite ſhould be afraid of them? Any believer in the divine Saviour may predict that their triumphing will be ſhort: and, if fairly called to it, we need not fear to go forth with the deſpiſed ſling and ſtone, with plain teſtimonies of holy Scripture, unadorned by eloquence, and unſupported by human learning, againſt the moſt formidable of them: truſting in him, who hath all

CHAP. XVIII.

Contains, 1st. Saul retaining David; and Jonathan's love for, and covenant with him, 1—4. *2d. David's success, and reputation; Saul's envy, and attempt to murder him; David's wisdom, the people's favour to, and Saul's fear of him,* 5—16. *3d. Saul's malice and treachery about giving him one of his daughters to wife; David's humility, and good conduct; his marriage to Michal, and his increasing reputation,* 17—30.

AND it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

2 And Saul took him that day, and would let him go no more home to his father's house.

3 Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

4 And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe

power in heaven and earth engaged in support of his cause, and truth. But they, who would serve God, must learn patience, meekness, and self-denial; to bear neglect, contempt, and ingratitude; to be laborious, faithful, and obedient; to shun observation, and ostentation; to walk by faith, and to wait the Lord's time for every promised, or expected mercy; and not to put themselves forward, till it be undeniably evident, that there is a cause. In times of general formality, and lukewarmness, every degree of zeal, which implies a readiness to go further, or to venture more in the cause of God, than others do, will be censured as pride, and ambition, &c: and by none more, than near relations, and negligent superiors. Such censures will seldom be unmingled with unjust insinuations, and attempts to blacken a man's character; in order to excite prejudice against him, and to render his efforts unsuccessful. But conscious integrity, and confidence in God, united with meekness, wisdom, and perseverance, will carry a man through, and raise him above such discouraging opposition: and they, who would do good, should not multiply words in defence of their own characters, should avoid whatever may needlessly exasperate, prolong contention, or foment envy; and be satisfied with appealing to the conscience, and common sense of impartial persons, that times, and circumstances require such exertions. The hope of being an instrument of good, and of being accepted by the Lord will animate the true believer in every undertaking; and the expectation of a reward from man, or the fear of human censure will be with him inferior considerations. The due improvement of our experience of the Lord's faithfulness, love, and power in former seasons of danger, and difficulty, will inspire confidence in the prospect of future conflicts; and on some occasions may be referred to for the satisfaction of others: and to be engaged against the acknowledged enemies of God, and his church, is in all cases a proper ground of encouragement. In the service of our common Lord we are not all qualified to handle the same weapons, or to fill up the same stations: none should therefore be set up in all things as models, nor ought any of us *indiscriminately* to imitate the most approved characters. Rules, and methods, which are useful, and natural to one man, are encumbrances to another: and we all do best when we cultivate our own peculiar talent, taking hints from every body, and not attempting exact conformity to any one. But faith, and prayer, and truth, and righteousness, the whole armour of God; and the mind, that was in Christ, are equally needful for all the servants of the Lord, whatever be their particular work, or method of doing it. The curses of wicked men are no more to be feared, than their power; they will at length rebound upon themselves, and proud self-confidence will surely be confounded. But they, who trust in the Lord, and simply seek his glory, shall never be ashamed: in their hands the feeblest means shall be successful, and before them the most formidable opposition shall come to nothing: and the event of every conflict of the church of God against her enemies, shall evince, "that the Lord saveth not with "sword, and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and he "will give it into our hands:" and this shall tend to make known his glory throughout the earth. But human favour is of small value, when men so soon forget those, who have been most useful to them: they alone are happy, who enjoy *his* favour, who never forgets, or forsakes the meanest of his true people. Finally in David's conflict with, and victory over the champion of the Philistines, we may see a faint shadow of the Redeemer's victory over satan, who for ages had defied the armies of the living God, and from the fall of Adam, to his coming, found no one able in his own strength to stand against him: but Jesus overcame him upon his own ground, and foiled him with his own weapons; and still goes on by his despised gospel to pursue the victory; whilst all the hosts of the true Israel join in, and share the benefits of his conquests, and shall ere long meet in heaven to celebrate his triumphs with everlasting songs of praise.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII.] V. 1. *Was knit*, &c.] The modesty, piety, and faith of David were so congenial to the disposition of Jonathan, that they attracted his most cordial esteem, and affection: so that they continued thenceforth united in the most endeared friendship, notwithstanding Saul's envy, and malice, and Jonathan's knowledge that David was anointed to be king, to *his* exclusion. Their friendship was the effect of that grace of God, which produces in all true believers "one heart, and soul," forms them of the same judgment and disposition, and causes them to delight in each other's converse, and comfort.

V. 2. *And Saul took*, &c] Saul did not at first know David, but he soon recollected him: heretofore he had frequently returned from Saul to his pastoral employments, but from this time he returned no more to them.

V. 3, 4.] Jonathan, by stripping off his own clothes, and armour, and giving them to David, intended to ratify the covenant betwixt them, as well as to testify his affection, and equip him according to his character, and station: David then put off the shepherd, and put on the courtier, and soldier. Thus the Son of God laid aside for a season

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I. SAMUEL. CH. XVIII. VE. XI.

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that *was* upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle.

5 And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him, *and* behaved himself wisely: and Saul set him over the men of war; and he was accepted in the sight of all the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants.

6 And it came to pass, as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

7 And the women answered *one another* as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands and to me they have ascribed *but* thousands: and *what* can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

10 And it came to pass on the morrow, that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house; and David played with his hand, as at other times: and *there was* a javelin in Saul's hand.

11 And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall *with it*. And David avoided out of his presence twice.

12 And Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with him, and was departed from Saul.

13 Therefore Saul removed him from him, and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.

14 And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the LORD *was* with him.

15 Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.

16 But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

17 And Saul said to David, Behold, my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife; only be thou valiant for me, and fight the LORD's battles: for Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

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his robes of Divine majesty, to appear in the mean attire of a servant; that he might clothe us in his robes of righteousness, salvation, and glory, according to the tenor of the everlasting covenant, to which he invites sinners to accede.

V. 6—9.] Some time after the death of Goliath, and the consequent rout of the Philistines, Saul, and perhaps David with him, went to several of the cities of Israel: and wherever they came, the women, according to the custom of the times, went forth to meet them with instruments of music, and singing an ode, that had been composed on the occasion. In this no injustice was done, nor any affront offered to Saul: yet the wording of it was very imprudent, and might have given umbrage to a mind less propense to envy, and suspicion, than Saul's was. Accordingly he was greatly displeased; and perceiving how David increased, whilst he decreased, in popularity, he concluded that God was about "to rend the kingdom from him, and "to give it to a neighbour of his, who was better than he:" perhaps he was also informed that Samuel had anointed David, and favoured his interest. So that he began to look upon him with a jealous, and malignant eye.

V. 10. *That the evil spirit*, &c.] When Saul indulged malevolence he "gave place to the devil," and provoked the Lord to permit the evil spirit again to trouble him. Being under a supernatural influence, he behaved in some respects, as the prophets did, when the Spirit of inspiration came upon them; but from a contrary cause: but whether he *assumed* this appearance to cloke his attempt of murdering David; or whether satan wrought upon him till he was thus carried away, is not certain: however he was influenced by deliberate malice when he threw the javelin at David, and fully intended to have murdered him. Perhaps David, though conscious of his innocence, and satisfied that he was doing his duty, and under God's protection, he would not leave his place, yet suspected some mischief from the javelin in Saul's hand, and thus was enabled to avoid the blow. But whether the javelin was thrown twice successively at this time; or once now, and once on another occasion, doth not certainly appear: David however, being providentially preserved, expressed no resentment, though probably he became more circumspect.

V. 12—16.] Saul was conscious that the Lord was departed from him, and that his former capacity for public business was withdrawn: and he perceived that the Lord had given David peculiar wisdom, and was with him to prosper all his undertakings; and this increased the disquietude of his malevolent mind, and his fear of David, as a prevailing rival. Under pretence of advancing him, he therefore removed him from his presence, which served to ingratiate him with the people, by affording him the opportunity of leading them forth to victory over their enemies.

V. 17. *Let not mine hand*, &c.] Saul appears to have been influenced in this determination by the fear of exciting a revolt among the people, rather than by the fear of God,

18 And

18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what *is* my life, *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?

19 But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

20 And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son-in-law in *the one of* the twain.

22 And Saul commanded his servants, *saying*, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son-in-law.

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you *a* light *thing* to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I *am* a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, On this manner spake David.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

26 And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law: and the days were not expired.

27 Wherefore David arose, and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

28 And Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, *that* David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

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or any reluctance to so horrible a crime. He was engaged by promise to give his daughter to David; but he had delayed, and David was willing to dispense with the engagement. However malice at length prompted him to propose it to David, that he might excite him to venture his life more freely, in order to be accounted worthy of such an honour: but when his design proved abortive, he affronted him in the grossest manner, by giving his daughter to another man: yet David expressed no resentment!

V. 23—26.] David would doubtless suspect some invidious design in this proposal also; but he cautiously avoided mentioning the slight, which had been put upon him; and waved the matter upon the ground of his own poverty, and inferiority; (though his original was not much inferior to Saul's.) But when, instead of dowry, according to the custom of those times, an hundred foreskins of the Philistines were required, he would not seem backward to any perilous service; and therefore in the short time allowed him, he went forth, and returned with twice as many, as were prescribed.

V. 28—30.] Michal's affection for David, his prudent conduct in another incursion of the Philistines, and his increasing reputation, appeared to Saul's distempered mind to forebode David's advancement to, and his own expulsion from the kingdom.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

True religion teacheth us to rejoice in, and to love real excellency, though it rival and eclipse our own reputation: and to delight in the society of those, whom the Lord loves, and honours, who bear his image, and are zealous for his glory, without respect to inferiority of station, or selfish considerations. This is that union of souls resulting from participation of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, which prepares men for filling up their several stations in the church of God, in harmony, sympathy, and love, as the several members do in the natural body: and which being perfected in heaven, will for ever exclude envy, and discontent, and render the felicity of each favoured inhabitant an accession to the joy of all the rest. But how different is the nature of fallen man! When the Lord is provoked to leave us, and satan is permitted to foment our natural evil propensities, we become capable of envying and hating those especially, who are most amiable, and have done the most to serve us, and with malignity proportioned to their meekness and wisdom: the commendation bestowed upon them will be considered as an injury, and reproach to us; and even the peculiar favour of God for them will enhance malice, and incite to revenge; (*Gen.* c. iv. v. 4—8.) Thus men imitate and gratify satan's malevolence; whilst themselves are tortured with continued terrors

CHAP. XIX.

Contains, 1st. Saul ordering David to be slain; Jonathan pleading for him, and Saul swearing not to hurt him, v. 1—7. 2d. David victorious over the Philistines; Saul aiming to kill him with a javelin, and besetting his house to take him; his preservation by Michal's assistance, and his flight to Samuel, v. 8—18. 3d. Saul and his messengers, seized with the spirit of prophecy, and prevented from taking David, v. 19—24.

AND Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David.

2 But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David: and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee. Now therefore, I pray thee, take heed to thyself until the morning, and abide in a secret *place*, and hide thyself:

3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where thou *art*, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see that I will tell thee.

4 And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works *have been* to thee-ward very good.

5 For he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest *it*, and didst rejoice; wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?

6 And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, *As* the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

7 And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all those things: and Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as in times past.

8 And there was war again: and David went out and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter: and they fled from him.

9 And the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul as he sat in his house with his ja-

and suspicions, and exposed to temptations to every horrid crime, whereby they bring upon themselves swift destruction. If we would not be given up to such dreadful excesses, let us watch, and pray against the first risings of these dire passions. On the other hand we must be prepared for the effects of them, as they prevail in the minds of others: for every great, and good work a man must expect to be envied of his neighbour: no distinction, or pre-eminence can be so unexceptionably obtained, or possessed, but it will expose a man to slander, and malice, and perhaps to their most treacherous, and fatal consequences. But such trials are very useful to those, who love God; they serve as a counterpoise to their honour, and commendation, and to check the growth of pride, and attachment to the world: they exercise them to faith, patience, meekness, and communion with God: they give them a fair opportunity of exemplifying the amiable nature, and tendency of true godliness, by acting with wisdom, and propriety in such difficult circumstances: they give them increasing experience of the Lord's faithfulness, in restraining their enemies, raising them up friends, and affording them his gracious protection: and they both prepare them for, and open their way to those stations, in which they are to be employed; for modest merit will shine forth with double lustre in due time. But humility, industry, faithfulness, silence under injuries, and a backwardness to seek great things for ourselves, are requisite to safety, and comfort in public scenes of life; and retired stations are vastly more favourable to our own inward peace. Nay our lavish commendations of those, whom we love and admire, in such a world as this, often proves a real injury: and in all cases every thing should be avoided which can excite envy, or opposition, except the performance of our duty to God and man. But if the Lord be with us, and we have the consolations of his Spirit, we shall be happy in any situation: committing our souls, and bodies, our characters, and interests, our families, and connexions, our way, and our work into his Almighty hand: he will bring all that to pass, which is good for us; and carry us safe through to that blessed world, where treachery, envy, and malice find no admission, but perfect love will prevail for evermore.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 3. *Where thou art*, &c.] Some spot, where Saul commonly walked, was pitched upon, that David being there concealed, might have the fullest evidence of Jonathan's fidelity and affection; and all the information, which he could procure him.

V. 6. *And Saul sware*, &c.] Saul was for the present impressed by Jonathan's calm, and forcible arguments; and sware that David should not be slain, probably meaning sincerely: but his convictions wore off, and his malice revived, and he was too much accustomed to swear, duly to reverence an oath.

V. 7—9. *And he was*, &c.] David did not much confide in Saul's assurances; but he was willing to keep in the way of his duty, and to put his trust in God. Though his valour, and success were the known causes of Saul's enmity; yet he was willing to fight against the Philistines, and to expose himself to their swords, and to Saul's in-

velin in his hand: and David played with *his* hand.

10 And Saul ſought to ſmite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he ſlipped away out of Saul's preſence, and he ſmote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and eſcaped that night.

11 Saul alſo ſent meſſengers unto David's houſe to watch him, and to ſlay him in the morning: and Michal, David's wife, told him, ſaying, If thou ſave not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou ſhalt be ſlain.

12 So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and eſcaped.

13 And Michal took an image, and laid *it* in the bed, and put a pillow of goats *hair* for his bolſter, and covered *it* with a cloth.

14 And when Saul ſent meſſengers to take David, ſhe ſaid, He *is* ſick.

15 And Saul ſent the meſſengers *again* to ſee David, ſaying, Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may ſlay him.

16 And when the meſſengers were come in, behold, *there was* an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats *hair* for his bolſter.

17 And Saul ſaid unto Michal, Why haſt thou deceived me ſo, and ſent away mine enemy, that he is eſcaped? And Michal anſwered Saul, He ſaid unto me, Let me go; why ſhould I kill thee?

18 So David fled, and eſcaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him: and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth.

19 And it was told Saul, ſaying, Behold, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah.

20 And Saul ſent meſſengers to take David: and when they ſaw the company of the prophets propheſying, and Samuel ſtanding *as* appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the meſſengers of Saul, and they alſo propheſied.

21 And when it was told Saul, he ſent other meſſengers, and they propheſied likewiſe. And Saul ſent meſſengers again the third time, and they propheſied alſo.

22 Then went he alſo to Ramah, and came to a great well that *is* in Sechu: and he aſked, and ſaid, Where *are* Samuel and David? And *one* ſaid, Behold, *they be* at Naioth in Ramah.

23 And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah: and the Spirit of God was upon him alſo, and he went on and propheſied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah.

24 And he ſtripped off his clothes alſo, and propheſied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day, and all that night. Wherefore they ſay, *Is* Saul alſo among the the prophets?

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creaſed envy on that account: nor did he decline playing upon the harp before him, though he ſaw the javelin in his hand, and had before ſo narrowly eſcaped!

V. 11. *In the morning*, &c.] Leſt David ſhould eſcape, if they entered in the night, the meſſengers were employed to watch till the morning, that he went not out of his houſe; and were then ordered to go, to apprehend, and bring him to Saul that he might ſlay him. By this means an opportunity was afforded David of eſcaping. On this occaſion he penned the fifty-ninth Pſalm.

V. 11—17.] Michal's fidelity to her huſband was commendable: if the caſe had been more doubtful, it would have been her duty to ſide with him againſt her father, whilſt no harm was intended him; but David only aimed to preſerve his life from the unjuſt, and ungrateful malice of Saul. Her ſtratagem to gain time, till David was got to a diſtance, was allowable: but her direct falſhood had not even the plea of neceſſity to excuſe it; (*Note*, *Joſh.* c. ii. v. 4:) and her anſwer was injurious to David's reputation, and manifeſts that notwithſtanding her affection for him, ſhe was not influenced by the ſame Spirit of piety, which had dictated Jonathan's language to Saul. (ver. 4, 5, 6.) The whole account illuſtrates the ſavage cruelty of Saul, and the extreme danger, to which David's life was expoſed.

V. 18. *To Samuel*, &c.] As the aged prophet had anointed him to be king, he fled to him on this emergency, rather than to his father's houſe; that he might have the ſolace of his counſel, inſtructions, and prayers. Naioth is ſuppoſed to have been the place of the ſeminary of prophets, near Ramah.

V. 23, 24.] Saul being ſeized by the prophetic Spirit before he came to Naioh, ſtripped off his armour, and royal robes, or upper garments; (2 *Sam.* c. vi. v. 14: 20;) and in an extaſy, during the whole day and night, involuntarily joined in ſpeaking of divine things, or in ſinging hymns of praiſe, without any power of executing the baſe purpoſe of his journey. After which, finding himſelf baffled, he probably returned home extremely chagrined, without taking any notice of Samuel. This ſecond time of Saul being among the prophets was noted, as more wonderful than the former. (c. x. v. 11.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt vehement anger, when excited by ſuppoſed injuries may be pacified by conceſſions, kindneſs, and con-

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Contains 1st. David conferring with Jonathan, receiving assurances of fidelity, forming a scheme of ascertaining Saul's intentions, and solemnly ratifying the covenant of friendship, 1—23. *2d. Saul's rage, abuse, and attempt to kill Jonathan for favouring David,* 24—34. *3d. Jonathan shewing David his danger, and their pathetic parting,* 35—42.

AND David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what *is* mine iniquity? and what *is* my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?

2 And he said unto him, God forbid; thou shalt not die: behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will shew it me; and why should my father hide this thing from me? it *is* not *so*.

3 And David sware moreover, and said: Thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes; and he saith, Let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved: but truly, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, *there is* but a step between me and death.

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do *it* for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to-morrow *is* the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third *day* at even.

6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked *leave* of me, that he might run to Beth-lehem his city; for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, *It is* well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth,

tinued respectful, and good behaviour: but envious rage is fomented by excellency of character, and conduct, and is far more dreadful; (*Prov.* c. xxvii. v. 4.) When rooted malice possesses the heart, murder is speedily conceived; and the prospect of impunity emboldens men to avow the most shameful purposes. Princes are so seldom opposed in their designs; and so few will venture to plead for the objects of their envy, and hatred; that they sometimes conclude all men to be alike selfish, and ready to execute any lucrative schemes of villainy. But that friendship, which is cemented by mutual faith, and piety, will influence those, who feel it's sacred flame, to renounce their highest temporal interests, and venture the displeasure of their superiors, in pleading the cause of injured worth. The evil of causeless malice, of ingratitude, and of persecuting those, whose conduct has been irreproachable, and whose services have been eminent, is so manifest, that a plain statement of truth, and fact, with meek, and serious expostulations, will in such a case often for the time impress their minds, who are most deeply guilty. But resolutions made in consequence of hasty convictions, and without any inward change of disposition, or dependance on the grace of God, seldom produce much good effect: and ungovernable passions easily break through the most solemn oaths, when the fear of God doth not possess the heart. A fresh temptation soon rouses the dormant corruption: and when men indulge malignant passions, they give satan his full advantage, and may be answerable for multiplied murders, without actually perpretating one. The Lord's servants must keep to their place, and duty, though hated for so doing: they must give hónour to their earthly superiors, however *they* behave; and persevere in th ir endeavours to overcome evil with good. The Lord hath innumerable methods of protecting them in the most imminent dangers: he can preserve them by the kindness of those persons, whose misconduct deserves the most marked disapprobation: he can change the hearts, or tye the hands of their enemies, or shame them for a season out of their malicious purposes. Many a persecutor, by coming amongst God's people, have been seized upon by converting grace, and, like Saul of Tarsus, have professed, and preached the faith, that once they sought to destroy. And many, like King Saul, have for a time been apparently changed, have exercised spiritual gifts, and been numbered among the prophets, whose malice has remained unsubdued, and whose last state hath been worse than the first. Let us then daily seek for renewing grace, which shall be in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life: let us cleave to truth, and holiness with full purpose of heart; and in every danger and trouble seek protection, comfort, and direction, in the ordinances of God, and in the society of his ministers and people: these things will do more to make us happy, than all the splendour, and luxury of a court.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] XX. 2. *It is not so.*] Probably whilst Saul was detained at Naioh, David hastily repaired to Jonathan, to confer with him upon the state of his affairs: who was willing to attribute his father's attempts against David to his distemper, or to sudden sallies of passion. After Saul had sworn not to slay David, he had said no more to Jonathan on that subject, though he confided all his other affairs to him; and therefore he could not believe that he had a fixed intention of murdering him.

V. 3. *David sware*, &c.] He solemnly called God to witness that in criminating Saul, he went not upon doubtful surmises: and that it was as certain in itself, as that the Lord liveth; and to him, as Jonathan could be of his own existence, that a design was formed against his life, which constrained him to renounce Saul's service, and consult his own safety.

V. 5—7.] David suggested this expedient to convince Jonathan of Saul's intentions, and to shew that he was

then be ſure that evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore thou ſhalt deal kindly with thy ſervant; for thou haſt brought thy ſervant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithſtanding, if there be in me iniquity, ſlay me thyſelf; for why ſhouldeſt thou bring me to thy father?

9 And Jonathan ſaid, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10 Then ſaid David to Jonathan, Who ſhall tell me? or what *if* thy father anſwer thee roughly?

11 And Jonathan ſaid unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan ſaid unto David, O LORD God of Iſrael, when I have ſounded my father about to-morrow any time, *or* the third *day*, and, behold, *if there be* any good toward David, and I then ſend not unto thee, and ſhew it thee;

13 The LORD do ſo, and much more to Jonathan: but if it pleaſe my father *to do* thee evil, then I will ſhew it thee, and ſend thee away, that thou mayeſt go in peace; and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou ſhalt not only, while yet I live, ſhew me the kindneſs of the LORD, that I die not;

15 But *alſo* thou ſhalt not cut off thy kindneſs from my houſe for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the houſe of David, *ſaying*, Let the LORD even require *it* at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan cauſed David to ſwear again, becauſe he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own ſoul.

18 Then Jonathan ſaid to David, To-morrow *is* the new moon; and thou ſhalt be miſſed, becauſe thy ſeat will be empty.

19 And *when* thou haſt ſtayed three days, *then* thou ſhalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didſt hide thyſelf when the buſineſs was *in hand*, and ſhalt remain by the ſtone Ezel.

20 And I will ſhoot three arrows on the ſide *thereof*, as though I ſhot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will ſend a lad, *ſaying*, Go, find out the arrows. If I expreſsly ſay

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forced into the meaſures, which he afterwards adopted. Saul ſtill regarded the externals of religion, and at the new moons entertained his family, and chief officers at a feaſt upon a ſacrifice. Hitherto David had filled his place there; but on this occaſion he purpoſed to be abſent, to make trial of Saul: for as he was evidently deſtitute of affection for him, if he were very angry, it muſt ariſe from being deprived of an opportunity to do him miſchief. David was probably invited to a family ſacrifice at Bethlehem; the excuſe was ſufficient; and Saul being out of the way, Jonathan was competent to allow his abſence: and he engaged to return on the third day before even, and to lie concealed in an appointed place, to be informed of the reſult.

V. 8. *A covenant of the Lord*, &c.] That is a covenant ratified in the faith, fear, and love of God, for their mutual encouragement in worſhipping him, and promoting his glory. David ſeems to have conceived ſome jealouſy, leſt Jonathan ſhould warp from his conſtancy: eſpecially leſt the envenomed tongue of ſlander ſhould injure him in his friend's eſteem. "But," ſays he, "if I am guilty of "any great offence, that violates our covenant, ſlay me "thyſelf, but betray me not to thy father." This was finely conceived to touch the tendereſt feelings of the heart of Jonathan.

V. 12, 13.] In ſpeaking to David, Jonathan appealed to the Lord for his ſincerity, and called on him to avenge his perfidy, if he betrayed his friend. It appears that Jonathan knew that Samuel had anointed David, and believed that he would certainly be king: and he had no thoughts of oppoſing the Lord's purpoſe, but rejoiced that ſo pious, and able a perſon was choſen to reign over God's people; and prayed that the Lord might be with him, as he had been with Saul: for, as became a dutiful ſon, he drew a veil over his fathers miſconduct, and only adverted to his former good management and ſucceſs.

V. 14, 15.] It hath been too common in diſputed ſucceſſions for the reigning prince to clear his children's title, by cutting off all competitors: Jonathan therefore prudently propoſed to extend the covenant to their poſterity alſo. He readily renounced all pretenſions to the kingdom, and only deſired that he, and his poſterity might be numbered amongſt David's friends, when all his enemies were deſtroyed. When we conſider David's diſtreſs, Saul's enmity, and Jonathan's proſpects, we can never ſufficiently admire the ſtrength of his faith, and the force of his diſintereſted love! It is obſervable that Jonathan did not deſire that the Lord ſhould require it of David or his poſterity, if any failure took place, "but of the hand of David's "enemies."

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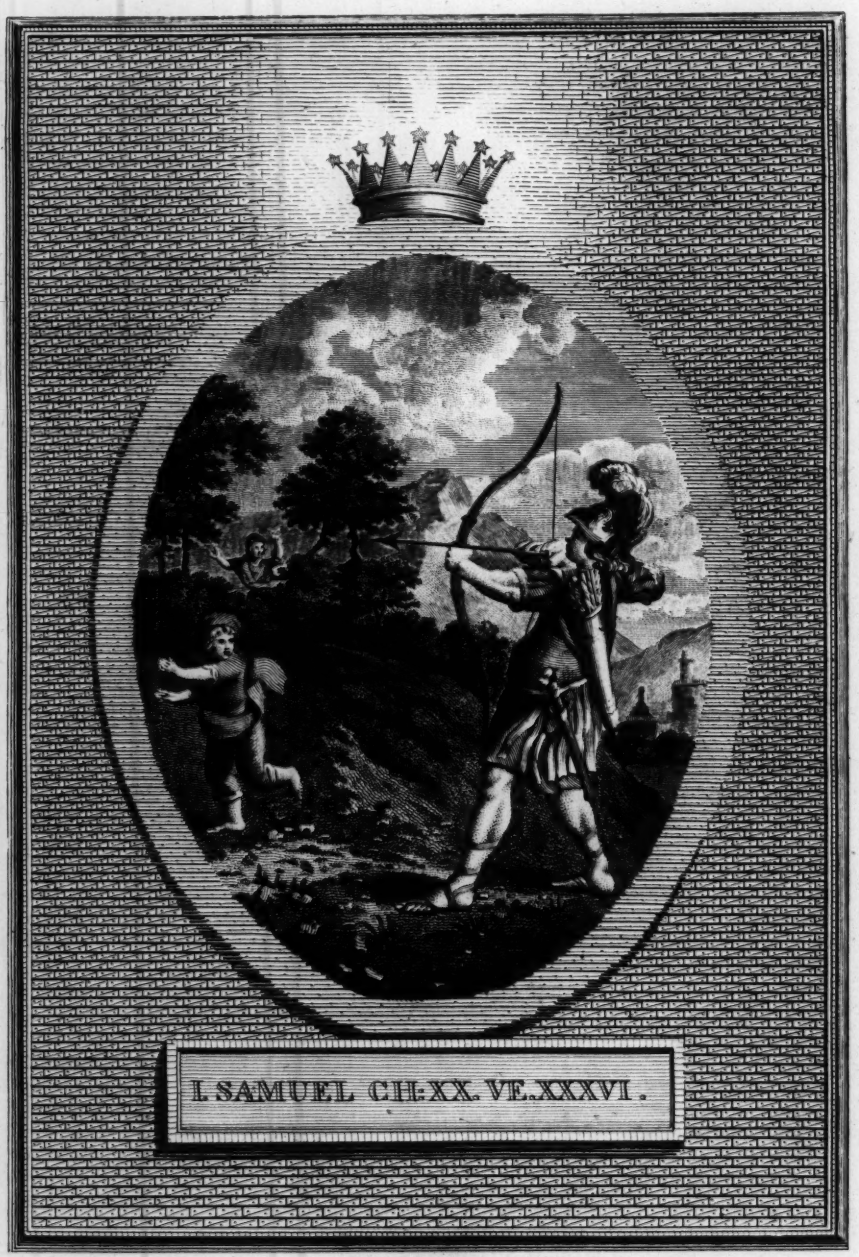

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unto the lad, Behold the arrows *are* on this ſide of thee, take them; then come thou: for *there is* peace to thee, and no hurt, *as* the LORD liveth.

22 But if I ſay thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows *are* beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath ſent thee away.

23 And *as touching* the matter which thou and I have ſpoken of, behold the LORD *be* between thee and me for ever.

24 So David hid himſelf in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king ſat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king ſat upon his ſeat, as at other times, *even* upon a ſeat by the wall: and Jonathan aroſe, and Abner ſat by Saul's ſide, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheleſs Saul ſpake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he *is* not clean; ſurely he *is* not clean.

27 And it came to paſs on the morrow, *which was* the ſecond *day* of the month, that David's place was empty; and Saul ſaid unto Jonathan his ſon, Wherefore cometh not the ſon of Jeſſe to meat, neither yeſterday nor to-day?

28 And Jonathan anſwered Saul, David earneſtly aſked *leave* of me *to go* to Bethlehem:

29 And he ſaid, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a ſacrifice in the city, and my brother he hath commanded me *to be there*; and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and ſee my brethren: therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled againſt Jonathan, and he ſaid unto him, Thou ſon of the perverſe rebellious *woman*, do not I know that thou haſt choſen the ſon of Jeſſe to thine own confuſion, and unto the confuſion of thy mother's nakedneſs?

31 For as long as the ſon of Jeſſe liveth upon the ground, thou ſhalt not be eſtabliſhed, nor thy kingdom: wherefore now ſend and fetch him unto me, for he ſhall ſurely die.

32 And Jonathan anſwered Saul his father, and ſaid unto him, Wherefore ſhall he be ſlain? what hath he done?

33 And Saul caſt a javelin at him to ſmite him; whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to ſlay David.

34 So Jonathan aroſe from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the ſecond day of the month: for he was grieved for David, becauſe his father had done him ſhame.

35 And it came to paſs in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field, at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he ſaid unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I ſhoot. *And* as the lad ran, he ſhot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had ſhot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and ſaid, *is* not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make ſpeed, haſte, ſtay not. And Jona-

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V. 22. *The Lord hath ſent*, &c.] In caſe Jonathan could not ſpeak with David, this was the ſignal, that his death was determined; and that the Lord required him to provide for his ſafety.

V. 26. *He is not clean.*] Saul did not aſcribe David's abſence to a criminal cauſe: but he might rather have ſuſpected that fear of his murderous rage had kept him away, than any ceremonial uncleanneſs!

V. 30. *Thou ſon*, &c.] Or "Thou ſon of perverſe "rebellion." Without entering into any critical diſcuſſion of the words of this verſe, they may be underſtood to contain the moſt ſcurrilous abuſe, which the language afforded, and as coarſe as any made uſe of in modern times: eſpecially implying that Jonathan proved himſelf not to be *his* ſon, and *diſgraced his mother*, by taking David's part againſt him. Conſidering Saul's rank, and Jonathan's relation to him, and his eminent ſervices, and excellent character, and the public and ſacred occaſion, we muſt condemn this ſpeech, as a moſt ſhameful indulgence of furious paſſion.

V. 31.] Probably Saul knew that David had been anointed by the ſame authority with himſelf: yet he oppoſed him with all his might, and vainly hoped to exclude him from the kingdom, and to put him to death. His unbelief and enmity formed a ſtriking contraſt to Jonathan's faith and love. (*Matt.* c. ii. v. 4—16.)

V. 32, 33.] When Jonathan before reaſoned with Saul, he was reduced to a better temper; but now he would not hearken to a word: and though, in order to induce Jonathan's concurrence in killing David, he pretended a great zeal for his eſtabliſhment in the kingdom; yet when his purpoſes were oppoſed, he furiouſly attempted to kill him alſo.

than's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his maſter.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and ſaid unto him, Go, carry *them* to the city.

41 *And* as ſoon as the lad was gone, David aroſe out of *a place* toward the ſouth, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himſelf three times: and they kiſſed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan ſaid to David, Go in peace, for as much as we have ſworn both of us in the name of the LORD, ſaying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my ſeed and thy ſeed for ever. And he aroſe and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

CHAP. XXI.

Contains 1ſt. David obtaining from Ahimelech proviſions, and Goliath's ſword, 1—9. *2d. Fleeing to the king of Gath, and feigning himſelf mad,* 10—15.

V. 40—42. *His artillery*, &c.] His bow, quiver, and arrows, &c. Finding the coaſt clear Jonathan ſeized the opportunity of one more interview with his beloved friend; who, in his conduct on this occaſion, united all the reſpect and honour due to his rank, with the moſt endeared affection, and glowing gratitude, ſo that his ſorrow even exceeded Jonathan's. Nothing can be conceived more pathetic than this their parting; and we find not that they met more than once afterwards in this world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Next to the conſolations of true religion, nothing is more ſupporting to an afflicted mind, than the converſe of a pious friend: and it is moſt deſirable to obviate miſconſtructions of our conduct, by thoſe, whom we love, and eſteem; leſt we ſhould loſe the comfort of their friendſhip, and ſhould throw temptations in *their* way. Though it is painful to ſuffer for well doing, yet it is far better than to ſuffer for evil doing; for a clear conſcience, an unblemiſhed reputation, and the favour of God are vaſt advantages in trying circumſtances. Friendly, and pious perſons are always backward to ſuſpect others of deep malignity, but wiſh to impute their miſconduct, where undeniable, to other cauſes: and pious children will veil the faults of their parents, as far as conſiſts with other duties; and ſpeak as favourably of them, as truth permits. But it is ſhameful when parents deliberately deviſe wickedneſs, which they conceal from their children, leſt they ſhould in them meet with obſtacles to their criminal intentions. Evident danger from the malice of men renders it allowable for us to quit thoſe places, where we were employed, and to take proper meaſures for ſelf-preſervation: yet this ought, if poſſible, to be ſo conducted, that all impartial perſons may perceive the neceſſity, and "that the Lord hath ſent us away." At ſometimes it *appears to us* "that there is but a ſtep between "us and death:" at all times we are ſenſible that it may be ſo, and ſhould be expecting, and preparing for that event; "for as ſure as the Lord liveth, and our ſouls now "live" in the body, we ſhall ere long remove into the eternal world. But let dangers appear ever ſo eminent, we cannot die, till the purpoſe of God concerning us be accompliſhed; and, if we are believers, until "we have "ſerved our generation according to his will." Every expedient ſhould be tried to prevent open quarrels, and every appearance of evil ought to be guarded againſt: and by little things a certain judgment may be formed of men's diſpoſitions, and intentions. True friendſhip, grounded upon the covenant of the Lord, will require nothing unreaſonable, and refuſe nothing equitable: yet it is apt to be jealous, when fidelity is put to ſevere trials, and there is danger leſt ſlander and prejudice ſhould interrupt its courſe. But in reality it reſts upon an immoveable baſis, and poſſeſſes inconceivable force: it is ſtronger than death, and able to ſilence the voice of emulation, ambition, and undue ſelf-love, and relative affection. Who then can comprehend the love of Jeſus, who gave himſelf a ſacrifice unto God for us rebellious, and polluted ſinners! and what ought to be the force, and effects of our love to him, and his cauſe and people! The believer, being acquainted with the purpoſe of the father reſpecting him, willingly ſubmits to his authority, rejoices in the proſpect of his glory, and cries Hoſanna to the Son of David, who cometh in the name of the Lord. Greatly deſiring to have the covenant of peace ratified with the Saviour, and to love him as his own ſoul, he will aſk and receive repeated confirmations of it, and will readily perform whatever Jeſus his friend commandeth: and for his ſake he will have a cordial love for thoſe, who ſeek his glory, and bear his image. Aſſured that all his enemies will periſh, he will deſire the ſame bleſſings for his poſterity, and his relations: and he will pray for, and weep over ſuch of them, as reject the counſel of God againſt themſelves: but he muſt ſeparate from them, and join intereſts with thoſe, whom they deſpiſe and hate.—The formal profeſſor will ſometimes be more conſtant at divine ordinances, than the true believer: for diſcompoſure of mind will ſometimes prevent *his* attendance; whilſt the purpoſe, or the practice of the vileſt crimes interrupt not thoſe, who truſt in the mere external obſervance. When envious and angry paſſions are indulged, men are puſhed on by ſatan into the moſt indecent exceſſes, without reſpect even to character, or the moſt ſacred obligations: nor are they aware one moment of the outrages, which they ſhall commit the next. Let us then fear giving place to the devil in the ſmalleſt degree. Under great provocations the meekeſt cannot always refrain from anger; but when its emotions are felt, our wiſdom is to withdraw in ſilence; and it is generous to be more grieved for our inſulted friends than for ourſelves. Every comfort on earth is counterpoiſed with ſome ſorrow; and the deareſt friends muſt experience the moſt painful ſeparations. But Chriſtians need not ſorrow as men without hope; for being one with Chriſt, they are one with each other; and will meet in his preſence ere long to part no more, where all tears ſhall be wiped from their eyes.

THEN

THEN came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why *art* thou alone, and no man with thee?

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed *my* servants to such and such a place.

3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give *me* five *loaves of* bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

4 And the priest answered David, and said, *There is* no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women,

5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women *have been* kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

6 So the priest gave him hallowed *bread:* for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that *belonged* to Saul.

8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it *is here* wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take *it:* for *there is* no other save that here. And David said, *There is* none like that; give it me.

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, *Is* not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1, 2. *To Nob*, &c.] The tabernacle on some account had been removed from Shiloh to Nob, a city of Benjamin, but the ark still remained at Kirjath-jearim. David went thither to enquire of the Lord by the High Priest, as he had been accustomed to do; (c. xxii. v. 10—15;) and to take farewel of him, and of the sanctuary, as he had of Samuel, and of Jonathan. But as he went without a suitable retinue, and in apparent distress, Ahimelech probably suspected a breach betwixt him and Saul, and was afraid to entertain him. This proved a snare to David; and lest he should be betrayed to Saul, or sent away destitute, he framed immediately a gross falsehood, which cannot be excused, and which had fatal consequences.

V. 3—6. It seems wonderful that David should not be able to procure bread for himself, and his few attendants: but when Saul's rooted malice was made known, (and such news spreads very rapidly,) every one would be afraid, or indisposed to entertain him. However the necessity was real, and urgent, and Ahimelech supposed that they might in this case eat of the shew-bread, provided they were prepared in the same manner, as the Israelites had been for receiving the law from mount Sinai; (*Exod.* c. xix. v. 15. 1 *Cor.* c. vii. v. 5.) David having therefore satisfied him in this respect, and assured him, that the young men were ceremonially clean, and habitually holy persons: and having pleaded, that the bread was now in a manner common, as other loaves had been placed upon the table in their stead, he gave him thereof, and he did eat. Jesus Christ hath expressly vindicated both him, and David in this matter; which proves that the *positive* institutions of religion may be dispensed with, when the preservation of life, or other urgent necessity requires it.

V. 7. *Detained*, &c.] Doeg had been proselyted to the religion of Israel, perhaps to obtain preferment from Saul; and he was at this time performing some vow: but as he did not love the ordinances of God, his attendance was constrained, and his heart was elsewhere.

V. 8, 9. *There is none like that*, &c.] It seems Goliath's sword was not so large, but David could readily use it. And every time he drew it, it would remind him to bless

and

and let his ſpittle fall down upon his beard.

14 Then ſaid Achiſh unto his ſervants, Lo, ye ſee the man is mad: wherefore *then* have ye brought him to me?

15 Have I need of madmen, that ye have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my preſence? ſhall this *fellow* come into my houſe?

CHAP. XXII.

Contains, 1ſt. David reſorted to by his relations, and diſtreſſed perſons, entruſting his parents with the king of Moab, and inſtructed by the prophet Gad, to return into the land of Judah, v. 1—5. 2d. Saul accuſing David, Jonathan, &c, of treaſon: Ahimelech accuſed by Doeg, ſent for, pleading his cauſe; by Saul's orders murdered with the other prieſts by Doeg: and Nob utterly deſtroyed, v. 6—19. 3d. Abiathar eſcaping to David: David blaming himſelf, and aſſuring him of protection, v. 20—23.

DAVID therefore departed thence, and eſcaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's houſe heard *it*, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one *that was* in diſtreſs, and every one *that was* in debt, and every one *that was* diſcontented, gathered themſelves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of

God for that victory, and to truſt in him to turn the arms of all his enemies againſt themſelves. David muſt have fled with great precipitation, as he came from home without his armour!

V. 10—15.] David expected that Saul would purſue him into every part of the land, and he was not diſpoſed to form a party againſt him. Perhaps Achiſh deemed it politic to draw off ſo able a commander from the ſervice of Saul, and therefore had given him ſome intimations, that he would protect him. But his officers judged otherwiſe: and remembering his victory over Goliath, the praiſes, which he had received, and his relation to Saul; and perhaps having heard, that he had been anointed to be "the king of the land," they deemed it impoſſible to fix him in their intereſt, and expreſſed an intention of putting him to death. This ſo alarmed David, that he feigned himſelf mad, and mimicked the actions of lunatics; which gave Achiſh the opportunity of driving him away, without either employing, or hurting him. This conduct was degrading to David's character, and diſcovered a wavering in his faith, and courage. However he ſoon recovered his confidence, and compoſure, and in theſe circumſtances compoſed both the 34th and 56th Pſalms, which are remarkable for the ſtrength of faith, and fervour of piety contained in them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When a favourite in earthly courts falls, it is commonly very rapidly: for out of fickleneſs, envy, malice, ambition, or fear, almoſt every one will deſert, or oppoſe him, without regarding the moſt unſullied reputation, eminent public ſervices, or perſonal obligations. It is therefore better to truſt in the Lord, than to put any confidence in princes. "Oppreſſion maketh even a wiſe man mad;" and few conduct themſelves in extreme difficulties, without taking ſome manifeſtly falſe ſtep: we ſhould therefore watch, and pray, that we enter not into temptation; and that the ſtrength of faith in God may overcome the fear of man. Ingenious falſhoods often promiſe preſent ſecurity, but they enſure future diſgrace, and diſquietude: and no impoſitions are more fooliſh, and prejudicial, than thoſe, which ſome men practiſe, in adviſing with, and ſeeking comfort from the miniſters of Chriſt. Neceſſity will juſtify us in neglecting the rituals of religion: but our attendance on holy things, ſhould be in holineſs of body, and ſoul, and with a mind as abſtracted from all earthly objects as poſſible. The true believer is glad to go to the courts of the Lord, loth to quit them, and mourns when confined from them: but the time ſerving hypocrite is dragged to, and detained in God's ſervice, from ſecular motives, and is often forming ſchemes of wickedneſs, when he ſeems to be worſhipping God! What wonder then that his ſacrifice is an abomination to the Lord? The remembrance of former mercies not only revives gratitude, but inſpires freſh confidence, and courage: and the word of God is that ſword of the Spirit, concerning which in all temptations, and conflicts, we may well ſay, "there is "none like it." In this world we muſt paſs from one danger to another, and meet with terror where we ſeek ſecurity: and thoſe very honours, of which men are ambitious, expoſe them to manifold diſadvantages, and perils: nor can we expect our ſituation to be better, whilſt the beſt of characters are ſo inconſiſtent, and defective. But we may truſt in the Lord at all times; he will ſupply our wants, and not forſake us, notwithſtanding our infirmities: he will not leave the lives of his people in the hands of their enemies, nor their ſouls in diſconſolation: and the more ſimply we depend on, and obey him, the more comfortably and ſurely we ſhall walk through this troubleſome world, to that reſt, which is reſerved for the people of God.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII.] V. 1—2.] David, unable to ſecure himſelf by flight, and none venturing to harbour him, hid himſelf in a cave, (*Pſalm* cxlii.) Thither his relations reſorted to him for protection, and to afford him aſſiſtance: along with them alſo came a number of perſons of broken fortunes, and unſettled minds, of whom he formed a ſmall army: but they acted entirely upon the defenſive, and were protectors of the country: and probably David's inſtructions, devotions, and example produced a great change in their temper, and behaviour.

V. 3. *The king of Moab*, &c.] (*Note, Jud.* c. xi. v. 11.) This prince, being favourable to David, he there ſecured a quiet retreat for his aged parents.

Moab:

Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, *and be* with you, till I know what God will do for me.

4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.

5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.

6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that *were* with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants *were* standing about him;)

7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds;

8 That all of you have conspired against me, and *there is* none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and *there is* none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, (which was set over the servants of Saul,) and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.

10 And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that *were* in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.

12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I *am*, my lord.

13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, and who *is so* faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?

15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute *any* thing unto his servant, *nor* to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.

16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house.

V. 5. *The prophet Gad*, &c.] Probably he had been under Samuel's tuition. By him God commanded David not to abide in Moab, but to return into the land of Judah, that he might not be alienated from his brethren, nor his men enticed to idolatry; that his faith might be exercised, and increased; and that he still might perform some service to his country.

V. 6. *Under a tree*, &c.] Saul pitched his tent, or set up his standard upon some eminence, (for so the word Ramah signifies,) near Gibeah: and with a spear in his hand seemed to menace vengeance against all, who did not join him in persecuting David.

V. 7, 8.] This language is very expressive of rage, and jealousy. He took it for granted that David had conspired his death. His pious, amiable, and dutiful son also was accused of being the ringleader in this conspiracy; because he would not assist in, or connive at the murder of an excellent man, whom he greatly loved. Nay the people in general, and his own tribe in particular had conspired against him, and had no compassion on him, and were blind to their own interests: because they were not so furious against David as he was!

V. 9, 10.] There was no reason why Doeg should mention the High Priest's conduct, which he knew did not proceed from malice: and if he must needs mention it, he should have declared how he was imposed upon by David, and that he intended to shew respect to Saul in that very action.

V. 13. *Enquired of God*, &c.] Saul, almost in direct terms, charged God himself, as counselling a traitor by his High Priest, how to prevail against his sovereign! So rash, and unreasonable is furious anger.

V. 14, 15.] In Ahimelech's ready attendance with all his brethren, and in his answer to Saul, we have the conduct, and language of conscious innocence. David's reputation for fidelity and capacity was established: his near relation, and prompt obedience to Saul, and his honourable services to the public were well known: he had been used to enquire of the Lord for him, as a public person: for his part he meant no harm, knew nothing of what had passed, and abhorred the thought of conspiring against his prince; and therefore trusted he should be honourably acquitted. It is observable that he generously concealed David's imposition, though it tended to exculpate himself.

17 And the king ſaid unto the footmen that ſtood about him, Turn and ſlay the prieſts of the LORD; becauſe their hand alſo *is* with David, and becauſe they knew when he fled, and did not ſhew it to me. But the ſervants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the prieſts of the LORD.

18 And the king ſaid to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the prieſts. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the prieſts, and ſlew on that day fourſcore and five perſons that did wear a linen ephod.

19 And Nob, the city of the prieſts, ſmote he with the edge of the ſword; both men and women, children and ſucklings, and oxen, and aſſes, and ſheep, with the edge of the ſword.

20 And one of the ſons of Ahimelech the ſon of Ahitub, named Abiathar, eſcaped, and fled after David.

21 And Abiathar ſhewed David that Saul had ſlain the LORD's prieſts.

22 And David ſaid unto Abiathar, I knew *it* that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would ſurely tell Saul: I have occaſioned *the death* of all the perſons of thy father's houſe.

23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that ſeeketh my life ſeeketh thy life: but with me thou *ſhalt be* in ſafeguard.

But Saul was forſaken of God, and given up to ſatan, and his own vile paſſions, and would hearken to nothing, but the ſuggeſtions of revenge, and jealouſy.

V. 17. *But the ſervants*, &c.] They might expect on this refuſal to feel the weight of the king's reſentment: yet the command was ſo barbarous, and impious, that they would not obey it.

V. 18. *That did wear*, &c.] That is, officiating prieſts, who probably were now dreſſed in their ſacerdotal veſtments. Theſe, to the number of eighty-five, this Edomite with his own hands ſlew at once, without provocation, or oppoſition! And both Saul and Doeg ſeem to have gloried, in taking this vengeance on the prieſts of the Lord, as they knew that they favoured the cauſe of David; (*Pſalm* lii.) Yet this horrible maſſacre was an accompliſhment of the ſentence denounced againſt the houſe of Eli. (c. ii. 31—33. c. iii. 12—14.)

V. 19. *And Nob*, &c.] Nob was not originally allotted to the prieſts, but on ſome account had ſince been given them: and Doeg, doubtleſs by Saul's authority, who was not ſatisfied with the blood of God's prieſts, treated it, and all therein, as the devoted enemies of God.

V. 22. *I knew it*, &c.] Upon recollection David feared this conſequence from Doeg's known character. His feelings muſt have been exceeding painful, when he conſidered his falſhood as one probable occaſion of this fatal cataſtrophe! By this event, ſo terrible to the prieſts, and lamentable to Iſrael, David obtained the preſence of the High Prieſt, which afterwards proved a comfort to him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Oppreſſion often forces men into meaſures, to which they were entirely averſe, and deprives the community of the ſervices of it's moſt uſeful members: yet the Lord will preſerve his people for their appointed work, however they may be hated, and expoſed. He can promote their good by the moſt contemptible, and meaneſt inſtruments: and the Son of David receives all, who come to him, however vile, and miſerable; he changes them all into an holy people, and employs them in his ſervice: and they, who would reign with him, muſt be contented firſt to ſuffer with, and for him. True piety increaſes, and purifies natural affection, in its due ſubordination to the love of God; and teaches men, however occupied, or diſtreſſed, to be reſpectful to, and tender of their aged parents; and to be more ready to meet hardſhip, or danger themſelves, than to expoſe *them* to it. In all our difficulties we ſhould wait till we know what God will do for us; for our enemies can go no further, than he is pleaſed to permit them: we ſhould therefore guard againſt exceſſive fear; venture readily into any place, whither duty call us; and without yielding to reſentment or deſpondency, perſevere in looking out for opportunities of uſefulneſs. The progreſs of human nature, inſtigated by ſatan's temptations, is from bad to worſe, and with increaſing rapidity. Conſcience, fear, and ſhame give leſs, and leſs reſiſtance, and every paſſion grows more and more exorbitant. Envy, malice, and jealouſy torment the ſoul with ideal miſeries: the wretch, who is under their dominion ſuſpects every one of enmity, and treachery; breaks through all the bonds of honour, and conſcience; and is hurried on to the moſt furious, and bloody revenges. Unhappy is it for mankind when ſuch perſons poſſeſs unlimited authority: the moſt ſacred character, unſhaken fidelity, conſcious innocency, unblemiſhed reputation, convincing arguments, reſpectful aſſurances will form no ſecurity to any one, who is become obnoxious to them: the moſt harmleſs, and friendly actions become conſtructive treaſon, and "thou ſhalt ſurely "die," ſilences every plea: nay the death of one, or of a few ſeems a paltry revenge to a proud tyrant: (*Eſther* c. iii. v. 6;) ſacrifices large as his rage, and power may be expected, for nothing elſe can appeaſe his fury. And if ſome be found willing to venture his indignation, rather than abet his cruelty, and impiety; others will be glad to purchaſe preferment at any price. Let us then bleſs God for a mild, equitable, and limited government, and ſtudy to fill up our places in ſociety ſuitable to our peculiar advantages: may the Lord continue them to our remoteſt poſterity, and extend the ſame to all the nations of the earth! The Lord often employs companions in diſtreſs to comfort and protect each other; and being expoſed to the ſame dangers, and enemies, they ſhould combine for their mutual defence. Thus believers, being hated for Chriſt's ſake, find ſafety under his protection, and ought to lay

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1*st. David defending Keilah againſt the Philiſtines*, 1—6. 2*d. Eſcaping thence into the wilderneſs of Ziph, purſued by Saul; met, and encouragad by Jonathan; and protected by the Lord*, 7—18. 3*d. The Ziphites informing Saul of him, his purſuit of him, and David's preſervation by an invaſion of the Philiſtines*, 19—29.

THEN they told David, ſaying, Behold, the Philiſtines fight againſt Keilah, and they rob the threſhing-floors.

2 Therefore David enquired of the LORD, ſaying, Shall I go and ſmite theſe Philiſtines? And the LORD ſaid unto David, Go and ſmite the Philiſtines, and ſave Keilah.

3 And David's men ſaid unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah: how much more then if we come to Keilah againſt the armies of the Philiſtines?

4 Then David enquired of the LORD yet again. And the LORD anſwered him and ſaid, Ariſe, go down to Keilah; for I will deliver the Philiſtines into thine hand.

5 So David and his men went to Keilah, and fought with the Philiſtines, and brought away their cattle, and ſmote them with a great ſlaughter. So David ſaved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 And it came to paſs, when Abiathar the ſon of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, *that* he came down *with* an ephod.

7 And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul ſaid, God hath delivered him into mine hand; for he is ſhut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.

8 And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to beſiege David and his men.

9 And David knew that Saul ſecretly practiſed miſchief againſt him; and he ſaid to Abiathar the prieſt, Bring hither the ephod.

10 Then ſaid David, O LORD God of Iſrael, thy ſervant hath certainly heard that Saul ſeeketh to come to Keilah, to deſtroy the city for my ſake.

11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? will Saul come down, as thy ſervant hath heard? O LORD God of Iſrael, I beſeech thee, tell thy ſervant. And the LORD ſaid, He will come down.

12 Then ſaid David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? and the LORD ſaid, They will deliver *thee* up.

13 Then David and his men, *which were* about ſix hundred, aroſe and departed out of Keilah, and went whitherſoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was eſcaped from Keilah; and he forbare to go forth.

14 And David abode in the wilderneſs in ſtrong holds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderneſs of Ziph: and Saul ſought

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aſide all perſonal animoſities, and uſeleſs controverſies, to unite together againſt their common enemies. We may alſo learn from this narration; that *needleſsly* to report the truth, to the diſadvantage of others, often ſprings from malice, and produces miſchief: that a partial ſtatement of facts is effectual bearing falſe witneſs: that a generous mind is unwilling to repeat the faults of others, even for his own vindication: that it is very painful to a feeling heart to occaſion evil to others, eſpecially by miſconduct: that unexpected bad conſequences may ariſe from our actions, which ſhould warn us to walk circumſpectly: and that we ſhould always be ready for death, which hurries men into eternity before they are aware; "For the wicked "is driven away in his wickedneſs, but the righteous hath "hope in his death!"

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 2. *Enquired of the Lord*, &c.] David was at this time inſpired as a penman of the holy ſcriptures; yet the Lord ſpake to him by his prophet, and then by the High Prieſt, for the honour of his own inſtitutions. David ſtill conſidered himſelf the protector of the land, and was ready to employ his men in any ſervice, that the Lord was pleaſed to appoint him to.

V. 7, 8. *God hath delivered*, &c.] Saul, forgetting all the proofs, which he had that the Lord was with David, conſidered this ſlight circumſtance as an evidence that God had delivered him into his hands: as if every fair appearance enſured ſucceſs; or any ſucceſs could ſanctify wickedneſs. "But God delivered him not into his hand," (v. 14.)

V. 9—13.] David perhaps thought that he could defend this fenced city againſt Saul, if the inhabitants would be firm in his intereſts. But as they would fear the ſame dreadful maſſacre, with which Nob had been deſtroyed, he could not confide in their aſſurances: he therefore enquired of God, and was informed that they would purchaſe peace by delivering him up, though perhaps they were not meditating ſuch ingratitude, and treachery. He therefore left the city, to ſecure himſelf from danger, and them from temptation and ſin.

him

him every day; but God delivered him not into his hand.

15 And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David *was* in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

16 And Jonathan Saul's son arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.

17 And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee: and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee: and that also Saul my father knoweth.

18 And they two made a covenant before the LORD. And David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

19 Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon?

20 Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand.

21 And Saul said, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD; for ye have compassion on me.

22 Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his haunt is, *and* who hath seen him there: for it is told me *that* he dealeth very subtilly.

23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself, and come ye again to me with the certainty, and I will go with you: and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah.

24 And they arose, and went to Ziph before Saul: but David and his men *were* in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon.

25 Saul also and his men went to seek *him*; and they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that*, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.

26 And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain: and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them.

27 But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come; for the Philistines have invaded the land.

28 Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines: therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth.

29 And David went up from thence, and dwelt in strong holds at En-gedi.

V. 16. *Strengthened his hand*, &c.] Jonathan would doubtless converse with him of the promise, the power, faithfulness, and love of God, and what he had heard, and experienced of them; which strengthened his wavering faith, encouraged his declining hope, and invigorated his dependance on, and submission to God.

V. 17. *I shall be next*, &c.] This was Jonathan's conjecture, grounded on David's friendship, not upon the word of God, who had appointed things otherwise: Jonathan's chearful resignation would be a sensible satisfaction to David's mind.

V. 21. *Blessed*, &c.] The Israelites in general were, it seems, averse to Saul's persecution of David, and backward to give him intelligence, or assistance: he therefore deemed himself an unfortunate man, whom none of them pitied; and these treacherous Ziphites were considered as his only friends (*Psalm* liv.) In the midst of his wickedness Saul affected the language of piety: but whether he deceived himself, or intended to mislead others, is not certain.

V. 26—28.] When Saul's army had nearly surrounded David's company, tidings were brought that the Philistines had invaded the land: and either their invasion was very formidable, or Saul feared the people's resentment, if the Philistines ravaged the country, whilst he was destroying their defender; However he retired, doubtless full of rage, and indignation, and David escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the Philistines, without intending it, being the instruments in God's hand of his preservation. On this account the place was called "the rock of divi-"sions," as separating betwixt David, and his bloody persecutor.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The prayers of true believers are a barrier against hostile invasions; but the persecution of them brings down the judgments of God upon guilty nations. However, no ill usage must prompt them to revenge themselves, or prevent them from doing good to their neighbours, as they have opportunity, and ability; even when they are sure to be recompensed by ingratitude, and exposed to further trouble. Thus Jesus lived, and died, and left us an example, that we should follow his steps. The more particularly we seek direction from God in fervent prayer, and

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CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1st. David sparing Saul's life, and cutting off his skirt, 1—7. *2d. His pathetic reasoning with Saul, and its effects upon him,* 8—22.

AND it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David *is* in the wilderness of En-gedi.

2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats.

3 And he came to the sheep-cotes by the way, where *was* a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.

4 And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

5 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt.

6 And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.

7 So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on *his* way.

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the more carefully we consult the sacred scriptures, the safer will be our path. In difficult circumstances we shall find the unbelief of our professed helpers, a very discouraging hindrance: but referring them to the plain precepts, and promises of God's word, is our most effectual method of answering their objections, and securing their assistance. No natural ties of honour, gratitude, or affection, can secure the heart under powerful temptations: nay, we none of us know how we should act, if assailed by the terrors of impending death, and left without the immediate supports of divine grace. He, who made the human heart, can alone estimate its deceitfulness: we ought not to confide absolutely in our own resolutions, or in the assurances of others: but should depend on the Lord to guide, and keep us; and if we meet with evil treatment, we need not wonder, and ought not to revile, or murmur. The kindness of those friends, whom he raises up for us, where we could least expect them, may well countervail the malice of our enemies, and the ingratitude, and fickleness of those, whom we have served. And if the converse of one friend can, at one interview, occasion comfort, and strength, to our hearts, what may not be expected from the continual supports, and daily visits, and powerful love of the sinner's Saviour, the believer's covenanted friend? And what will heaven be, where perfect, universal friendship reigns, without interruption, separation, or alloy? Let us then continually seek the renewed ratification of the covenant of grace, and cultivate the friendship of the Lord, and of his people. Our most rational, and pleasing expectations of another kind may be frustrated; all other unions must be dissolved: but here disappointment, and disunion can have no place for ever. The influence of wickedness in those, who fill exalted stations, widely, and fatally diffuses itself amongst their inferiors: many will pay court to them, by aiding their sinful purposes; nay some will pride themselves in resembling them in their vices: and they only will be treated as friends, who are in fact their most destructive enemies. Such distinguished persons have therefore many additional reasons for bridling their passions, and exercising themselves unto godliness; lest they should occasion the ruin of multitudes, and thus aggravate their own condemnation. The language of piety, separate from its substantial effects, can only amuse and deceive those, who hear, and those who use it. Malice is ever restless, and tormenting; and though disappointed, it still hopes for success: but numbers, power, rage and subtlety can never destroy those, whom God protects. His methods of preserving his people are unnumbered; and he sometimes leads them into the most imminent danger, to endear their deliverance, and to increase the torment of their persecuting foes. And he can employ one enemy to deliver us from another, without their ever intending it; or fill the hands of persecutors with other work, so that they are constrained to postpone their malicious purposes: they then are happy who live in simple dependance on, and obedience to him. But we must not expect much comfort in this evil world, which so ill uses the best of men, and which once crucified the Lord of Glory. We should therefore study to pass through it as pilgrims; and to leave it, as they, who are departing to a better, that is an heavenly country.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 3.] When Saul had repelled the Philistines, he resumed his pursuit of David, who had taken refuge in some uncultivated rocky part of the country, inhabited only by the wild goats. But when Saul supposed David, and his men to be at some distance, he retired into a cave, either for sleep, or some necessary occasion, whilst his men were absent: in this cave David and his men lay concealed, and Saul discovered them not; and thus, "God had delivered him into David's "hand," (c. xxiii. v. 7:) he was absolutely in his power, could have made no resistance; nor would the cause of his death have been known, until David had taken proper measures to secure himself, and to seize the vacant throne.

V. 4—7.] David's men urged *very plausibly*, that God had brought his enemy into his power, in order to fulfil his promises to him: yet they were greatly mistaken. The

8 David alſo aroſe afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, ſaying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David ſtooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himſelf.

9 And David ſaid to Saul, Wherefore heareſt thou men's words, ſaying, Behold, David ſeeketh thy hurt?

10 Behold, this day thine eyes have ſeen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and *ſome* bade *me* kill thee: but *mine eye* ſpared thee; and I ſaid, I will not put forth mine hand againſt my lord; for he *is* the LORD's anointed.

11 Moreover, my father, ſee, yea, ſee the ſkirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the ſkirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and ſee that *there is* neither evil nor tranſgreſſion in mine hand, and I have not ſinned againſt thee: yet thou hunteſt my ſoul to take it.

12 The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee; but mine hand ſhall not be upon thee.

13 As ſaith the proverb of the ancients, Wickedneſs proceedeth from the wicked; but mine hand ſhall not be upon thee.

14 After whom is the king of Iſrael come out? after whom doſt thou purſue? after a dead dog, after a flea?

15 The LORD therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee, and ſee, and plead my cauſe, and deliver me out of thine hand.

16 And it came to paſs, when David had made an end of ſpeaking theſe words unto Saul, that Saul ſaid, *Is* this thy voice, my ſon David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

17 And he ſaid to David, Thou *art* more righteous than I: for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.

18 And thou haſt ſhewed this day how that thou haſt dealt well with me: foraſmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not.

Lord really intended to give David an opportunity of exerciſing faith, patience, and genuine love for his enemy: of ſhewing the tendency of his religion, the tenderneſs of his conſcience, and the ſtedfaſtneſs of his loyalty; for the confutation of his accuſers, a rebuke to Saul, and an example to all, who read of it. He had a promiſe of the kingdom, but no command to ſlay the reigning king: Saul had been anointed by God's command, as well as placed over Iſrael in his providence: his rejection had indeed been denounced; and David had been greatly injured, but he was not appointed his own avenger: ſubjection to the powers, that are, is the believer's general rule of duty: David's peculiar circumſtances conſtrained him to defend himſelf, but not to ſlay Saul; whom he looked upon, and reverenced as his ſovereign, and the Lord's anointed; and not as *his* rival and perſecutor. He aimed to perform his preſent duty; and left his protection, and future advancement to the Lord; and he deemed it an atrocious offence to "ſtretch forth his hand" to hurt even ſo wicked a prince as Saul, and in defence of his own life. Nay, when he had privily cut off the ſkirt of Saul's robe, as a demonſtration of what he could have done, his heart ſmote him, leſt in this action he had failed of his due reſpect to the Lord's anointed: and he would no more allow his men to injure him, than he would do it himſelf!

V. 8—15.] Nothing can be imagined more reſpectful, pathetic, and forcible, than David's conduct, and addreſs on this occaſion. He ſhewed all reverence to Saul as his prince, bowing himſelf before him to the earth: he called him reſpectfully, "My lord the king," and in token of affection, "My father," (being his ſon-in-law;) he avoided all reproaches, or ſharp expoſtulations; he intimated that Saul's prejudice againſt him aroſe from ſlanderous reports; and reminded him, that he had been counſelled to take away his life, but would not do it. He adduced the moſt deciſive evidence, that he meant not to injure him; whilſt he aſſured him, that his hand ſhould never be upon him: he mildly expoſtulated with him on the injuſtice, and unreaſonableneſs of his conduct; and humbly repreſented himſelf as beneath the notice of ſo great a prince, who degraded himſelf in coming out "after a dead dog, a "ſingle flea," an imagined enemy, equally inſignificant. In illuſtration of the affair he quoted the proverb of the ancients, that "wickedneſs proceedeth from the wicked:" that men's actions manifeſt their diſpoſitions; and if he had been a wicked perſon, his conduct that day would have ſhewn it: or, that nothing but evil can be expected from, or happen to the wicked; wherefore he would have no part with them. At the ſame time he plainly, and repeatedly warned Saul, that the Lord would judge betwixt them, and both deliver him out of his hand, and avenge his cauſe upon him, if he perſiſted in his injurious treatment of him.

V. 16—22.] David's forcible words, and generous behaviour produced a temporary conviction in Saul's mind of his excellency, the righteouſneſs of his cauſe, and the certainty of his advancement; and conſequently that himſelf was culpable, and in a ruinous path. Probably he was in ſome meaſure convinced of theſe things at other times; but they now more deeply affected his mind; nor could he ſuppreſs his emotion, or refuſe to acknowledge his convictions: and inſtead of attempting to deſtroy David, as he intended, his malice was, as it were, arreſted; and he both ſpake well of him, foretold his eſtabliſhment on the throne, and begged of the Lord to reward him for ſparing his life; and allowed, that he ſhould not have behaved thus to him, if he had been in his power. In conſequence of this con-

19 For

19 For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore, the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day.

20 And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.

21 Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house.

22 And David sware unto Saul, and Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

viction Saul desired of David the security of an oath, that he would not, when king, extirpate his posterity: but it would have been better, if he had been more concerned about his soul, and less about his name, and his seed: and if he had endeavoured himself to reward him, or rather to do him justice. And his confession, that David was "more righteous than he," and that he rewarded him evil, without mentioning his sin against the Lord, were not the language of a true penitent. However David was willing to give him the required security, and to bind himself to his duty: but he did not require Saul to swear to him, that he would no more seek his life; knowing that he regarded not the obligation of an oath, and that it would only serve to increase his guilt: nor would he trust himself to him, being aware, how little such transient appearances can be depended on. When David gave up some of Saul's posterity to be put to death, (2 *Sam.* c. xxi. v. 1—14:) he acted by divine command, and therefore did not violate his oath to Saul; for it was not David, but the Lord who ordered that execution.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Wicked men are often interrupted in their evil courses by afflictions, but return to them, when the restraint is removed: as if they were delivered, that they might commit more sins: but the Lord restrains, and disappoints their malice; and, by bringing them into danger, gives them manifest proof of their folly and wickedness. We must be careful how we interpret God's providences; lest we mistake the opportunity, for the permission, to follow our own inclinations: and in doubtful cases we must not judge by appearance, or be determined by mere plausible arguments. An accurate knowledge of the divine law, an established judgment, and an holy temper of heart must combine in marking out the path of duty, in some important cases. But it is always safe to deny the suggestions of revenge, covetousness, ambition, impatience, or any other selfish principle: and it favours more of piety to interpret a providential dispensation as a trial of faith, and patience, and an exercise of self-denial; than to consider it as a license for self-indulgence: and a tender conscience will fear a plausible temptation, and avoid all approach to, and appearance of evil. We must perform all our relative duties from regard to the authority of God; and when others violate his law in their conduct towards us, we are not allowed to do the same towards them: and in waiting the performance of God's promises we must use only lawful means, and not wish to anticipate his time. Under the deepest injuries, we must not avenge ourselves, but after the example of David, and of David's lord, we must commit ourselves to him, that judgeth righteously. Magistracy is the ordinance of God, and confers dignity on those, who are advanced to it; who in all ordinary cases, and lawful things, are to be honoured, and obeyed: and if they abuse their trust, the Lord will execute vengeance upon them. If we are persecuted in one city, we may flee to another, and use necessary means of self-preservation: but we must not lift our hands, or adopt any offensive measures, against those, whom God in his providence hath placed over us; though like Saul, or Nero. That is, in our private capacity as Christian members of society: for the word of God determines nothing concerning the different kinds of government; or against the *constitutional rights* of legal *collective bodies* to defend their liberties against ambitious tyrants, and usurpers. We must not only avoid evil ourselves, but use our influence to restrain others, or we shall be chargeable before God for it. Mild language, and respectful behaviour, even to wicked, and injurious superiors, are ornamental to piety: and though we must not flatter any man with the hope of impunity in sin; yet we may put the most candid construction upon their actions; and satisfy ourselves with manifesting our own innocence, modestly complaining of hard usage, and with employing forcible arguments, and pathetic expostulations; without venting virulent invective, or exasperating reproaches. It is also more prudent to abate envy, by seeking to appear inconsiderable, than to excite it, by boasting of dignity, or excellence. Whilst we are thankful for being preserved from open crimes hitherto, we cannot bind ourselves too strongly, in dependance on the grace of God, to avoid them for the time to come: for our conduct should form a contrast to that of the enemies of true religion; that all men may perceive upon what principles we act, and be convinced that our cause is worthy of God. A proper consideration of the dignity of men's characters, in eminent stations, or of the excellency of their immortal souls, would tend to keep them from debasing themselves by such mean pursuits, as they are commonly engaged in. They who act conscientiously, will find opportunities of confuting their revilers, and of being manifested in the consciences of their most determined enemies: and at length the Lord will plead and avenge their cause. Flattering and slanderous favourites are the bane of princes: by hearing their words, they prefer their enemies, and persecute their friends; because the clamour of their passions silences the whisper of their consciences. But the most atrocious sinners have some seasons of remorse, when they perceive, and are affected with their situation: they are almost persuaded to renounce their sins; they are convinced of the superior excellency of true Christians, as acting from principles superior, and even contrary to those, which influence their own conduct: they cannot withhold from them a good word, and a good wish, and at once forbode their own misery, and their felicity. Yet they are not truly humbled, or

CHAP. XXV.

Contains, 1ſt. The death of Samuel, v. 1. 2d. Some account of Nabal, and Abigail his wife, v. 2, 3. 3d. David's petition to Nabal, his rude anſwer, and David's reſentment, v. 4—13—21, 22. 4th. Abigail meeting, and pacifying David, v. 14—20. 23—35. 5th. Nabal's death, and David's marriage with Abigail, v. 36—42. 6th. His taking Ahinoam alſo to wife, Michal having been given to another, v. 43, 44.

AND Samuel died; and all the Iſraelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his houſe at Ramah. And David aroſe, and went down to the wilderneſs of Paran.

2 And *there was* a man in Maon, whoſe poſſeſſions *were* in Carmel; and the man *was* very great, and he had three thouſand ſheep, and a thouſand goats: and he was ſhearing his ſheep in Carmel.

3 Now the name of the man *was* Nabal; and the name of his wife Abigail: and *ſhe was* a woman of good underſtanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man *was* churliſh and evil in his doings: and he *was* of the houſe of Caleb.

4 And David heard in the wilderneſs that Nabal did ſhear his ſheep.

5 And David ſent out ten young men, and David ſaid unto the young men, Get ye up to Carmel, and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name:

6 And thus ſhall ye ſay to him that liveth *in proſperity*, Peace *be* both to thee, and peace *be* to thine houſe, and peace *be* unto all that thou haſt.

7 And now I have heard that thou haſt ſhearers: now thy ſhepherds which were with us, we hurt them not, neither was there ought miſſing unto them, all the while they were in Carmel.

8 Aſk thy young men, and they will ſhew thee. Wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes: for we come in a good day: give, I pray thee, whatſoever cometh to thine hand unto thy ſervants, and to thy ſon David.

9 And when David's young men came, they ſpake to Nabal according to all thoſe

changed; ſin and the world reign in their hearts; they acknowledge that they are not ſo good, as ſome are, but will not confeſs how very vile they are: they are more careful about their credit, and intereſt in the world, than about the forgiveneſs of their ſins; and whilſt they confeſs their own injuſtice, and their obligations to others; they leave it to the Lord to repay them. They, who are *experimentally* acquainted with the grace of God, will place little dependance on ſuch appearances, eſpecially in thoſe who have long ſtifled their convictions, and ſinned againſt the light of their own conſciences: for they fear that theſe tranſient affections alſo will ſubſide, and leave the heart ſtill harder than before. Men ſhould therefore be afraid of rebelling againſt the light, and quenching the Spirit of God, when producing convictions in their conſciences; leſt he ſtrive no more with them, but leave them to be hardened by the deceitfulneſs of ſin. The grace of God will teach us to forgive and be kind to our enemies; but not to truſt thoſe, who have repeatedly deceived us: for malice often ſeems dead, when it is only dormant, and will ere long revive with double force. Yet, whether the Lord fill, or bind men's hands; or awe, and affect their hearts, ſo that they loſe for a ſeaſon their inclination to hurt us; the deliverance is from him, an evidence of his love, and an earneſt of our final ſalvation.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV.] V. 1. *Samuel died*, &c.] This is ſuppoſed to have been within two years of the death of Saul, who permitted Samuel to cloſe his days in peace: to the end of his life he doubtleſs preſided over the ſeminary of prophets, and, by his prayers, inſtructions and example, was very uſeful in private, though he intermeddled not in public buſineſs. When he died, the people were very ſenſible of their loſs, and of their ſin, and folly in rejecting him, and made general lamentations for him. Upon this event David removed into the wilderneſs of Paran, in part of which Iſrael wandered, before they entered Canaan; perhaps concluding that Saul's malice would be now more unreſtrained than ever.

V. 2. *Carmel.*] Not mount Carmel in the north of Canaan, (1 *Kings* c. xviii. v. 19:) but another place of the ſame name towards the ſouth.

V. 6. *That liveth*, &c.] The words "in proſperity," are not in the original, though evidently implied. David ſeems to have ſpoken unadviſedly, in calling a wicked man living in luxury, one "that liveth," as if his own indigence ſcarce deſerved the name of life. For Nabal "living in pleaſure was dead in ſin;" and David, though deſtitute, was alive to God.

V. 8. *Aſk*, &c.] David not only reſtrained his men from moleſting Nabal's flocks, but protected them againſt the depredations of their invaders. He might therefore have demanded a reward for his ſervices: but he was rather deſirous of becoming his ſupplicant, for whatever came to hand, in that ſeaſon of feſtivity; as he was in great diſtreſs, and unwilling to ſubſiſt by plunder.

words in the name of David, and ceaſed.

10 And Nabal anſwered David's ſervants, and ſaid, Who *is* David? and who *is* the ſon of Jeſſe? There be many ſervants now a days that break away every man from his maſter.

11 Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh that I have killed for my ſhearers, and give *it* unto men whom I know not whence they *be?*

12 So David's young men turned their way, and went again, and came and told him all thoſe ſayings.

13 And David ſaid unto his men, Gird ye on every man his ſword. And they girded on every man his ſword; and David alſo girded on his ſword: and there went up after David about four hundred men; and two hundred abode by the ſtuff.

14 But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, ſaying, Behold, David ſent meſſengers out of the wilderneſs to ſalute our maſter; and he railed on them.

15 But the men *were* very good unto us, and we were not hurt, neither miſſed we any thing, as long as we were converſant with them, when we were in the fields:

16 They were a wall unto us both by night and day, all the while we were with them keeping tbe ſheep.

17 Now therefore know and conſider what thou wilt do; for evil is determined againſt our maſter, and againſt all his houſhold: for he *is ſuch* a ſon of Belial, that *a man* cannot ſpeak to him.

18 Then Abigail made haſte, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five ſheep ready dreſſed, and five meaſures of parched *corn*, and an hundred cluſters of raiſins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid *them* on aſſes.

19 And ſhe ſaid unto her ſervants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But ſhe told not her huſband Nabal:

20 And it was *ſo*, *as* ſhe rode on the aſs, that ſhe came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down againſt her; and ſhe met them.

21 Now David had ſaid, Surely in vain have I kept all that this *fellow* hath in the wilderneſs, ſo that nothing was miſſed of all that *pertained* unto him: and he hath requited me evil for good.

22 So and more alſo do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him, by the morning light, any that piſſeth againſt the wall.

23 And when Abigail ſaw David, ſhe haſted, and lighted off the aſs, and fell before David

V. 10. *Who is David?* &c.] Nabal well knew that David had ſlain Goliath, and often ſmitten the Philiſtines: that he was a man of eminent valour, and capacity, and of unblemiſhed reputation: that he was the ſon-in-law of Saul, and unjuſtly perſecuted: and that in his preſent neceſſity, he behaved in an unexceptionable manner. But to vindicate his ſelfiſh refuſal, he abuſed him as one of the many run-away ſlaves, who then deſerted their maſter's ſervice; and thus he fooliſhly rendered his anſwer as exaſperating, as he knew how!

V. 13. *And David ſaid*, &c.] David had been upon his guard againſt anger, and revenge, when ill uſed by Saul: but he did not expect ſuch language, and treatment from Nabal; and therefore he was off his guard, and in great indignation determined to avenge himſelf. It was alſo more humiliating, to be inſulted by ſuch a man as Nabal, than to be perſecuted by the king.

V. 17. *For evil is determined*, &c.] Whether this ſervant had got any intelligence of David's determination, or only formed a ſhrewd conjecture from circumſtances, doth not appear. But anxious for his own ſafety, as well as for that of the family, he dared not to mention his apprehenſions to Nabal, who would probably have abuſed him for his impertinence: and therefore he applied to Abigail, complaining that his maſter was ſuch a ſon of Belial, that a man could "not ſpeak unto him:" words not proper to have been uſed by a ſervant concerning his maſter, if the urgency of the caſe had not required them.

V. 19. *She told not*, &c.] Abigail was about to diſpoſe largely of Nabal's property without his conſent; but it was for the preſervation of him and his family: yet ſhe knew that his obſtinacy would ruin them all, if he were made acquainted with her deſign; the cauſe therefore fully juſtified her conduct.

V. 21, 22.] David, in his ſober judgment, knew better, than to repent of his good deeds, or to think them done in vain, becauſe they were requited with ingratitude: his determination to deſtroy every male of Nabal's family, for his fault, was unjuſt, and cruel in the extreme, and more like Saul, than himſelf: and his confirming this with a kind of oath, (though he turned off the imprecation from himſelf unto his enemies,) was very raſh, and ſavoured of profaneneſs. Had he been permitted to have executed his purpoſe of revenge, it would have occaſioned him much bitter reflection, greatly tarniſhed his character, and given his enemies a vaſt advantage againſt him.

V. 23—31.] The conduct, and addreſs of Abigail on

on her face, and bowed herſelf to the ground,

24 And fell at his feet, and ſaid, Upon me, my lord, *upon* me *let this* iniquity *be:* and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, ſpeak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid.

25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, *even* Nabal: for as his name *is*, ſo *is* he; Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him: but I thine handmaid ſaw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didſt ſend.

26 Now therefore, my lord, *as* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy ſoul liveth, ſeeing the LORD hath withholden thee from coming to *ſhed* blood, and from avenging thyſelf with thine own hand, now let thine enemies, and they that ſeek evil to my lord, be as Nabal.

27 And now this bleſſing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord.

28 I pray thee, forgive the treſpaſs of thine handmaid: for the LORD will certainly make my lord a ſure houſe; becauſe my lord fighteth the battles of the LORD, and evil hath not been found in thee *all* thy days.

29 Yet a man is riſen to purſue thee, and to ſeek thy ſoul: but the ſoul of my lord ſhall be bound in the bundle of life with the LORD thy God; and the ſouls of thine enemies, them ſhall he ſling out, *as out* of the middle of a ſling.

30 And it ſhall come to paſs, when the LORD ſhall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath ſpoken concerning thee, and ſhall have appointed thee ruler over Iſrael;

31 That this ſhall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou haſt ſhed blood cauſeleſs, or that my lord hath avenged himſelf: but when the LORD ſhall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.

32 And David ſaid to Abigail, Bleſſed *be* the LORD God of Iſrael, which ſent thee this day to meet me:

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this emergency are worthy of admiration. Nabal had inſulted David, as a run-away ſlave: in order to pacify him, Abigail ſhewed him the reverence due to a ſuperior, and to her ſovereign, in the purpoſe of God: though he was evidently in an unbecoming heat, ſhe took no notice of it; but only intreated him, to allow her, as if ſhe were the criminal, to plead her cauſe, and to give her a candid hearing. She could not palliate her huſband's conduct, and the caſe did not allow her to veil his infirmities: but ſhe attempted to convert his well-known raſhneſs, and imprudence, (which accorded to his name, that ſignifies folly,) into an argument with David, why he ſhould lay aſide his reſentment: for Nabal meant no peculiar affront to him, it was his fooliſh way with every body; and it was beneath a perſon of David's character, and eminence, to take any notice of the rudeneſs of ſuch a man: but had ſhe been preſent his young men ſhould have had better treatment. She was confident that the Lord had ſent her to keep his ſervant David "from avenging himſelf with "his own hand," which ſhe knew he could not calmly think of without horrour: and ſhe ſolemnly deſired, that as ſure, as the Lord lived, and as David's ſoul lived, all that ſought evil to him, might be as weak, and infatuated in their counſels, as Nabal: and then he would have nothing to fear from them; for they would be ſure to ruin themſelves. The liberal preſent, (which ſhe called a bleſſing, being an expreſſion of her good-will to him,) ſhe repreſented as unworthy of his notice; but begged that it might be given to his followers. She profeſſed her firm belief that he, and his family, would be eſtabliſhed in the kingdom: ſhe made honourable mention of his great ſervices to Iſrael, and of his unblameable conduct; and adverted to the injuſtice of Saul's perſecution, whom in honour of his authority, ſhe did not mention. She declared her aſſurance of David's preſervation by a remarkable expreſſion, "that his ſoul ſhould be bound up in the bundle "of life with the Lord his God:" that is, that he was irreverſibly appointed unto the kingdom, and in conſequence was numbered with thoſe, whoſe lives are upheld, and protected againſt all poſſible dangers, by the almighty power of the everlaſting God: and that his ſoul alſo was numbered amongſt thoſe, who were "appointed unto "ſalvation," and would in the ſame manner be preſerved unto eternal life: whilſt his enemies would be driven into deſtruction, as a ſtone is violently thrown from a ſling. In pleading for forgiveneſs ſhe intimated that it would be more honourable to his character, and comfortable to his mind, when the Lord's promiſes were performed, to reflect, that he had maſtered his anger; than that he had avenged himſelf, and ſhed blood without cauſe: and ſhe concluded with begging of him to think of her, and what ſhe had ſaid, when theſe things were come to paſs. Nothing ſeems to have been omitted in this addreſs, which ſuited the occaſion, nothing added unſuitably; all was expreſſed in the moſt perſuaſive manner: and manifeſts Abigail to have been a woman of ſtrong faith, and great piety, as well as poſſeſſed of ſingular prudence and ingenuity, though married to ſo worthleſs a man.

V. 32. *And David ſaid*, &c.] Abigail's ſpeech brought David to view the matter in it's true light, to bleſs God for ſending her, to pray for her, and to thank her for

I.SAMUEL CH.XXV. VE.XXIV.

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33 And bleſſed *be* thy advice, and bleſſed *be* thou, which haſt kept me this day from coming to *ſhed* blood, and from avenging myſelf with mine own hand.

34 For in very deed, *as* the LORD God of Iſrael liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadſt haſted and come to meet me, ſurely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that piſſeth againſt the wall.

35 So David received of her hand *that* which ſhe had brought him, and ſaid unto her, Go up in peace to thine houſe; ſee, I have hearkened to thy voice, and have accepted thy perſon.

36 And Abigail came to Nabal; and, behold, he held a feaſt in his houſe like the feaſt of a king; and Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunken: wherefore ſhe told him nothing, leſs or more, until the morning light.

37 But it came to paſs in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal, and his wife had told him theſe things, that his heart died within him, and he became *as* a ſtone.

38 And it came to paſs about ten days *after*, that the LORD ſmote Nabal, that he died.

39 And when David heard that Nabal was dead, he ſaid, Bleſſed *be* the LORD, that hath pleaded the cauſe of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and hath kept his ſervant from evil: for the LORD hath returned the wickedneſs of Nabal upon his own head. And David ſent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife.

40 And when the ſervants of David were come to Abigail, to Carmel, they ſpake unto her, ſaying, David ſent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife.

41 And ſhe aroſe, and bowed herſelf on *her* face to the earth, and ſaid, Behold, *let* thine handmaid *be* a ſervant to waſh the feet of the ſervants of my lord.

42 And Abigail haſted, and aroſe, and rode upon an aſs, with five damſels of her's that went after her; and ſhe went after the meſſengers of David, and became his wife.

43 David alſo took Ahinoam of Jezreel; and they were alſo both of them his wives.

44 But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the ſon of Laiſh, which *was* of Gallim.

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coming ſo ſpeedily with ſuch ſeaſonable advice, whereby much miſchief, and guilt had been prevented.

V. 34. *Any that*, &c.] This phraſe, though literally tranſlated, being in common uſe amongſt the Iſraelites, had not with them that indelicacy in it that it hath amongſt us, and may in every place, with the utmoſt propriety, be read "every male." Though David only intended the death of the men; yet if Abigail, and the other women eſcaped the maſſacre, they muſt have been greatly injured; therefore the Lord had kept "him back from "hurting her."

V. 37. *His heart died*, &c.] When Nabal heard of the imminent danger, to which his own folly had expoſed him, at the very time, when he was ſtupified with drunkenneſs, and ſurrounded with thoſe, whom he had tempted to the ſame exceſs, his terror, and vexation were ſo great, that they ſunk his ſpirits; and in ten days, by the juſt judgment of God, he ended his life, and left his wealth to others. It ſeems his proviſions were ſo large, his attendants ſo numerous, and his mind ſo diſſipated, that he did not miſs Abigail, or her preſent to David; or the ſervants, who went with her.

V. 39. *Bleſſed be the Lord*, &c.] David bleſſed God that he had been kept from avenging himſelf; and he conſidered the death of Nabal, as a proof of God's ſpecial regard to him, in pleading his cauſe againſt his enemies; as an earneſt of further favours of the ſame kind; and as ſuited to awe others from injuring him.

V. 42. *Became his wife.*] Abigail firmly believed that David would be king over Iſrael, and greatly eſteemed his pious and excellent character: ſhe therefore deemed, the propoſal honourable, and advantageous, notwithſtanding his preſent difficulties; and with great humility, and doubtleſs according to the *decorum* of thoſe times, acceded thereto; being willing to ſhare his trials, and to ſubmit to any ſervices for his ſake.

V. 43, 44.] Probably David had before this married Ahinoam, and as ſoon as Michal was married to Phalti. In this he was carried away with the cuſtom of the times, and was connived at in having more than one wife.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The moſt honoured ſervants of God have the meaſure, and period of their uſefulneſs appointed them: but they are happy, though rejected of men, who perſevere unto the end, walking with God, and living conſiſtent with their profeſſion, even in a retired ſituation. Their unblemiſhed characters, their good examples, and their teſtimony to the truth, will produce ſalutary effects; and their unceaſing prayers will be anſwered in behalf of numbers, after they are removed by death. And indeed whole nations have cauſe to lament when faithful inſtructors, holy men of

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Contains, 1ſt. Saul informed about David, and marching againſt him, 1—3. *2d. David, and Abiſhai entering Saul's camp, whilſt he was aſleep, ſparing his life, and taking away his ſpear, &c, from his bolſter,* 4—12. *3d. David's reaſonings, and Saul's convictions on this occaſion,* 13—25.

AND the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, ſaying, Doth not David hide

God, and public interceſſors are taken away. But Jeſus our prophet, prieſt, interceſſor, and judge, ever liveth to take care of thoſe, who truſt in him. Riches make men look great in their own eyes, and in thoſe of other worldly people. But they are often laviſhed on thoſe, who have neither wiſdom, nor grace; and who ſo abuſe them, as to ruin themſelves, and to render many others wretched, or wicked. May we be great in the ſight of the Lord, and not in the opinion of the world! To be deſcended from honourable anceſtors forms one branch of man's little, and fooliſh vanity: yet it frequently is a moſt ſevere reproach to the character, and conduct of many of thoſe, who value themſelves upon it. Perſons of virtue, good ſenſe, and amiable qualifications are often married, for the ſake of wealth, to ſuch unſuitable perſons, as render their whole lives wretched, and expoſed to manifold temptations, as well as diſtreſſes. Let parents, and young perſons guard againſt this fatal miſtake. But prudent and pious relations are an invaluable treaſure, and often retard the ruin of thoſe, who have not ſenſe to know their worth. They, whom the Lord will moſt honour, are often very deſtitute for a ſeaſon; and, as they will not have recourſe to fraud, or violence, they are ſometimes conſtrained to become ſupplicants to ungodly perſons. On ſuch occaſions it behoves them to ſpeak with modeſty of themſelves, and with decent reſpect to thoſe, whoſe aſſiſtance they requeſt, wiſhing the continuance, increaſe, or acceſſion of every bleſſing: but they muſt be careful, or they will verge towards flattery, and paſs ſuch compliments, as conſiſt not with truth, and tend to confirm evil men in their favourable opinion of themſelves, and their ſtate: this they ought by no means to do, though they be cenſured for rudeneſs by neglecting it. Wordly men deem their riches *their own*; but God declares they *are another's*, (*Luke* c. xvi. v. 12,) and that they muſt ſhortly give an account of their ſtewardſhip. When they are determined not to relieve the neceſſitous, they often excuſe themſelves by railing on them, by charging the vices of ſome poor perſons upon them all; and by repreſenting alms-giving as an encouragement to idleneſs, impertinence, and extravagance: nor are the moſt excellent characters any defence againſt ſuch undiſtinguiſhing invectives, which betray the pride, ignorance, malice, and avarice of the heart, from which they proceed. In imitation of the example of the Lord, we are commanded to do good to the evil, and ungrateful; and wretched ſhould we all be, if he dealt with us by ſuch rules, as we are diſpoſed to adopt, in our behaviour to our poor brethren. Whilſt we enjoy the abundance, which God hath given us, we ſhould be liberal to the indigent: but many will laviſh as much upon one *unneceſſary*, *proud*, and *luxurious* feaſt, or upon the exceſſive indulgence of their own appetites, or vanity; as would be deemed an exorbitant ſum to be expended in acts of charity: (*Luke* c. xiv. v. 12—14.) Silence is generally our wiſdom, when aſſaulted by provoking language, or we ſhall be betrayed into folly and ſin: and when the meſſengers of the Son of David meet with abuſe for his ſake, they muſt hold their peace, and report it to their Lord, who will ſurely, and juſtly reſent it. How changeable are the beſt of men! how contrary their conduct in one inſtance, from what might have been expected from another! a ſmall temptation frequently prevails over them, after a greater hath been reſiſted: for when they are off their guard, they are driven away as a thing rolling before the whirlwind. Paſſionate reſolutions, formed without time for reflection, or prayer, are the reſult of ſatan's counſel; and we are at thoſe times capable of imitating the worſt actions of the worſt of men, and of diſregarding all conſequences to our own character, and peace, to the church of God, or to thoſe, who rejoice in being thus emboldened in their impiety! Many ſervants have more wiſdom and grace, than their maſters, and could ſuggeſt to them uſeful hints: but they, who are ſuch ſons of Belial, that a man cannot ſpeak to them, will loſe this advantage, and will not permit any one to extricate them from the dangers, to which their own imprudence expoſes them. General rules of ſubmiſſion to ſuperior relations muſt be interpreted according to circumſtances. In great emergencies the form may be diſpenſed with; and the preſervation of a man's life, or fortune will juſtify a failure in exterior indications of reſpect. It is honourable when others commend thoſe ſervices, of which we ſay nothing: and when it appears, that we had a right to *demand* more, than we *petitioned* for. In urgent caſes diſpatch is as requiſite, as prudence: leſſer intereſts are always to be ſacrificed to preſerve the greater: our property to preſerve our lives; our very lives, for the ſalvation of our ſouls. Reſpect and liberal kindneſs are proper means of averting wrath: but with wiſe, and godly men, right words are moſt forcible. When, in mild language, matters are fairly ſtated, and proper topics are adduced, their judgments, affections, and conſciences are appealed to; and they cannot but be overcome thereby, if they can be prevailed upon to liſten to it. It is degrading to a wiſe man to reſent the affronts of thoſe, who are notoriouſly fooliſh, and abuſive: they act in character, ſo ſhould we: and bleſs God that our enemies are of ſuch a ſtamp: their unmerited reproaches cannot injure our character; nay their unprovoked enmity does us credit. Every ſervant of God ſhould duly eſtimate his own ſituation; what his obligations, profeſſions, and proſpects are; what his ſtation in the church; what his former conduct, and preſent character: that he may with great circumſpection avoid every inconſiſtent word, and action: for according to theſe things, will men's expectations from, and cenſures of us be. And under every temptation we ſhould conſider how the matter will afterwards appear. Patience and forgiveneſs of injuries will never occaſion uneaſy reflections; but revenge will in every caſe be recollected with grief of heart: and if we could but liſten to our prudent and faith-

himſelf

himſelf in the hill of Hachilah, *which is* before Jeſhimon?

2 Then Saul aroſe, and went down to the wilderneſs of Ziph, having three thouſand choſen men of Iſrael with him, to ſeek David in the wilderneſs of Ziph.

3 And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* before Jeſhimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderneſs, and he ſaw that Saul came after him into the wilderneſs.

4 David therefore ſent out ſpies, and underſtood that Saul was come in very deed.

5 And David aroſe, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the ſon of Ner, the captain of his hoſt: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people pitched round about him.

6 Then anſwered David and ſaid to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah, brother to Joab, ſaying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abiſhai ſaid, I will go down with thee.

7 So David and Abiſhai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay ſleeping within the trench, and his ſpear ſtuck in the ground at his bolſter: but Abner and the people lay round about him.

8 Then ſaid Abiſhai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me ſmite him, I pray thee, with the ſpear, even to the earth at once, and I will not *ſmite* him the ſecond time.

9 And David ſaid to Abiſhai, Deſtroy him not: for who can ſtretch forth his hand againſt the LORD's anointed, and be guiltleſs?

10 David ſaid furthermore, *As* the LORD liveth, the LORD ſhall ſmite him; or his day

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ful counſellors at preſent, with the ſame candour, that we ſhall reflect upon their advice in future, we ſhould avoid much ſorrow, and many offences. Happy is the true believer: "his ſoul is bound up in the bundle of life "with the Lord his God! In the midſt of dangers, and enemies, his natural life is perfectly ſafe, till the appointed hour: the life of his ſoul is hid with Chriſt in God; and becauſe the Saviour liveth, he ſhall live alſo; whilſt all his foes ſhall be driven to deſtruction. Our gratitude to God ſhould precede, but not exclude our gratitude to the inſtruments of his goodneſs: and we have peculiar cauſe to be thankful, when we have been kept back from thoſe ſins, which we were ready to commit: and real penitents will not be backward to take ſhame to themſelves, and to retract their raſh expreſſions; and they will tremble to reflect what the conſequences would have been, had they been left to themſelves. God's people need not avenge their own cauſe, for the Lord will ſurely do it for them; and ſometimes more awfully, than they could have wiſhed: yet when his purpoſe is known, they will adore his juſtice, and bleſs him for his kindneſs to them. Whilſt divine vengeance hovers over the heads of ſinners, they are often given up to fooliſh mirth, and brutiſh intoxication. If the proſpect of a violent death be ſo terrifying; how ſhould ſinners tremble at the thoughts of eternal damnation, and flee without delay from the wrath to come! Worldly ſorrow, mortified pride, and an affrighted conſcience ſometimes ſuffice to end the ſenſualiſt's joys, and ſeparate the covetous man from all his wealth: but whatever be the weapon, the Lord ſmites men with death, when it pleaſes him. May we chooſe that good part, which ſhall never be taken from us! Modeſty, prudence, and humility are ordinary preparations to advancement: and a wiſe man will always know the value of a pious and virtuous wife. But ſome deviations from the divine law, and ſome alloy to our comforts, muſt be expected in every character, and every ſituation, on this ſide heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI.] V. 1. *And the Ziphites*, &c.] It ſeems that Saul had dropped the purſuit of David, till excited to it again by the officious information of the Ziphites, who perhaps deſpaired of David's pardon for their former malice and perfidy. Upon which Saul's envy, ambition, and malice revived; like Pharaoh he again hardened his heart and determined to make one more effort to deſtroy his rival.

V. 3. *Abode*, &c.] David neither fled, nor went forth to meet Saul, but kept his poſt, till he ſaw how matters were. Had a much greater army of uncircumciſed Philiſtines marched againſt him, he would have faced them, with his ſmall company, and truſted the Lord for the event: but he would not fight againſt the Lord's anointed.

V. 6. *And Abiſhai ſaid*, &c.] Probably David was determined to this meaſure by a divine impulſe, that all Iſrael might be convinced that he was vilely ſlandered by his enemies. Having therefore in the day time made proper obſervations, he propoſed the matter to two of his attendants: but Ahimelech, who was a Hittite, had not that ſtrength of faith in the God of Iſrael, which ſuch a bold adventure required; and Abiſhai only went with David.

V. 10. *The Lord ſhall*, &c.] As he had ſmitten Nabal. It hath been ſaid that David ſpared Saul, the Lord's anointed, out of policy, that he might not teach the people an evil leſſon againſt himſelf. But it is evident, that he acted from higher motives: the Lord forbad it, and "no "man could ſtretch forth his hand againſt the Lord's "anointed, and be guiltleſs." Satisfied that the Lord would fulfil his promiſe, he determined to wait his time, though he ſeemed awfully convinced that Saul would die impenitent.

ſhall come to die; or he ſhall deſcend into battle, and periſh.

11 The LORD forbid that I ſhould ſtretch forth mine hand againſt the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the ſpear that *is* at his bolſter, and the cruſe of water, and let us go.

12 So David took the ſpear and the cruſe of water from Saul's bolſter; and they gat them away, and no man ſaw *it*, nor knew *it*, neither awaked: for they *were* all aſleep; becauſe a deep ſleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.

13 Then David went over to the other ſide, and ſtood on the top of an hill afar off; a great ſpace *being* betwen them:

14 And David cried to the people, and to Abner the ſon of Ner, ſaying, Anſwereſt thou not, Abner? Then Abner anſwered and ſaid, Who *art* thou *that* crieſt to the king?

15 And David ſaid to Abner, *Art* not thou a *valiant* man? and who *is* like to thee in Iſrael? wherefore then haſt thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to deſtroy the king thy lord.

16 This thing *is* not good that thou haſt done. *As* the LORD liveth ye *are* worthy to die, becauſe ye have not kept your maſter, the LORD's anointed. And now ſee where the king's ſpear *is*, and the cruſe of water that *was* at his bolſter.

17 And Saul knew David's voice, and ſaid, *Is* this thy voice, my ſon David? And David ſaid, *It is* my voice, my lord, O king.

18 And he ſaid, Wherefore doth my lord thus purſue after his ſervant? for what have I done? or what evil *is* in mine hand?

19 Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his ſervant. If the LORD have ſtirred thee up againſt me, let him accept an offering: but if *they be* the children of men, curſed *be* they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, ſaying, Go, ſerve other gods.

20 Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD; for the king of Iſrael is come out to ſeek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.

21 Then ſaid Saul, I have ſinned: return, my ſon David: for I will no more do thee harm, becauſe my ſoul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.

22 And David anſwered and ſaid, Behold the king's ſpear; and let one of the young men come over and fetch it.

23 The LORD render to every man his righteouſneſs and his faithfulneſs: for the LORD delivered thee into *my* hand to day, but I would not ſtretch forth mine hand againſt the LORD's anointed.

24 And, behold, as thy life was much ſet

V. 16. *Ye are worthy*, &c.] Abner and his ſoldiers, by neglecting to guard Saul, when he ſlept, had expoſed his life, and merited to be treated as his enemies, though he confided in them, as his friends: for though their *ſound* ſleep was ſupernatural; yet there might be a neglect of placing centinels, ariſing from contempt of David's ſmall company: and yet Saul deemed David his enemy; who had ſpared and protected his life, in the moſt friendly manner. This he would have Saul, and all his men to take notice of; that they might be aſhamed of their enterpriſe.

V. 19. *If the Lord*, &c.] David had not offended Saul, but he was a ſinner againſt the Lord: and if he ſhould be convinced that his ſufferings aroſe from that cauſe; he would repent, and offer a ſin-offering, that his ſin being pardoned, his trials might ceaſe: but if it appeared that Saul was inſtigated to this perſecution by the evil ſpirit, which in judgment was permitted to trouble him, he adviſed him to the ſame meaſures. But if wicked men influenced him to it, they might expect ſevere vengeance from God, for thus baniſhing him from the worſhip of Jehovah; and tempting him to turn idolater. It is obſervable that David carefully avoids mentioning Saul's own envy, and malice, which were the real cauſes of his conduct: for he meant not to irritate, but to mollify him.

V. 20. *Let not my*, &c.] Though David was ſo inconſiderable a perſon, according to his modeſt repreſentation of himſelf: yet if his blood were ſhed, the Lord would certainly require it.

V. 21—25.] (*Notes*, &c. c. 24.) This ſecond inſtance of David's fidelity ſeems to have affected Saul more than the former. He confeſſed his guilt and folly in much ſtronger terms, and even invited him to return to court; and he repeated his good words, and wiſhes, and his perſuaſion that he would prevail, and be very eminent. But there were no evidences of true repentance towards God; and David plainly intimated that he would not truſt his promiſes, and expected no recompence from him: but that he referred his cauſe to the Lord, who would protect, deliver, and do him juſtice. Thus they parted to meet no more.

by this day in mine eyes, ſo let my life be much ſet by in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.

25 Then Saul ſaid to David, Bleſſed *be* thou, my ſon David: thou ſhalt both do great *things*, and alſo ſhalt ſtill prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

CHAP. XXVII.

Contains, 1ſt. David retiring to Gath, favoured by the king, and obtaining Ziklag, 1—7. *2d. His expedition againſt the Geſhurites, &c, and his equivocating anſwer to Achiſh,* 1—12.

AND David ſaid in his heart, I ſhall now periſh one day by the hand of Saul: *there is* nothing better for me than that I ſhould ſpeedily eſcape into the land of the Philiſtines; and Saul ſhall deſpair of me, to ſeek me any more in any coaſt of Iſrael: ſo ſhall I eſcape out of his hand.

2 And David aroſe, and he paſſed over with the ſix hundred men that *were* with him unto Achiſh, the ſon of Maoch, king of Gath.

3 And David dwelt with Achiſh at Gath, he and his men, every man with his houſhold, *even* David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreeliteſs, and Abigail the Carmeliteſs, Nabal's wife.

4 And it was told Saul that David was fled

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

One crime generally proves a temptation to another; and if ſin be not dethroned by ſanctifying grace, it will recover its ſtrength, when a ſuitable temptation is preſented: and ſatan, and his agents will ſuggeſt ſuch thoughts as may re-kindle the ſmothered flame: thus after deep convictions, and temporary reformations, men return to their ſins, and become worſe than ever. But the ſervants of God ought to perſevere in a blameleſs conduct, however injured; that it may appear that they act from a ſettled purpoſe of doing good for the Lord's ſake: and in ſome caſes, they will need the boldneſs of the lion, the wiſdom of the ſerpent, and the harmleſſneſs of the dove, in order to avoid evil, and the appearance of evil; and yet to uſe proper means of eſcaping the malice of their enemies. Confidence in God fortifies the ſoul againſt temptations to ſeek relief from trouble by ſin: and it requires as much reſolution to reſtrain the exceſſes of mis-judging zealous friends, as to ſtand firm againſt the rage of incenſed enemies. If we would have outward bleſſings with comfort, and reputation, we muſt wait for them in the path of duty: and if wicked men obſtruct the Lord's purpoſes, he can eaſily remove them, without needing our help. We are expoſed to ſo many dangers, whenever we cloſe our eyes, that we ſhould previouſly examine our ſtate, whether we are ready for death; and then commit ourſelves to his keeping, who neither ſlumbereth nor ſleepeth. Otherwiſe our needful ſleep may confine us, as in a priſon, till ſome murderer, or awful calamity comes upon us, with unexpected deſtruction. The ſuppoſed friends of ungodly men are either incapable of ſerving them, or will treacherouſly neglect, and expoſe them. And the pious people whom they hate and revile, are their only friends, as they perſevere in their prayers for, and kindneſs to them. Good works give energy to perſuaſive words: and whether we plead our own cauſe, or the cauſe of God, an evident integrity, and conſiſtency of conduct will go further in producing conviction, than the utmoſt powers of eloquence: for want of *this confirmation*, much ſound reaſoning, and pathetic exhortation, paſs for unmeaning declamation, and nobody is convinced by them. Man's tranſgreſſions againſt God are the cauſe of their enmities againſt each other; and no reconciliation amongſt men hath an immoveable baſis, which is not founded in, and cemented by peace with God through Jeſus Chriſt. They, who drive us from our duty, or tempt us to ſin, are our worſt enemies: and perſecutors, beſides their murder of men's bodies, muſt give a dreadful account of the murder of their ſouls, whom they have driven to apoſtacy, or to do violence to their own conſciences, by the terrors of impriſonment, or death. In ſinning againſt God men "play the fool exceedingly:" this the believer perceives, repents of, obtains a pardon, and acts more wiſely: many others obtain a tranſient view of theſe mortifying truths, who hate, and cloſe their eyes againſt the light. But eternity will fully diſcover their exceeding fooliſhneſs, and they will never ceaſe to reflect upon their own madneſs, in ſtifling their convictions, and holding faſt their iniquities. No good words, or fair profeſſions entitle thoſe to any confidence, who have long ſinned againſt the light: yet the confeſſions of obſtinate ſinners may be uſeful to us, in ſatisfying us that we are in the right way, and ſhall prevail; and to encourage us to perſevere, expecting our recompence from the Lord alone.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII.] V. 1. *I ſhall*, &c.] Whilſt David reflected upon the inveterate malice of Saul, and the neglect or treachery of his countrymen; he ſeems to have forgot his anointing, the promiſe, and command of God, and the manifold deliverances, which he had experienced; and was ready to deſpair of ſafety in the land of Judah: and from this unbelief aroſe many ſins, and temptations. Having perhaps received ſome intimation from Achiſh, that he would protect him, he went thither without enquiring of the Lord: but this was the way to alienate the affections of the Iſraelites, and to give credit to the ſlanders of his accuſers: he thus run himſelf, and his men into temptations to idolatry; and he laid himſelf under obligations to thoſe, whom he could never favour, without betraying the cauſe of God.

V. 3. *Dwelt with*, &c.] Achiſh probably hoped that he ſhould be able to fix David in his intereſts, and employ him againſt the Iſraelites: or that he ſhould thus ſecure an advantageous alliance with him, if ever he came to be king of Iſrael.

V. 4. *It was told Saul*, &c.] Saul does not appear to have been cured of his malice, but the object of it was re-

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to Gath: and he ſought no more again for him.

5 And David ſaid unto Achiſh, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in ſome town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why ſhould thy ſervant dwell in the royal city with thee?

6 Then Achiſh gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day.

7 And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philiſtines was a full year and four months.

8 And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geſhurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for thoſe *nations were* of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goeſt to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt.

9 And David ſmote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the ſheep, and the oxen, and the aſſes, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achiſh.

10 And Achiſh ſaid, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David ſaid, Againſt the ſouth of Judah, and againſt the ſouth of the Jerahmeelites, and againſt the ſouth of the Kenites.

11 And David ſaved neither man nor woman alive, to bring *tidings* to Gath, ſaying, Leſt they ſhould tell on us, ſaying, So did David, and ſo *will be* his manner, all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philiſtines.

12 And Achiſh believed David, ſaying, He hath made his people Iſrael utterly to abhor him; therefore he ſhall be my ſervant for ever.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Contains, 1ſt. The Philiſtines preparing war againſt Iſrael, and Achiſh requiring David to aſſiſt him, v. 1, 2—4. 2d. After Samuel's death Saul in vain enquiring of the Lord, and applying to the witch of Endor, v. 3. 5—11. 3d. What paſſed upon this occaſion, and Saul's deſpondency, v. 12—20. 4th. His return to the army, having been prevailed upon to take ſome meat, v. 21—25.

AND it came to paſs in thoſe days, that the Philiſtines gathered their armies together for warfare, to fight with Iſrael.

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moved out of his reach. Thus many ſeem reformed, not becauſe they are cured of their love of ſin, but becauſe they have no longer any opportunity of committing it.

V. 5. *In ſome town*, &c.] David wanted to avoid oſtentation, and to eſcape the effects of envy; and perhaps to be out of the way of temptation, more at leiſure for the exerciſes of religion, and more unembarraſſed in his whole conduct, than he could be near the court, and amongſt the nobles of King Achiſh. After the diviſion of the land, the Philiſtines had ſeized Ziklag; but in this manner it came again into the poſſeſſion of the Iſraelites.

V. 8—12.] Probably the Geſhurites, &c, were tribes of the Amalekites, or in alliance with them. We may therefore commend David for attempting to complete the work, which Saul had done by halves; and ſhould not cenſure the ſeverity, with which he conducted the war. Theſe nations lived to the ſouth of Judah; and he made Achiſh to believe that he had been fighting againſt his countrymen: and as intelligence was not then conveyed ſo eaſily, as at preſent, no one undeceived him; and he believed, that David had widened the breach betwixt himſelf and his people, ſo that it could not be healed: had he known the truth, he would have concluded, that David could not be detached from Iſrael, or united to their enemies. David's circumſtances naturally tempted him to this deceit, but it can by no means be juſtified.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The ſtrongeſt believers cannot wholly exclude the incurſions of unbelief, under tedious trials, and when ſenſe, and reaſon, bring in no report of deliverance: many, under ſharp temptations, have overlooked former mercies, and experiences; forgotten the power, and promiſe of the Lord, and feared that ſin, and ſatan would finally prevail againſt them. When faith thus ſtaggers, obedience wavers, and ſinful expedients obtain the preference; which involve men more and more in difficulties, and temptations When we lean to our own underſtanding, and aſk not counſel of the Lord, we are ſure to do wrong: and we ought not to quit the path of duty, or to join intereſts with God's enemies, even for ſelf-preſervation, or out of care for our families: nor ſhould we willingly contract obligations, where we cannot conſiſtently make requitals of kindneſs. It is our wiſdom to ſhun notoriety, and to ſhelter ourſelves from envy; for obſcurity is commonly more ſafe and comfortable, and no leſs advantageous. But we muſt in no ſituation be wholly inactive, but muſt attempt ſomewhat in the cauſe of God and his people; even though ungratefully requited by thoſe, whom we would ſerve. The fear of man is ſo enſnaring, that we ſhould, if we can, keep out of thoſe places, where doing our duty will expoſe us to danger, or reproach. An equivocation, which ſerves the purpoſes of a lye, bears the ſame relation to it, that a hypocrite doth to a profane perſon: it is only apparently better, and therefore a more dangerous cheat. But though believers often betray their imperfections, they can never be prevailed upon to renounce the ſervice of God, and to unite intereſts with his enemies, or finally to become the ſervants of ſin and ſatan.

And Achish said unto David, Know thou assuredly, that thou shalt go out with me to battle, thou and thy men.

2 And David said to Achish, Surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do. And Achish said to David, Therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever.

3 Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had lamented him, and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city. And Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land.

4 And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem: and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa.

5 And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled.

6 And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

7 Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor.

8 And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee.

9 And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?

10 And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing.

11 Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel.

12 And when the woman saw Samuel, she

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII.] V. 1, 2.] Achish required and expected David's assistance in the war against Israel, and promised him a high preferment in his service, for his recompence: David could not refuse withoutt he utmost danger: if he had promised it, and then either stood neuter, or gone over to the Israelites, he must have behaved with great ingratitude and treachery; and if he had fought against Israel, he would have been guilty of a great sin, and have alienated the affections of his people, and perhaps have exposed himself to the reproach of having murdered Saul. It seemed therefore impossible that he could extricate himself from this difficulty with a good conscience, and a clear reputation. His evasive answer, which was intended to gain time, but which Achish understood as a promise of effectual assistance, was scarce consistent with the character of an Israelite, in whom there should be no guile.

V. 3. *Now Samuel*, &c.] Perhaps the death of Samuel, and the absence of David from his people, encouraged the Philistines to this war. But Saul had filled up his measure of iniquity, and the day was come, when he was to descend into battle and perish. He had put away those, that had familiar spirits, &c, from the land; perhaps before the Spirit of the Lord departed from him: perhaps when he was troubled with an evil spirit, he charged some of them as the cause of it: perhaps by his zeal in this respect he aimed to atone for his other sins, that the kingdom might not be taken from him. Whatever was his motive, the thing itself was right.

V. 4, 5.] As Shunem, and Gilboa lay far north in the land, either this invasion was very formidable, or Saul very negligent; or they could not have marched thus far, without being opposed. But his terror arose chiefly from his guilty conscience. His contempt of Samuel, his murder of the priests, and his malicious persecution of David, dismayed his heart upon every recollection, and he foreboded his approaching doom.

V. 6. *Saul enquired*, &c.] Saul's enquiry was the result of his terror, without any humiliation for his sins, or purposes of repentance, and therefore the Lord would not give him any answer. He did not enquire till his doom was sealed, (*Prov.* c. i. v. 27, 28;) and then only in an hypocritical manner, (*Ezek.* c. xx. v. 1, 2:) and therefore it was the same as not enquiring at all; (1 *Chron.* c. x. v. 14.) After Abiathar fled to David, Saul probably employed some other person to officiate as High Priest: but neither by him, nor any prophet, nor in any other way, could he obtain an answer. The silence of the Lord proclaimed his deep indignation; and Saul ought the more deeply to have humbled himself, and to have persevered in his applications to him: (*Judges* c. x. v. 10—16.) But he was given up to final impenitency; and therefore in impious defiance of God, he determined to consult a witch!

V. 7, 8.] Saul imagined that a few still secretly practised their diabolical arts: but nothing could exceed the presumption of consulting those, whom he had, according to God's law, endeavoured to extirpate! And he disguised himself, not only lest the woman should fear to use her incantations, if she knew him, but lest the people should be exasperated against him, if they were acquainted with the infamous transaction.

V. 9, 10.] Instead of being cut to the heart by the woman's suspicion, which implied the most severe reproof; Saul profanely sware by the Lord, that the woman should

cried with a loud voice: and the woman ſpake to Saul, ſaying, Why haſt thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul.

13 And the king ſaid unto her, Be not afraid: for what ſaweſt thou? And the woman ſaid unto Saul, I ſaw gods aſcending out of the earth.

14 And he ſaid unto her, what form *is* he of? And ſhe ſaid, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he ſtooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himſelf.

15 And Samuel ſaid to Saul, why haſt thou diſquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul anſwered, I am ſore diſtreſſed: for the Philiſtines make war againſt me, and God is departed from me, and anſwereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayeſt make known unto me what I ſhall do.

16 Then ſaid Samuel, wherefore then doſt thou aſk of me, ſeeing the LORD is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?

17 And the LORD hath done to him as he ſpake by me: for the LORD hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, *even* to David:

18 Becauſe thou obeyedſt not the voice of the LORD, nor executedſt his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore hath the LORD done this thing unto thee this day.

19 Moreover the LORD will alſo deliver Iſrael with thee into the hand of the Philiſtines: and to morrow *ſhalt* thou and thy ſons *be* with me: the LORD alſo ſhall deliver the hoſt of Iſrael into the hand of the Philiſtines.

20 Then Saul fell ſtraightway all along on the earth, and was ſore afraid, becauſe of the words of Samuel: and there was no ſtrength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night.

21 And the woman came unto Saul, and ſaw that he was ſore troubled, and ſaid unto him, Behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice, and I have put my life in my hand, and have hearkened unto thy words which thou ſpakeſt unto me:

22 Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou alſo unto the voice of thine handmaid, and let me ſet a morſel of bread before thee; and eat, that thou mayeſt have ſtrength, when thou goeſt on thy way.

23 But he refuſed, and ſaid, I will not eat. But his ſervants, together with the woman, compelled him: and he hearkened unto their voice. So he aroſe from the earth, and ſat upon the bed.

24 And the woman had a fat calf in the

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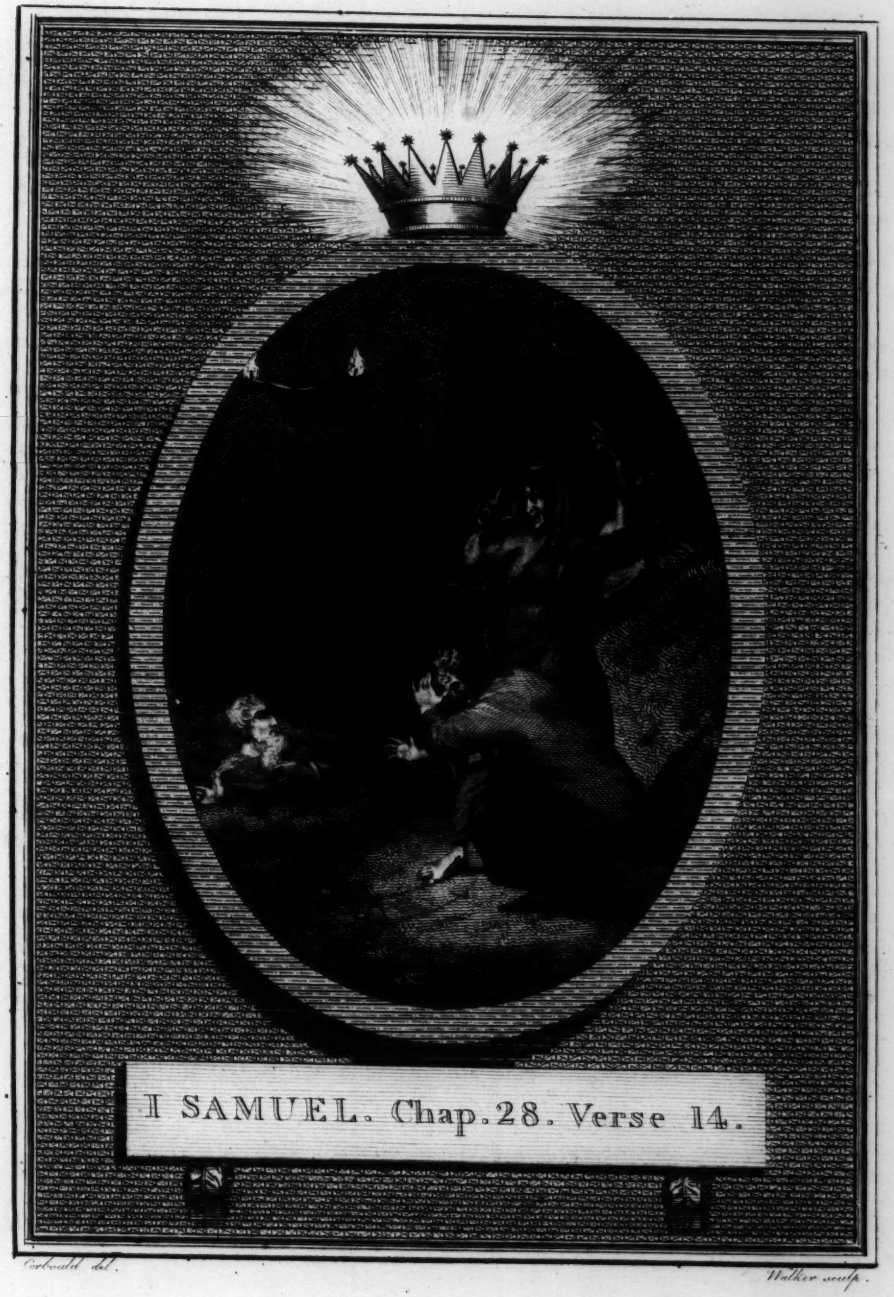
not be puniſhed for violating God's expreſs commands. She would underſtand this merely as an engagement not to inform againſt her: but Saul thereby ſware not to do *his duty:* and both of them acted almoſt *atheiſtically*, when one engaged, and the other was ſatisfied with the engagement, that no puniſhment ſhould happen to her, for ſinning againſt God: yet moſt *abſurdly*, as well as *impiouſly*, a ſolemn oath was the ſecurity in ſo vile a buſineſs.

V. 11. *Bring me up Samuel*, &c.] That is the departed ſoul of Samuel, in the form in which he appeared in, when alive. Samuel had anointed Saul, and often counſelled him for his good: and though during the latter part of his life, he had neglected him: yet he was convinced, that it was better with him, when he had regarded his advice; and therefore nothing could now ſerve him, but a conference with the departed prophet: and he was ſo ignorant as to ſuppoſe, that the woman, by means of her familiar ſpirit, could bring him up for that purpoſe, even without the Lord's permiſſion: and ſhe probably expected to impoſe upon her conſulter, by ſome ſatanical apparition.

V. 12—19. *When the woman*, &c.] Her incantations are paſſed over in ſilence. It is much diſputed who it was, that appeared on this occaſion. The whole narrative manifeſts, that it was no human impoſture. Many pious men take it for granted, that it was ſatan, perſonating Samuel, though the text gives no intimations to that effect: and it does not appear reconcileable to the ſimplicity of ſcripture language; nor is it adviſeable to give thoſe men any countenance, who, to ſupport a favourite ſyſtem, put a forced conſtruction upon the words of holy writ, very different to their obvious meaning. And ſcarce any of their interpretations can ſound harſher, than the inſertion in every place, where Samuel was mentioned, "that it "was ſatan, perſonating Samuel!" It is argued that the woman's incantations could have no power over a glorified ſaint: but an evil ſpirit could not come at her call without the Lord's permiſſion; and he might ſee good that one ſhould come from the dead at this time; and though the woman was not the cauſe of Samuel's being ſent, Saul's enquiry might be the occaſion of it: and the word "diſ-"quieted," ſeems to be uſed merely in accommodation to the general notions of mankind on that ſubject: And the woman's ſurpriſe and terror proved, that it was an unuſual and unexpected appearance; and not the ordinary effect of her art: (*Note Exod.* c. vii. v. 12.) It is further urged that the apparition's diſcourſe tended to drive Saul

houſe;



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house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded *it*, and did bake unleavened bread thereof:

25 And she brought *it* before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night.

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to despair, which is one of satan's temptation's; and that it contained no exhortations to repentance, which were usual with the prophets. But Elijah's message to Ahaziah (2 *Kings*, c. i. v. 6;) Daniel's address to Belshazzar, and even Christ's discourse in the presence of Judas, were equally calculated to drive them to despair; and equally void of exhortations to repent, or proposals of mercy. Saul had despised Samuel's solemn warnings in his life-time; yet now he hoped, as it were in defiance of God, to obtain some counsel, and encouragement from him: and why might not God permit the soul of his departed prophet to appear to Saul, and confirm his former sentence, and denounce his irrevocable doom? It was not beyond the power of God, nor, that I can see, any ways unworthy of him; but rather a declaration of his immutable, and irreversible truth and justice. Satan could not have predicted the several events, (which for ought appears came to pass accordingly,) without being inspired of God to do so, and it would seem to give more countenance to consulting witches: if God, on such an occasion, should inspire satan to prophesy *by them*; than if Samuel were sent with this tremendous message from God, when Saul consulted one of them. Indeed this would operate to discourage such attempts; as the bootless request of the rich man in hell to Abraham is calculated to discourage praying to departed saints. The local situation of departed spirits is so concealed from us, that the circumstance of the spirit apparently arising out of the earth, forms no real objection against its being the soul of Samuel: and the expression, "shalt thou, and thy sons be "with me," means no more, than that they should be in the eternal world; and it was suited to impress the idea of a future state, and determined nothing against the different conditions of the righteous and the wicked therein. Upon the whole, there appears much solemnity in God's for once permitting the soul of a departed prophet to make his appearance, as a witness from heaven; and in sending him to confirm the word, which he spake on earth; thereby evincing, that the words of the prophets would surely take effect; and to sit in judgment upon a proud enemy of God, who foolishly sought encouragement in his impenitency, and by the most atrocious crimes. And this interpretation is certainly more obvious, and suited to the apprehensions of the unlearned reader, and according to the general simplicity of the scriptures: and they should be unanswerable arguments and objections, which should constrain us to suppose, that when the Holy Ghost said Samuel, he meant satan; not speaking by Samuel, as he did by the serpent, and by the demoniacks; but actually counterfeiting his shape, and speaking with his voice, when Samuel himself was in every sense absent from the place. The venerable appearance of Samuel, or somewhat that he uttered, convinced the woman, that it was Saul who consulted her. Saul's bowing down before him, was not an act of religious worship, any more than Abigail's bowing down before David. The answer of Samuel was very suited to his character, and the occasion: in vain was it to consult the servant, when the Lord was become his enemy: the Lord was only doing to Saul, or "for himself," (17,) as he declared he would: and as he knew him to be finally given up, he neither gave him counsel, nor comfort.

V. 25. *Then they rose up*, &c.] Saul, though terrified even to desperation, was not humbled! a miserable state he was indeed reduced to, when the witch was his only comforter! But he confessed not his sins, offered no sacrifices, and presented no supplications, that we find: nor does he seem to have been concerned about his sons, or his people; or to have attempted any escape; but in sullen despair to have rushed upon his doom.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we in the least deviate from the plain path of duty, every circumstance will draw us further aside, and increase our perplexity, and temptation: and needless intimacies with, or obligations to the avowed enemies of the true religion, will reduce us, ere we are aware, to the necessity of being unfaithful to our God, or treacherous, and ungrateful to our benefactors. And we shall scarce ever be able, in such a situation, to open our mouths with that candour, and simplicity, which become Christians. When death hath removed, or persecution hath expelled God's ministers, and servants, a land is deprived of its best defence, and its enemies have their best opportunity of preparing war against it. Hypocrites are frequently very zealous against those crimes, to which they are not tempted, or from which they suffer, or apprehend detriment: and apostates commonly fall into those sins, which they were most earnest in opposing. Ungodly persons fear the reproach of man, or the punishments, denounced by human laws, more than the wrath of God: They do not therefore forsake their sins, but dissemble their real characters, and conceal their conduct; and deem all well if they escape detection: but frequently they are employed to rebuke, or correct each other, either for their present conviction, or their future deeper condemnation. When habits of perjury, or profane swearing have been contracted, the sacred name of God, and the most solemn oaths, are often introduced in the midst of the most horrible wickedness, and made the obligations and encouragements to the most enormous crimes! But the malignity of such impiety cannot be expressed in any language. All real, or pretended witchcraft, &c, is a malicious, or ignorant attempt, to gain intelligence, or assistance from some creature, when it cannot be had, or is not sought from the Lord in the path of duty: and is therefore *essentially* idolatry, and *virtually* the worship of the devil: but of such works of darkness it is best to be totally ignorant. Many, who despise the Lord's servants whilst they live, are so far convinced of their wisdom, and fidelity, that they vainly wish for their counsel, and instruction, in distressing circumstances, after their death. But in that blessed world, to which they are removed, they have done with fear, favour, and affection, and are become more determined than ever in the service, and cause of God: and were they to appear, they would denounce the doom of impenitent sinners with more dread-

CHAP. XXIX.

Contains, 1st. David attending Achish, and disapproved by the lords of the Philistines, v. 1—5. 2d. Dismissed with credit, and departing with affected reluctancy, v. 6—11.

NOW the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek: and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel.

2 And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands: but David and his men passed on in the rere-ward with Achish.

3 Then said the princes of the Philistines, What *do* these Hebrews *here?* And Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines, *Is* not this David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, which hath been with me these days, or these years, and I have found no fault in him since he fell *unto me* unto this day?

4 And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him; and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, Make this fellow return, that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary to us: for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? *should it* not *be* with the heads of these men?

5 *Is* not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances, saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

6 Then Achish called David, and said unto him, Surely, *as* the LORD liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host *is* good in my sight; for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless the lords favour thee not.

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ful decision than ever. Wretched indeed are they, who in great outward distress can obtain no help or comfort from the Lord! What can they expect either from good or evil men, holy, or unholy spirits! Neither the servants, nor the enemies of God, can do them any service: and every thing combines to drive them to desperation. This satan labours to effect, and God is sometimes pleased to permit him: nay the very testimony of his word, and ministers, concur in convincing the poor wretch, "that there "remains nothing, but a certain fearful looking for of "judgment, and fiery indignation!" And the remembrance of former crimes, convictions, warnings, and relapses into sin, help to assure him of the certainty, and justice of his doom. Yet all these things do not humble, or soften him; for it is "impossible to renew him to re-"pentance:" and not having "believed Moses and the "prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose "from the dead:" but either in sullen, or in furious despair he waits; or meets his doom. In every age God sets up a few such beacons for a tremendous warning to their fellow-sinners, not to listen to temptations, to stifle convictions, or despise the word of God: and to beware of hypocrisy, apostacy, procrastination, or other great wickedness: for none are given up of God to this desperation, who have not provoked him to it by their previous crimes. But whilst one relenting thought remains no sinner should ever suppose himself in this case. God will not indeed hear the prayer of the unhumbled, and impenitent; and many enquire of him in vain, because they are not in earnest: when therefore they meet not with encouragement, they detect their own hypocrisy, by giving up their religious duties, plunging again into sin, and seeking help from the world, and the god of this world. But let the discouraged enquirer persevere in knocking at mercy's gate, until it be opened: let him humble himself more, and more before God, and determine to live, and die supplicating his favour; and he will be sure at length to succeed. Let us all learn "to seek the Lord, while he may "be found, and to call upon him, whilst he is near," and without reserve to obey his voice, and do his will. Finally though subjects suffer *with* their wicked governors, and children with their parents; yet it either is *for* their own sins, or their sufferings will work for them a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIX.] V. 2. *In the rere-ward*, &c.] Probably David was undetermined how to act on this occasion, and waited with a secret hope, that the Lord would help him out of this difficulty. But he seems to have been influenced too much by the fear of man, in so readily consenting to attend Achish, when he might have framed very plausible excuses, for declining that service: however the Lord was pleased to bring him off with credit.

V. 6. *And Achish*, &c.] These lords, or princes, possessed so much authority in their own cities, and in the camp, at the head of their troops, and were so decided against employing David, that Achish would not venture their displeasure in retaining him. The high opinion that he had of him, and the confidence which he reposed in him: and his commendations of him both before his face, and to the lords, would have been honourable, to him; if they had not been *in part*, the effect of deception. When Achish sware by Jehovah, that he did not send David away, for any suspicion that he entertained of him, he shewed that he had collected some notions *at least* concerning the true God, and his worship.

7 Wherefore

7 Wherefore now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.

8 And David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

9 And Achish answered and said to David, I know that thou *art* good in my sight, as an angel of God: notwithstanding, the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle.

10 Wherefore now rise up early in the morning, with thy master's servants that are come with thee: and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart.

11 So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

CHAP. XXX.

Contains, 1st. David, and his men, at their return, finding Ziklag taken, and burnt, and their families carried captive by the Amalekites, v. 1—3. 2d. Their grief, and resentment; David's distress, enquiry of the Lord, and pursuit of the enemy; v. 4—10. 3d. Their surprisal of them by means of a slave, recovering all, and taking much spoil; and the manner, in which it was disposed of, v. 11—31.

AND it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire;

2 And had taken the women captives, that *were* therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried *them* away, and went on their way.

3 So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, *it was* burnt with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

V. 8. *What have I done*, &c.] David could not but rejoice at this occurrence; and yet he would not have Achish think that he did; and therefore he pretended a desire "to fight with the enemies of my lord the "king:" which words Achish would understand of the Israelites, but which were ambiguous, as several of his speeches were on this occasion: so hard is it in such circumstances to avoid all disingenuity, and flattery, either from fear, or courtesy!

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Whilst the presumptuous sinner is given up to the effects of his own counsels, and driven headlong to destruction: the sins of the upright shall be pardoned; and the Lord will take care both of their peace, and reputation. He sees many ways of extricating us out of difficulties, when we can perceive no way of escape: and whilst ungodly men are pursuing their own purposes, and following their own judgments, he secretly influences them to such determinations, as subserve the good of his people, and preserve them from sin, and temptation. Reputation, esteem, and affection frequently become our snares: whilst reproaches, contempt, and injurious suspicions prove beneficial: and the ill usage of the wicked, by which we are driven from them, is much better for us, than that friendship, which draws us amongst them. When worldly people have no evil thing to say of us, but will bear testimony to our uprightness, we need desire no more from them: this we should aim at by prudence, meekness, and a blameless life. But their flattering commendations are almost always purchased by improper compliances, or some measure of deception, and may therefore commonly cover a professor of godliness with confusion. It is seldom prudent to place great confidence in one, who hath changed sides; except as the fear of God influences a true convert to conscientious fidelity. Obscurity, or the company of those, who are of one heart with us, are generally more safe, comfortable, and honourable, than high stations in the palaces of the ungodly. And David in the cave was more worthy of our imitation, than when a favourite in the camp of king Achish: and he scarce ever had a greater deliverance, than when he was dismissed from that ensnaring service.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXX.] V. 1. *On the third day*, &c.] Ziklag seems to have been situated three days march from the camp of the Philistines. David did not receive the news of Saul's death till several days after he left Achish: but we cannot argue any thing from thence concerning the battle not being fought on the morrow, after Saul consulted the witch of Endor: for they form distinct narrations, and no date is fixed to the latter. The Lord had extricated David reputably from his ensnaring situation: but he severely rebuked him for his misconduct, by this calamity, that came upon Ziklag in his absence. He might reasonably have expected that the Amalekites would watch their opportunity of retaliating upon him: and his fear of offending Achish made him very improvident, in leaving the city, with the women and children in it, without any guard. The Amalekites were wonderfully restrained from slaying them, after the example which had been set them; preferring the profit of enslaving them, to the pleasure of revenge: for God intended to rebuke David, but not to permit his family and friends to be destroyed.

4 Then David and the people that *were* with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

5 And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreeliteſs, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 And David was greatly diſtreſſed; for the people ſpake of ſtoning him, becauſe the ſoul of all the people was grieved, every man for his ſons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himſelf in the LORD his God.

7 And David ſaid to Abiathar the prieſt, Ahimelech's ſon, I pray thee bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

8 And David enquired at the LORD, ſaying, Shall I purſue after this troop? ſhall I overtake them? And he anſwered him, Purſue; for thou ſhalt ſurely overtake *them*, and without fail recover *all*.

9 So David went, he and the ſix hundred men that *were* with him, and came to the brook Beſor, where thoſe that were left behind ſtayed.

10 But David purſued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were ſo faint that they could not go over the brook Beſor.

11 And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;

12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two cluſters of raiſins: and when he had eaten, his ſpirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk *any* water, three days and three nights.

13 And David ſaid unto him, To whom *belongeſt* thou? and whence *art* thou? And he ſaid, I *am* a young man of Egypt, ſervant to an Amalekite; and my maſter left me, becauſe three days agone I fell ſick.

14 We made an invaſion *upon* the ſouth of the Cherethites, and upon *the coaſt* which *belongeth* to Judah, and upon the ſouth of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.

15 And David ſaid unto him, Canſt thou bring me down to this company? And he ſaid, Swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my maſter, and I will bring thee down to this company.

16 And when he had brought him down, behold, *they were* ſpread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, becauſe of all the great ſpoil that they had

V. 6. *David encouraged*, &c.] David's loſs of his wives and children, the deſolations of the city, the anguiſh of his followers, who, not entirely without reaſon, were enraged againſt him for thus expoſing their families, all tended to enhance his diſtreſs: at the ſame time he muſt conſider all his calamities as reſulting from his unbelief, in leaving the land of Judah, in being ſo much afraid of Achiſh, and in neglecting to conſult the Lord. But in the midſt of all theſe complicated troubles, his ſpirit was ſoon calmed and encouraged: he neither murmured againſt God, nor reſented the rage of his ſoldiers, nor deſpaired of redreſs, nor confided in his own valour, or conduct; "but "he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God:" he meditated upon the divine perfections; upon his promiſes to him; and his paſt experience of his faithfulneſs: and upon the relations, in which the Lord ſtood to him, as his worſhipper and ſervant, who had been enabled to chooſe him, as his ſalvation and portion. Thus he was encouraged to expect forgiveneſs, protection, and help, and a favourable event, notwithſtanding external appearances.

V. 7. *Bring me hither*, &c.] No time was now to be loſt; and as his troubles originated from neglecting to enquire of the Lord, he immediately conſulted him by the High Prieſt: and his anſwer quieted the minds of his followers; and they were willing to march in purſuit of the ravagers.

V. 9, 10. *Thoſe that were left*, &c.] With the fatigue of their former march, continued in this new expedition, and the anguiſh of their ſpirits, they became ſo faint, that they could proceed no further. But though David's ſmall troop was reduced, and he might fear, that the others would be unable to proceed, his faith did not fail "him; for he ſtill encouraged himſelf in the Lord his "God."

V. 11—15.] This ſick ſlave was of ſmall value to his maſter, and was likely to be an incumbrance: the life of a fellow creature was rated at nothing; and therefore he inhumanly left him to periſh: but in the righteous providence of God this cruelty occaſioned the deſtruction of the army: whilſt David's kindneſs to a periſhing ſtranger, and ſlave, was the means of his ſignal ſucceſs, and proved to be the reſult of true policy. This Egyptian, who feared being delivered up to his maſter, as much as death, deemed the oath of an Iſraelite by his God a ſufficient ſecurity for his preſervation.

V. 16. *They were ſpread*, &c.] The Amalekites probably knew that the Iſraelites, and the Philiſtines were engaged in war at a great diſtance; and therefore deeming themſelves ſecure, they very imprudently began to riot on

taken

taken out of the land of the Philiſtines, and out of the land of Judah.

17 And David ſmote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there eſcaped not a man of them, ſave four hundred young men which rode upon camels, and fled.

18 And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David reſcued his two wives.

19 And there was nothing lacking to them, neither ſmall nor great, neither ſons nor daughters, neither ſpoil, nor *any* thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.

20 And David took all the flocks and the herds, *which* they drave before thoſe *other* cattle, and ſaid, This *is* David's ſpoil.

21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were ſo faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made alſo to abide at the brook Beſor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that *were* with him: and when David came near to the people, he ſaluted them.

22 Then anſwered all the wicked men and *men* of Belial, of thoſe that went with David, and ſaid, Becauſe they went not with us, we will not give them *ought* of the ſpoil that we have recovered, ſave to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead *them* away, and depart.

23 Then ſaid David, Ye ſhall not do ſo, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preſerved us, and delivered the company that came againſt us into our hand.

24 For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part *is* that goeth down to the battle, ſo *ſhall* his part *be* that tarrieth by the ſtuff: they ſhall part alike.

25 And it was *ſo* from that day forward, that he made it a ſtatute and an ordinance for Iſrael unto this day.

26 And when David came to Ziklag, he ſent of the ſpoil unto the elders of Judah, *even* to his friends, ſaying, Behold a preſent for you of the ſpoil of the enemies of the LORD;

27 To *them* which *were* in Beth-el, and to *them* which *were* in ſouth Ramoth, and to *them* which *were* in Jattir,

28 And to *them* which *were* in Aroer, and to *them* which *were* in Siphmoth, and to *them* which *were* in Eſhtemoa,

29 And to *them* which *were* in Rachal, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to *them* which *were* in the cities of the Kenites,

30 And to *them* which *were* in Hormah, and to *them* which *were* in Chor-aſhan, and to *them* which *were* in Athach,

31 And to *them* which *were* in Hebron, and to all the places where David himſelf and his men were wont to haunt.

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the abundance, which they had taken, without any guards being placed, to give notice of an enemy's approach.

V. 20.] Beſides the cattle, which had been taken from the ſeveral countries, that the Amalekites had ravaged, perhaps David entered their lands, and fetched away their cattle alſo.

V. 22. *The wicked men*, &c.] We hope that many of David's men had profited by his example, and inſtructions: but there were wicked men of Belial amongſt them, who wanted to ſeize the property of their fellow-ſoldiers; becauſe they had not been able to go with them. But David's anſwer was full of piety, equity, and meekneſs, and prevailed againſt their unjuſt propoſals.

V. 26. *To his friends*, &c.] To thoſe who ſecretly favoured and aſſiſted him, when perſecuted by Saul. Theſe preſents not only expreſſed his generoſity; but were the reſult of true policy; and were the firſt fruits of the advantages, they were to expect from his friendſhip. Keilah, and the Ziphites are not mentioned in this liſt. Forgiveneſs, and aſſiſtance *in diſtreſs* are to be ſhewn to enemies: but gratitude *at all times* is due to our friends.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we leave our families, we cannot foreſee what may befal them, or ourſelves, ere we return: we ought therefore to commit ourſelves, and each other to the divine protection, and to render to God unfeigned thanks, when we meet, from time to time, in peace, and ſafety. It is wiſdom at all times to moderate our expectations of earthly comfort, leſt we ſhould, by being too ſanguine, meet with the more diſtreſſing diſappointments. Many of our troubles may be traced from our imprudence; all of them in one way or other, originate from our ſins. Inordinate paſſions blind men's minds: exceſſive fear of one danger, cauſes them to overlook others, ſtill more formidable: and they, who by any means give offence to others, may lay their account with, and ſhould prepare for retaliations. But the Lord reſtrains the rage of the moſt barbarous, and

CHAP.

CHAP. XXXI.

Contains, 1st. Saul's army routed, his sons slain, and Saul, and his armour-bearer killing themselves, 1—6. *2d. The terror of the Israelites, and the Philistines treatment of the dead bodies of Saul and his sons,* 7—10. *3d. The men of Jabesh Gilead rescuing and burying them,* 11—13.

NOW the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2 And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul, and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

3 And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4 Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his

by letting loose one carnal principle to counteract another, wicked men proceed as far, as his purposes require, and no further: and by various instruments he rebukes, and chastens his offending people, but restrains all from doing them essential detriment. Generous minds are most susceptible of rational affections, and the bravest are not disgraced by mourning the loss, or the sufferings of beloved relations: but all our passions are prone to excess; and unless the fear of God possess our hearts, we shall fret against him under our afflictions, and vent our impatience against the guilty, or innocent occasions of them: and thus our helpers may become our terror, or our destroyers. Conscious guilt, and a sense of the divine displeasure form the keenest aggravations of a believer's distress: yet the very reflection, which pains and humbles his heart, silences the tempest of his passions, and induces hope in God, who chastens, that he may not condemn. The Lord is rich in mercy, and ready to forgive: the greatest sinner, when first he approaches the mercy-seat, in the Redeemer's name, with penitent confessions, and fervent prayers, may be encouraged to expect salvation for his soul, and assistance in all his troubles: but the believer, who hath long trusted in his mercy, chosen him for his portion, walked with him in his ordinances, sought his glory, and experienced his faithfulness, power, and love; notwithstanding his failures, and his conscious unworthiness, may with confidence "encourage himself in the Lord his God," in the most extreme danger and distress. Bitter complaints, and mutual recriminations are of no use in the hour of trouble: we are then called to perform the present duty; and to enquire the Lord's will by searching the Scriptures and prayer: and when our sins are forgiven, and we act by the Lord's direction, we shall soon recover all, and be enriched by our very losses, and trials: and even if our companions cannot, or will not help us, the Lord himself will be for us, "the God of Jacob will be our refuge." Some of those, who are cordially attached to the cause of God, are less capable of hard services, than others: but he mercifully accepts them; and so should their brethren. It is good policy, as well as charity, to relieve the meanest in their distresses; for in some great emergency the Lord may enable them to render us the most important services: but he will certainly punish inhumanity to the poor, and the sick; especially that of masters to their sick, and afflicted servants. The success, and abundance of ungodly men, increasing their presumption, and being spent upon their lusts, frequently accelerates their destruction: and sensual indulgence is a common introduction to weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth. In the most favoured companies will be found selfish men, who being ungrateful to God for his kindness, will enrich, or pamper themselves, whilst they leave their more deserving, though less prosperous brethren to starve. But they, who consider the Lord as the giver of their abundance, will dispose of it with equity, and in liberality: they will employ their influence to restrain the injustice of others; and take occasion from evil suggestions to establish useful precedents: and instead of spending their wealth upon their lusts, will share it with their friends, and with the poor. Thus subserving their most important future interests, with the very mammon of unrighteousness. In this manner Jesus divides the spoil of his victories with the meanest of his followers. And though the rebellious are now invited to accept of mercy, and participate his favour: yet if they will not have him to reign over them, they shall receive no benefit from his redemption: the blessings of which will be confined to his friends, who trust in, and love him, and keep his commandments.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXXI.] V. 2. *Slew Jonathan*, &c.] Probably Saul never informed his sons of what he had been told concerning his own, and their approaching death; and therefore they were in the army, and slain before his eyes. By this means David's way to the throne was cleared: for if so many Israelites stood up for the rights of Ishbosheth, who was a very insignificant person; many more would have been strenuous for Jonathan. And though *he* would have conceded to David, his brethren and the people would probably have made much opposition to his succession. But the Lord removed him to a better world, that his anointed might be more readily established in the kingdom.

V. 4. *And abuse me*, &c.] Saul, when sore wounded, and unable to resist, or to flee, expressed no concern about his immortal soul; but only desired to be speedily dispatched, that the Philistines might not insult over, and put him to pain. His armour-bearer seems not to have either feared death, or the guilt of murder, or the wrath of God: but he had that reverence for the person of his prince, that he was incapable of lifting up his hand against him: and thus Saul became his own murderer; and his armour-bearer, in a mad, and foolish expression of his respect, and affection, imitated his example. Ahithophel, and Judas the traitor

armour-

I SAMUEL CH.XXXI. VE. IV.

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armour-bearer would not; for he was ſore afraid: therefore Saul took a ſword, and fell upon it.

5 And when his armour-bearer ſaw that Saul was dead, he fell likewiſe upon his ſword, and died with him.

6 So Saul died, and his three ſons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that ſame day together.

7 And when the men of Iſrael that *were* on the other ſide of the valley, and *they* that *were* on the other ſide Jordan, ſaw that the men of Iſrael fled, and that Saul and his ſons were dead, they forſook the cities and fled; and the Philiſtines came and dwelt in them.

8 And it came to paſs on the morrow, when the Philiſtines came to ſtrip the ſlain, that they found Saul and his three ſons fallen in mount Gilboa.

9 And they cut off his head, and ſtripped off his armour, and ſent into the land of the Philiſtines round about, to publiſh *it in* the houſe of their idols, and among the people.

10 And they put his armour in the houſe of Aſhtaroth; and they faſtened his body to the wall of Beth-ſhan.

11 And when the inhabitants of Jabeſh-gilead heard of that which the Philiſtines had done to Saul,

12 All the valiant men aroſe, and went all night, and took the body of Saul, and the bodies of his ſons, from the wall of Beth-ſhan, and came to Jabeſh, and burnt them there.

13 And they took their bones, and buried *them* under a tree at Jabeſh, and faſted ſeven days.

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likewiſe murdered themſelves; and I recollect not any other inſtances in ſcripture of this practice. And when the characters of the ſcripture ſuicides are conſidered, it confirms the opinion, which hath been advanced of the enormous guilt, and direful conſequences of this crime; (*Note*, *Exod.* c. xx. v. 13.) Men, either madly preſuming upon, or deſpairing of God's mercy, to eſcape temporal ſufferings, or diſgrace, deſpiſe his gift of life, ruſh uncalled unto his tribunal, by an act of direct rebellion againſt his authority, and in proud defiance of his juſtice, with the guilt of all their unrepented crimes upon their heads. Yet ſo exceedingly hath ſatan blinded men's minds, that this worſt of murders, when really *intended*, has been held honourable in many ages, places, and ſituations, and hath often been committed out of vainglory, in imitation of, or from affection to thoſe, who have obtained renown amongſt their fellow-ſinners: by which means force has been added to his temptation. The Jews ſay, that Doeg was Saul's armour-bearer, having been preferred for ſlaying the prieſts of the Lord: if ſo, his death was worthy of his life. Saul's ſons, and ſervants, died in the performance of their duty to him, and to their country: but he, and his armour-bearer, died in direct violation of God's commandment.

V. 7. *On the other ſide*, &c.] That is, the cities, which lay between the field of battle, and the river Jordan. This was the effect of their rejecting the Lord, and his prophet, and demanding a king. (*Hoſea*, c. xiii. v. 10, 11.)

V. 8—10.] The Philiſtines ſent the head of Saul to be faſtened in the temple of Dagon, and his armour in that of Aſhtaroth; (1 *Chron.* c. x. v. 9;) in memorial of their victory, and in honour of their idols: but his body, and thoſe of his ſons, they faſtened to the wall of Beth-ſhan, a city near the field of battle. Thus Saul eſcaped being tortured by them, but ſcarce ever was a dead body more inhumanly abuſed. As by the death of Saul, way was made for David to aſcend the throne, they had no great cauſe to triumph on that account.

V. 11—13.] This conduct of the men of Jabeſh-gilead was a becoming expreſſion of gratitude to Saul, as their deliverer in the beginning of his reign, and a proper rebuke to the barbarity of the Philiſtines: probably they burned the bodies, leſt the Philiſtines ſhould recover, and further abuſe them. They faſted ſeven days until the evening, as a token of their ſorrow, and humiliation under the divine rebuke, and perhaps joined their ſolemn prayers. But there was no general lamentation made for Saul, as there had been for the prophet Samuel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The objects of the divine diſpleaſure are not only wretched themſelves, but the cauſe of calamities to all around them: but though the righteous may be involved with them in temporal troubles, and death; they will be ſeparated from them in the other world, and poſſeſs eternal happineſs, whilſt they ſink into everlaſting miſery: and frequently men's behaviour in the cloſing ſcene of life ſtrongly indicates their ſtate beyond the grave. How ſhould we watch and pray, that we may not be given up to preſumption, or deſpair; but may be enabled patiently to bear the evils of life, and quietly to hope for the ſalvation of the Lord, that ſatan may not tempt us to the horrible ſin of ſelf-murder! It is *comparatively* of little conſequence, in what manner, or with what circumſtances we die, or what is done with our dead bodies: if our ſouls are ſaved, they alſo will be raiſed at laſt incorruptible, and glorious: but to be anxious to avoid pain, or diſgrace from men, and not to fear his wrath, who is able to deſtroy both body, and ſoul in hell, is the extreme of infatuation and impiety: yet even in theſe worthleſs matters ungodly men are often diſappointed of their expectations. Indeed every worldly object, that is inordinately craved, will become our trouble; and the deſire, the poſſeſſion, and the loſs of it will all be ſources of uneaſineſs to us. When inhumanity, and impiety attend proſperity, it will be ſhort-lived: and the

The Second Book of SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

The Second Book of the KINGS.

This book derives its name from Samuel, though he was dead before the commencement of its history, because he anointed that king, whose actions are therein recorded. It opens with David's accession to the throne, his gradual prevalence against the house of Saul, and his establishment in the kingdom; it proceeds to relate his victories over his enemies on every side, and enlargement of the possession, and advancement of the prosperity of Israel; and his reformation of the state of religion amongst them. But with these more pleasing events are recorded the grievous sins, which he committed, and the domestic, and public calamities, with which he was chastised. These as a dark cloud cover the latter part of the history of this book, (which brings us almost to the close of his reign of forty years,) yet through all, his character shines very bright, in many instances, and we learn from another place (1 Chron. c. xxviii. xxix.) that he closed his life in a very honourable manner. We shall here meet with many things worthy of our imitation; and many that are recorded for our warning: the bias of our fallen nature to sin, and the efficacy of divine grace in renewing the soul to repentance and holiness, are therein illustrated: and such a view is given of the methods of God's providence towards his people, as is suited to excite our hopes, and our fears, and to teach us to unite holy joy with watchfulness and circumspection.

Before Christ 1055.

CHAP. I.

Contains, 1st. An Amalekite bringing Saul's crown and bracelet to David, informing him of the event of the battle, and asserting that he slew Saul, v. 1—10. *2d. David's expressions of sorrow, and ordering the messenger to be put to death, v.* 11—16. *3d. His poetical lamentation for Saul, and Jonathan, v.* 17—27.

NOW it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David was returned from

successes of ungodly men are commonly introductions to their misfortunes. It behoves us to shew gratitude to our benefactors, even though they be wicked men; and to venture danger, and trouble in doing it: yet how ineffectual is the kindness, and respect of fellow creatures to those, who are enduring the wrath of God? Whilst pompous funerals, magnificent monuments, and flattering encomiums combine to honour the memory of some illustrious deceased impenitent sinner, his poor soul is suffering the extremest misery, and disgrace in the regions of darkness and despair! This also is a sore vanity. May we seek and find that honour which cometh from God only!

Before Christ 1055.

the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had abode two days in Ziklag;

2 It came even to pass on the third day, that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and *so* it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance.

3 And David said unto him, From whence

CHAP. I.] V. 1. *Abode two days*, &c.] David, and his men had returned to Ziklag, and probably were employed in repairing its desolations, when news was brought him of the death of Saul: he seems not to have made any enquiry after the event of the war, though he had so many reasons to be anxious about it. The decisive blow, which opened his way to the throne, was given about the time, that he had been so exceedingly distressed.

V. 2—10.] As Saul's armour-bearer saw that he was dead, before he slew himself, we may conclude that this man feigned many circumstances of this story. But happening to pass by the field of battle, and finding Saul's cometh

cometh thou? And he said unto him, out of the camp of Israel am I escaped.

4 And David said unto him, How went the matter? I pray thee tell me. And he answered, That the people are fled from the battle, and many of the people also are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.

5 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6 And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me: and I answered, Here *am* I.

8 And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite.

9 He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me; for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me.

10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11 Then David took hold of his clothes, and rent them, and likewise all the men that *were* with him.

12 And they mourned and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.

13 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?

15 And David called one of the young men, and said, Go near, *and* fall upon him. And he smote him that he died.

16 And David said unto him, Thy blood *be* upon thy head: for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD's anointed.

17 And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son:

18 (Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow; behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.)

19 The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places; how are the mighty fallen!

20 Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of

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dead body, with the insignia of royalty upon him, (adorned with which he had very foolishly gone to battle;) he knew who it was: and by bringing them away he sufficiently proved Saul's death: and therefore he formed his story, and ordered his behaviour in that manner, which he supposed would most ingratiate him with David; of whom he judged according to the selfishness of his own disposition. It is remarkable, that an Amalekite should boast of having slain Saul, who had been rejected for sparing that nation.

V. 13—16.] This man was an Amalekite, and devoted by the Lord to destruction: this sentence David, as the king of Israel after Saul's death, was appointed to put in execution: he had boasted of having killed the king of Israel, and David could not disprove his testimony: and it would have been wrong in David to have shewn any countenance to such a person. By his own confession he deserved to die: and by putting him to death, David solemnly protested that he had no hand in the death of Saul; he warned all others not to expect favour from him by doing violence to any of Saul's family; and he aimed to conciliate their good will, and that of Israel in general.

V. 18.] *Also he bade*, &c.] Perhaps the bow was in disuse amongst the Israelites, which had given the Philistines an advantage: at the time therefore that this poem was inserted in the book of Jasher; (*Note*, *Joshua*, c. x. v. 13:) it was also recorded, that David had given orders to the people to habituate themselves to the use of the bow. Though some understand this expression of some tune, or musical instrument, to which this poem was adapted.

V. 19—27.] This elegy contains little of religion, but is highly poetical; and was intended as a tribute of respect to the memory of Saul, and of affection to that of Jonathan; who perhaps was principally meant by the "Beauty of Israel," being in every respect an ornament to his religion and people. Saul's valour and military renown are celebrated, and his faults are veiled; but nothing is spoken of his piety, or justice. The charge given to every one, not to mention the catastrophe in the cities of the Philistines, lest the enemies of God should rejoice, is very beautiful. The wish that neither rain nor dew might fructify the fields, on which the fatal battle was fought: and that no sacrifices might thence be brought to the altar

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the Philiſtines rejoice, leſt the daughters of the uncircumciſed triumph.

21 Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the ſhield of the mighty is vilely caſt away, the ſhield of Saul, *as though he had* not *been* anointed with oil.

22 From the blood of the ſlain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the ſword of Saul returned not empty.

23 Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleaſant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were ſwifter than eagles, they were ſtronger than lions.

24 Ye daughters of Iſrael weep over Saul, who clothed you in ſcarlet with *other* delights; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25 How are the mighty fallen in the midſt of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou waſt* ſlain in thine high places.

26 I am diſtreſſed for thee, my brother Jonathan; very pleaſant haſt thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, paſſing the love of women.

27 How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war periſhed!

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of God; becauſe there the anointed of the Lord had been deprived of his ſhield, and treated as one of the baſeſt of the people, is a ſtrong expreſſion of regret for ſuch an event. The harmony, which generally ſubſiſted betwixt Saul and Jonathan, in warring againſt the enemies of Iſrael; and the impetuoſity, and fury, with which they had together charged, and purſued them, and their falling in the ſame battle, are touched upon, in a very poetical manner. And as Saul had encouraged the manufactures of Iſrael, perhaps had increaſed their wealth, the daughters of Iſrael, as moſt delighted with external embelliſhments, are called upon to lament over their prince. Every thing is mentioned in his commendation, which truth permitted: but Jonathan is named with moſt paſſionate affection; as having fallen upon the high places, where he had often ſucceſsfully diſplayed his valour: and as having ſhewn a ſtrong and faithful affection, in ſuch trying circumſtances, and in ſo diſintereſted a manner, as could not be equalled by any inſtances of conjugal fidelity; or the moſt conſtant love, which hath ſubſiſted betwixt the ſexes. Conſidering therefore how pleaſant his friendſhip had been to him, he could not but be greatly diſtreſſed at his premature death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The deepeſt diſtreſs often immediately precedes the dawning of deliverance: but they, who have committed their concerns to the Lord, will quietly abide his will, and repreſs that eagerneſs, and anxiety, with which others torment themſelves, when they expect important changes. Many ſecretly wiſh for the death of thoſe, who keep them from their honours or eſtates, without excepting their neareſt relations; and inwardly rejoice at thoſe events, for which they *decently appear* to mourn. This is very well known to mercenary men, who form their plans accordingly: and they are apt to conclude that all men are actuated by the ſame ſelfiſh principles. But the grace of God ſubdues this baſe diſpoſition, and forms the mind to a more liberal temper: the true believer doth not allow himſelf to deſire, or to rejoice in the calamity, or death of a rival, or an enemy: much leſs for that of a kind, and ſuperior relation, to whom gratitude and honour are juſtly due: and his mourning will on ſuch occaſions be unfeigned, though moderated by ſubmiſſion to the will of God: he cannot exult in the proſpect of wordly advancement; for he conſiders it, as being entruſted with more talents, ſurrounded by greater temptations, and called to increaſing cares, duties, and burdens. They will therefore be deceived, who court his favour, as ſycophants do that of their ungodly ſuperiors: They will meet with a frown, a rebuke, and perhaps with puniſhment, where they expected a large reward. And ſuch treatment of ſuch mercenary men promiſes an uſeful, and honourable poſſeſſion of worldly pre-eminence. The poor diſtinctions, of which ſinners are vain, only expoſe them to diſtinguiſhed danger, and they are frequently ſeized by ſtrangers, and enemies: however they muſt be left, and they cannot tell who ſhall gather them. The faults of others ſhould not be needleſsly expoſed, and all remembrance of injuries ſhould be buried with the deceaſed, except the glory of God and the benefit of men demand the contrary. And the offices, and rank of diſtinguiſhed perſons are entitled to reſpect, though their characters do not demand our eſteem. Uſeful endowments are conferred on thoſe, who are deſtitute of true piety; and it is in ſome caſes allowable, and decent to give them due commendation; but never to praiſe them for thoſe virtues, which they do not poſſeſs. But holineſs demands our peculiar love, and renders the ſociety of others very pleaſant to the true believer: and nothing elſe will avail any man in another world. Next to the love, which ſubſiſts betwixt the Lord, and his people, that endeared affection, which ſprings from it, produces the moſt vigorous, durable, faithful, and diſintereſted friendſhip: yet even this heavenly love occaſions deep diſtreſs *in this world, in which it is an exotic*; but in its own climate above, it will flouriſh into unalloyed, and eternal pleaſure. The calamities of the Lord's people, and the triumphs of his enemies will always grieve the hearts of true believers, whatever advantages they may incidentally obtain by them: and it would be well, if many things, which continually occur amongſt profeſſors, could be concealed from infidels, and profligates, who are exceedingly hardened, and emboldened by them. But it is not enough to conceal; we muſt watch and pray againſt ſuch offences. Let us then learn to repreſs our ambition, reſentment, and ſelf-love, and to exerciſe patience, meekneſs, gratitude to our benefactors, love to our country, and zeal for the glory of God, and for the intereſts of true religion.

CHAP. II.

Contains, 1st. David directed of God to remove to Hebron, anointed king by the men of Judah, and thanking the men of Jabesh-gilead for burying Saul, &c, v. 1—7. *2d. Abner setting up Ish-bosheth, and the men of Israel following him, v.* 8—11. *3d. Abner beginning a civil war; met by Joab, David's general; a fatal conflict betwixt twelve men, on a side; a battle favourable to David, but stayed by Joab, and marked by the death of his brother Asahel, v.* 12—32.

AND it came to pass after this, that David enquired of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah? And the LORD said unto him, Go up. And David said, Whither shall I go up? And he said, unto Hebron.

2 So David went up thither, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite.

3 And his men that *were* with him did David bring up, every man with his household: and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

4 And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, *That* the men of Jabesh-gilead *were they* that buried Saul.

5 And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, Blessed *be* ye of the LORD, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, *even* unto Saul, and have buried him.

6 And now the LORD shew kindness and truth unto you: and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.

7 Therefore now let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant: for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them.

8 But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim:

9 And he made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

10 Ish-bosheth Saul's son *was* forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and

NOTES.

CHAP. II.] V. 1. *After this*, &c.] After the death of Saul many of the Israelites resorted to David at Ziklag, till his forces were very considerable; (1 *Chron.* c. xii. v. 22:) but he did not take any step to obtain possession of the vacant throne, without consulting the Lord: he trusted in God, who had promised him the kingdom, to give him it, in his own time, and manner; that he might possess it with a clear conscience, and avoid all appearance of those evils, with which he knew Saul's adherents would be ready to charge him. Accordingly he was directed to go up to Hebron, a chief city of Judah.

V. 4. *They anointed*, &c.] By this ceremony, they accepted David, as the Lord's anointed, to be their king; they did not prescribe to the other tribes, but anointed him only over the house of Judah.

V. 5—7.] David took every opportunity of expressing the same regard to Saul, as he had done in his life time. But he, and three of his sons were now dead; and all Israel knew that his family had been rejected by the Lord, who had ordered David to be anointed as his successor: the tribe of Judah had recognized his title, and it was proper that he should act as king: and he could not begin his reign by a more conciliating measure, than by sending a deputation to thank those, who had rescued, and performed the funeral ceremonies, over the bodies of Saul, and his sons: and he not only besought the Lord to reward them for that good work, but promised, that he also would requite them; being determined to shew all kindness to the friends of his predecessor: and he also encouraged them to expect his firm support against the Philistines and other enemies.

V. 8. *Abner*, &c.] Abner was a near relation of Saul; (1 *Sam.* c. ix. v. 1. c. xiv. v. 50, 51. 1 *Chron.* c. viii. v. 33. c. ix. v. 39;) and Ish-bosheth seems to have been an insignificant person: Abner therefore probably intended to give him only the title of king, and hoped to possess the authority himself. Yet he was conscious that, in so doing, he was opposing the purpose of God.

V. 9. *Over all Israel.*] The nation in general had rejected the judges, whom God had raised up for them, and had demanded a king: in continuation of the same, rebellion, they refused the person, whom the Lord had selected for them, though a man of approved abilities, and character; and preferred the surviving son of their rejected king, though in every respect, an improper person. By these means the Lord trained up his servant for future honour, and usefulness; and he took occasion to manifest the tendency of true godliness, in his behaviour, when passing through these various difficulties. In this David was a type of Christ, whom Israel would not submit to, though anointed of the Father to be a Prince and Saviour to them.

V. 10. *Two years*, &c.] That is, before any remarkable events took place; for David did not reign over all Israel, till the expiration of seven years. During two years, he attempted nothing hostile against Ish-bosheth, or to

reigned two years: but the house of Judah followed David.

11 (And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.)

12 And Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon.

13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool.

14 And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise.

15 Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which *pertained* to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David.

16 And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and *thrust* his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which *is* in Gibeon.

17 And there was a very sore battle that day: and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David.

18 And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel *was as* light of foot as a wild roe.

19 And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left, from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, I *am*.

21 And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him.

22 And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?

23 Howbeit, he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner, with the hinder end of the spear, smote him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still.

24 Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner: and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that *lieth* before Giah, by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon.

25 And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill.

26 Then Abner called to Joab, and said,

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subject Israel; and peace might have still subsisted, had not Abner commenced a war. However David was no subject to Ish-bosheth, but the appointed king of Israel, and therefore he was not bound to confine himself to the same measures of self-defence, as when he was persecuted by "the Lord's anointed."

V. 12. *From Mahanaim*, &c.] This was east of Jordan, where Abner had fixed the seat of Ishbosheth's kingdom, as more secure from the Philistines, and from David. Thence Abner marched his army over Jordan, unto Gibeon, in the tribe of Benjamin, expecting to be effectually supported, in subjecting the tribe of Judah also. To him David opposed an army under the command of Joab his sister's son: and to the instructions given him we ought to ascribe the moderation, with which he conducted this war.

V. 14. *Let the young men*, &c.] It is probable that Joab kept upon the defensive, and did not give Abner an opportunity of attacking him: and that Abner's impatience to engage induced him to give this challenge. He expressed himself, as if he only intended to make diversion for the two armies, according to the horrible custom of gladiators, who gratified the diabolical spectators by murdering each other. Joab, though backward to engage, had not resolution to refuse the challenge. Helkath Hazzurim signifies "the field of strong men."

V. 18—23.] These circumstances were recorded to shew that Abner was not to blame in the death of Asahel: for he was constrained to slay him in his own defence: for nothing could satisfy Asahel, but either killing or taking captive the commander of the opposite army; for which he was incompetent.

V. 26. *Shall the sword*, &c.] Abner used very different language, when he was worsted in battle, than when eager to engage: now, he spake "of the sword devouring "for ever," and of the bitterness which it would occasion in the event; before he spake of it as a kind of diversion. But he forgot himself, when he threw the blame upon Joab; and he would not have made so moderate an use of his advantage, had victory inclined to his side. But

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Shall the ſword devour for ever? knoweſt thou not that it will be bitterneſs in the latter end? how long ſhall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?

27 And Joab ſaid, *As* God liveth, unleſs thou hadſt ſpoken, ſurely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother.

28 So Joab blew a trumpet, and all the people ſtood ſtill, and purſued after Iſrael no more, neither fought they any more.

29 And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain, and paſſed over Jordan, and went through all Bithron, and they came to Mahanaim.

30 And Joab returned from following Abner: and when he had gathered all the people together, there lacked of David's ſervants nineteen men and Aſahel.

31 But the ſervants of David had ſmitten of Benjamin, and of Abner's men, *ſo that* three hundred and threeſcore men died.

32 And they took up Aſahel, and buried him in the ſepulchre of his father, which *was* in Beth-lehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at break of day.

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though Joab was exaſperated by the death of his brother, yet in regard to David's inclinations, and Iſrael's advantage, he ſtopped the purſuit, and gave Abner and his troops an opportunity of retiring to a place of ſafety.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

If we would poſſeſs temporal things with a bleſſing, we muſt not eagerly ſeize upon them: we muſt not be determined by favourable providences, or carnal counſellors: but we muſt obſerve the rules of God's word, and pray for his direction; uſing thoſe means, and thoſe only, which he hath appointed, or allowed; avoiding all evil, and appearance of evil, in our purſuit of them; and thus receiving them in that meaſure, that the Lord is pleaſed to communicate: whatever elſe we thus miſs of, we ſhall certainly be directed in the way to the kingdom of heaven. They, who have ſhared our afflictions, ſhould be aſſociated in our proſperity; for they, who ſuffer with Chriſt, ſhall alſo reign with him. When we are influenced by faith, fear, and love of God; and act with integrity, kindneſs, forgiveneſs, and a deſire of peace, and purity amongſt men, we ſhall conduct our affairs with the beſt wiſdom. We are bound to pray for, and do good to thoſe, who have acted properly, even to our enemies; and to uſe conciliatory meaſures towards all men; but eſpecially ſuch, who have behaved with gratitude, and fidelity, in dangerous circumſtances, and without proſpect of advantage; for ſuch friends are worthy of attention: and they, who have been grateful to one benefactor, will find others to protect them, when he is removed. But the believer's progreſs muſt be gradual; his faith, and graces muſt be exerciſed, and proved, and his pride ſubdued, before he can properly endure any kind of proſperity: and for theſe purpoſes, the Lord employs the perverſeneſs of our brethren, without their knowledge, or intention. In the profeſſing church few honour thoſe, whom the Lord will honour: before Jeſus came, and in every generation ſince, the very builders have rejected thoſe, whom the Lord intended for eminent ſituations in the ſpiritual building; and Chriſt's ſervants muſt be conformed to him. Ambition, jealouſy, envy, or other evil paſſions, cauſe men to rebel againſt the word of God: but they generally attempt to conceal their real motives under plauſible pretences: however the believer's wiſdom conſiſts in waiting quietly, and ſilently under injuries, and in leaving the Lord to plead his cauſe; except it be evidently his duty to be active. But there is a reſpect due to ſuperior relations, which equals or inferiors in ſimilar circumſtances are not entitled to. Ambitious, and bloody men often conſider the trade of war, and the ſlaughter of their fellow-creatures as a mere diverſion; and the lives of millions have been trifled away, out of a ridiculous point of honour, to the great gratification of ſatan, that firſt great murderer of the bodies, and ſouls of men. From age to age numbers are ambitious of venturing their lives, and ſouls, for the empty hope of being celebrated as valiant men, after they are dead; and from the ſame motive they mingle the blood of their brethren with their own; though they bear them no reſentment, and have received no provocation from them: but what can be more irrational, and infatuated than ſuch a conduct! The ſword of civil war, when once unſheathed, is not eaſily returned into the ſcabbard: and they, who in their eagerneſs to engage, have made the lighteſt of ſuch unnatural conteſts, will perceive in the event, that they are bitterneſs to all parties concerned. Men are greatly diſpoſed to throw the blame of manifeſt evil upon others, that they may exculpate themſelves: and thoſe arguments, which were diſregarded as futile, when they made againſt them, will be deemed very concluſive, when urged on their own behalf. Succeſs, as well as ſelf-love, has great effect in determining men's judgments: of the evil of proſperous attempts they cannot be convinced; yet they can eaſily perceive that to be wrong, which occaſions loſs, or peril to themſelves. But though ſuch partial deciſions ſhould be expoſed, and rebuked; it is always right to exerciſe clemency to the vanquiſhed, and generoſity to the wretched; to ſpare the ſhedding of human blood, and to alleviate the ſum of human miſery: and to ſtrive for peace, eſpecially in thoſe inteſtine contentions in nations or churches, wherein the common cauſe muſt ſuffer, which party ſoever acquires the aſcendancy. Men's different endowments qualify them for varied kinds of ſervice; and ſhould be improved for that purpoſe. But when talents are over-rated, and men confide, and glory in them, they will go out of the line of duty, in order to diſtinguiſh themſelves; they will deſpiſe warnings and counſel, as the effect of envy, or cowardice;

CHAP III.

Contains, 1ſt. The prevalence of David's cauſe, and the increaſe of his family, v. 1—5. 2d. Abner quarrelling with Iſh-boſheth, and treating with David, and with the people, about David's reigning over all Iſrael; and David demanding, and receiving back Michal, v. 6—21. 3d. Joab's inſolence to David, and his murder of Abner, v. 22—27. 4th. David's reſentment, lamentations, and honourable interment of Abner: and Joab's impunity for the preſent, v. 28—39.

NOW there was long war between the houſe of Saul and the houſe of David: but David waxed ſtronger and ſtronger, and the houſe of Saul waxed weaker and weaker.

2 And unto David were ſons born in Hebron: and his firſt born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreeliteſs;

3 And his ſecond, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite; and the third, Abſalom the ſon of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geſhur;

4 And the fourth Adonijah the ſon of Haggith; and the fifth, Shephatiah the ſon of Abital;

5 And the ſixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife. Theſe were born to David in Hebron.

6 And it came to paſs, while there was war between the houſe of Saul and the houſe of David, that Abner made himſelf ſtrong for the houſe of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine, whoſe name *was* Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah: and *Iſh-boſheth* ſaid to Abner, Wherefore haſt thou gone in unto my father's concubine?

8 Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Iſhboſheth, and ſaid, *Am* I a dog's head, which againſt Judah do ſhew kindneſs this day unto the houſe of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargeſt me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?

9 So do God to Abner, and more alſo, except as the LORD hath ſworn to David, even ſo I do to him;

10 To tranſlate the kingdom from the houſe of Saul, and to ſet up the throne of David over Iſrael and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-ſheba.

11 And he could not anſwer Abner a word again, becauſe he feared him.

12 And Abner ſent meſſengers to David on his behalf, ſaying, Whoſe *is* the land? ſaying *alſo*, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand *ſhall be* with thee, to bring about all Iſrael unto thee.

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and they will always be ſhamed, and frequently ruined, by theſe qualifications, in which they prided themſelves. Often do men fancy themſelves about to ſeize upon ideal happineſs, when death ſtops their career, and lays them in the duſt: and if they will ruſh forwards in the road to deſtruction, though plainly warned of their danger, they need blame none but themſelves. Finally, there are many diſtinctions amongſt men, both during life, and in the diſpoſal of their bodies after death: but in the eternal world no other diſtinction ſubſiſts, except betwixt thoſe, "who "have ſerved the Lord, and thoſe, who have not ſerved him."

NOTES.

CHAP. III. V. 1. *Now there was*, &c.] The civil war continued about five years, and a half: but it ſeems to have been conducted with great moderation on the part of David. However he gained continually upon the eſteem and affections of the people, and in the extent of his dominions, and the number of his ſubjects; whilſt Iſh-boſheth gradually ſunk into inſignificancy, and contempt. Thus Chriſt waits till his people are made willing to be his ſervants, and to claim his protection.

V. 2—5.] David's motives for multiplying his wives were of a carnal nature, whatever they were; and it proved the occaſion of much ſin, and trouble afterwards. By them all he had but ſix ſons all the time, that he reigned at Hebron; though probably he had ſome daughters, who are not mentioned. Perhaps Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, had been taken priſoner, and proſelyted, before David married her.

V. 6—10.] Perhaps Abner was weary of Iſh-boſheth's unſucceſsful cauſe, and was glad of an occaſion of ſecuring preferment in David's ſervice. He was moſt likely guilty of the crime charged upon him, which was conſidered as a claim to the kingdom of a deceaſed prince (c. xii. v. 8. c. xvi. v. 21—23. 1 *Kings*, c. ii. v. 22). Yet Iſh-boſheth was very imprudent to mention it, being entirely dependant upon Abner; whoſe pride diſdained to be called to an account, after all his boaſted ſervices to the houſe of Saul, whom he had ſupported not only againſt the houſe of Judah, but againſt the oath of God, and the convictions of his own conſcience. Indeed ambition, and not regard to Iſh-boſheth, had hitherto induced him to ſupport his intereſt: and revenge and policy, not regard to the will of God, prevailed with him at this time to join David's party.

V. 12. *Whoſe is the land*, &c.] Abner by this expreſſion inſinuated, that he poſſeſſed the authority, and not Iſh-boſheth: if therefore David would grant him advantageous terms, he would put him in poſſeſſion of the whole land.

13 And

13 And he said, Well; I will make a league with thee: but one thing I require of thee, that is, Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face.

14 And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth Saul's son, saying, Deliver *me* my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.

15 And Ish-bosheth sent, and took her from *her* husband, *even* from Phaltiel the son of Laish.

16 And her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim. Then said Abner unto him, Go, return. And he returned.

17 And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel, saying, Ye sought for David in times past *to be* king over you:

18 Now then *do it*: for the LORD hath spoken of David, saying, By the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies.

17 And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin: and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron, all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner came to David to Hebron, and twenty men with him. And David made Abner, and the men that were with him, a feast.

21 And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.

22 And, behold the servants of David and Joab came from *pursuing* a troop, and brought in a great spoil with them: but Abner *was* not with David in Hebron; for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace.

23 When Joab and all the host that *was* with him were come, they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace.

24 Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee: why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?

25 Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know

V. 13. *Well; I will*, &c.] David knew that the kingdom was his in the purpose of God: and it was desirable to sheath the sword of civil war, and to unite all Israel voluntarily under one king: and he was not the judge of, or accountable for Abner's secret motives; and doubtless he meant to grant Ish-bosheth very favourable terms, if his purposes had not been prevented.

V. 14—16.] Had David divorced Michal, and she had been married to another, he might not have received her again: but the separation was violent on both sides; and probably her marriage to Phaltiel was a force upon her inclinations: Phaltiel was very criminal in taking another man's wife, whatever affection he had for her. David made this demand, perhaps out of affection for Michal; or to strengthen his interests by asserting, and shewing the value, which he put upon his affinity with the house of Saul; or to shew his regard for the law of God, and to rebuke a man, who so openly violated it. As Abner did not deem it politic at that juncture, to take Michal from Phaltiel, he applied to Ishbosheth, who complied with his demand; perhaps being willing to be upon amicable terms with him, as he could not overcome him by arms.

V. 22. *From pursuing a troop*, &c.] Of Philistines, or other enemies, not of Ish-bosheth's forces.

V. 24, 25.] Joab, and his brother Abishai, had been very faithful, and useful to David, in his afflictions: and in gratitude, natural affection, and the love of peace, he had inadvertently given them almost as great an ascendancy over him, as Abner had over Ish bosheth: he trusted in, and feared them too much, and allowed them all the importance, that they claimed. But if he could not prevent their obtaining an undue influence before he came to the kingdom; he should afterwards have ventured all consequences, in checking their presumption, and exerting the authority, which God had committed to him: trusting in his help he need neither have feared the revolt of Joab, or cared about his support, and services. Nothing can be more affronting than this address of Joab to his prince, whom he grosly charged with the most egregious folly, and then left his presence without waiting for an answer. But it was the language of envy, and ambition, as well as of resentment: he supposed that he had missed an opportunity of avenging the death of Asahel; and he feared a formidable rival, if Abner made a league with David.

V. 25, 26.] Joab seems to have recalled Abner in David's name, without his knowledge; which was base treatment of him, as well as of Abner, as if he would bring him under suspicion of conniving at the murder: and when Abner, imprudently indeed, but in confidence, stepped aside to confer with him, as the officer of David, he treacherously assassinated him, in violation of every law of hospitality, or public faith: Abishai also was privy to, and

thy going out, and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doeſt.

26 And when Joab was come out from David, he ſent meſſengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah; but David knew *it* not.

27 And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aſide in the gate to ſpeak with him quietly, and ſmote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Aſahel his brother.

28 And afterward when David heard *it*, he ſaid, I and my kingdom *are* guiltleſs before the LORD for ever, from the blood of Abner the ſon of Ner.

29 Let it reſt on the head of Joab, and on all his father's houſe; and let there not fail from the houſe of Joab one that hath an iſſue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a ſtaff, or that falleth on the ſword, or that lacketh bread.

30 So Joab and Abiſhai his brother ſlew Abner, becauſe he had ſlain their brother Aſahel at Gibeon in the battle.

31 And David ſaid to Joab, and to all the people that *were* with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with ſackcloth, and mourn before Abner. And king David *himſelf* followed the bier.

32 And they buried Abner in Hebron: and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.

33 And the king lamented over Abner, and ſaid, Died Abner as a fool dieth?

34 Thy hands *were* not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, *ſo* felleſt thou. And all the people wept again over him.

35 And when all the people came to cauſe David to eat meat while it was yet day, David ſware, ſaying, So do God to me and more alſo, if I taſte bread, or ought elſe, till the ſun be down.

36 And all the people took notice *of it*, and it pleaſed them: as whatſoever the king did pleaſed all the people.

37 For all the people, and all Iſrael, underſtood that day, that it was not of the king to ſlay Abner the ſon of Ner.

38 And the king ſaid unto his ſervants, Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Iſrael?

39 And I *am* this day weak, though anointed king, and theſe men the ſons of Zeruiah *be* too hard for me: the LORD ſhall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedneſs.

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concerned in the baſe tranſaction, (v. 30.) But, notwithſtanding Joab's guilt, Abner was juſtly puniſhed for pertinaciouſly oppoſing the known will of God; and he was thrown aſide, as unworthy to raiſe David to the throne, or to give peace to Iſrael: and probably had he lived his ambition, influence, and ungodlineſs would have occaſioned further miſchiefs to all parties.

V. 28, 29.] David meant by theſe proteſtations, and imprecations upon Joab, and his family, to wipe off all ſuſpicion of his own guilt, and to remove it from the land: being afraid of a revolt of the ſoldiers, if he offered to execute vengeance on the murderer. But he ſhould have remembered, that He, who ſtilleth the raging of the ſea, is able to ſtill the madneſs of the people. In ſo juſt a cauſe he might, and ought to have riſqued all conſequences: he was anointed king to adminiſter juſtice without reſpect of perſons; and he might have been aſſured of the Lord's ſupport in doing ſo important a duty; the example would have been very ſalutary; all impartial perſons would have applauded his firmneſs; perhaps Iſh-boſheth's murder would have been prevented, and many other crimes, and calamities, in the latter part of his reign: but his fear of man overcame his faith in God, and Joab continued, and increaſed in authority, and in crimes, to the end of David's life: but he was at length called to account. Thus the Son of David long delays, but never fails to puniſh impenitent ſinners.

V. 31. *To Joab*, &c.] Joab was conſtrained to do penance, ſo to ſpeak, by appearing as a mourner for Abner: but as his revenge was gratified, his rival removed, and no heavier puniſhment inflicted, he would have little objection to ſuch a ceremonial.

V. 33. *Died Abner*, &c?] Abner did not die as criminals do, who are bound, fettered, put to ſhame, and executed for their offences; nor as a coward fleeing from, or taken priſoner by the enemy; nor as a raſh man, who had needleſsly run himſelf into danger: but as an honeſt man, who is unexpectedly ſet upon by ruffians, and murdered. It would be very mortifying to Joab, to be thus publicly reproached as an aſſaſſin. The ſatisfaction of the people in the king's behaviour on this occaſion ſhews, that he might ſafely have proceeded to puniſh the criminal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The power, and policy of ſatan, and of wicked men may ſtruggle againſt the purpoſes of God, and the cauſe of his anointed king, and may *ſeem* to occaſion delays: but his intereſt is gaining ground, though by imperceptible degrees, and his glory will ere long be diſplayed throughout the earth. When he hath ſet up his kingdom in any heart,

CHAP. IV.

Contains, 1st. Ishbosheth murdered by two of his servants, who brought his head to David; with some account of Mephibosheth, 1—8. 2d. David ordering the murderers to be put to death, 9—12.

AND when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled.

2 And Saul's son had two men *that were* captains of bands; the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin: (for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin:

3 And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.)

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inbred lusts, and outward temptations will powerfully oppose: but grace shall gather strength, and every corruption be weakened continually in the conflict, till the believer be at length sanctified wholly in body, soul, and spirit. Inconstancy must he incident to selfish men: if their avarice or ambition meet with disappointment in one course, they will turn into another; and sometimes pretensions to religion seem the readiest way to the gratification of their worldly lusts. Many are not above committing very base crimes, who are too proud to bear reproof, or even the suspicion of being guilty: and whilst men go on in their sins apparently without concern, they are often conscious that they are fighting against God. Little confidence can be placed in those who affront their Maker, betray their country, or deceive those, who confide in them, under the pretence of serving their friends: most certainly they mean to serve their own purposes; and will betray them also, when they can obtain advantageous terms for doing it. Yet even by those who are actuated by revenge, ambition, lust, or avarice, the Lord secretly subserves his own designs: but as they intend not to honour him, whatever they profess; so when his ends are answered, he will throw them aside with contempt. In some cases, and for some purposes, we too may use their help, without enquiring about their motives, but it will require great caution, and wisdom, or we shall not escape guilt, or reproach. The re-union of near relatives, who have been involuntarily separated, is right in itself, and it is always our duty to express our regard for the divine law, and to bear testimony against sin: and no affection is amiable or allowable, which is not regulated according to the word of God. The bulk of mankind in all ages are turned about by those, who rule, or teach them: or by those, who possess influence over them, or address their passions by eloquence, or flattery: but let us seek for a sound judgment, a good conscience, and an upright heart; that we may know, and adhere to the truth, and will of God amidst all changes, and notwithstanding all delusions; which succeed each other in the world, just as the fashions vary. They, who have deceived others, should endeavour to undeceive them: but good words will do but little, so long as a man continues the slave of his lusts. In cultivating Christian tempers, and performing relative duties, extremes, and counterfeits must be guarded against: as zeal, and boldness may be furious, and contentious; so meekness, and the love of peace may degenerate into imbecillity, and irresolution: and through undue ascendancy of those inferiors, who ought to be kept in subjection with all gravity, shameful things will often be done, or connived at, to the censure of individuals, and the reproach of the common cause. Every one therefore should know his own place, and it's duties, and exercise the Christian tempers *in doing them*, not make them an excuse for neglecting his proper work. Proud men rate their services so high, and are so regardless of relative duties, and of decorum, that it is not desirable to be under obligations to them: however we should endeavour to receive every thing from God, and consider every man as a channel, through which the gift is communicated; of whom there is indeed no real necessity, on whom we should rest no dependance, and to whom that gratitude is due, and that alone, which consists with every other duty. They who cannot brook an affront, or a rival; and who deem themselves too powerful for human justice, have little to restrain them from the commission of the most horrid crimes: and the human heart is capable of making the highest professions of friendship subservient to the most cruel murders; and of violating every sacred tye. It is not enough for those, who are vested with authority, to express their abhorrence of such crimes, and criminals, or their compassion for those, who suffer by them: but all partialities, and interested considerations should be laid aside, and condign punishment inflicted, that others may hear, and fear, and do no more such wickedness: and in every state the executive authority should possess power sufficient to punish the proudest subject; lest blood be imputed to the land. As our lives are so exposed on every side, and as he most *emphatically* dieth as a fool, who dieth in his sins, we should be careful to be always ready: for all the honour, or commendations, that men can bestow on us, after our decease, will not affect, or amend the state of the departed soul in the invisible world. Alas, what are the imagined advantages of royalty? The king after God's own heart finds as much cause for lamentation, and complaint, as when a poor fugitive! He who now reigns upon the throne of David, has a kingdom of a nobler kind: whatever he doeth is noticed by, and pleaseth all his willing people; and he will bring them all to share his glory, and joy. But many are outwardly serviceable to his cause, who only seek themselves in all they do, and from time to time disgrace it with their crimes: these may escape for a season, but at length they shall be numbered with his enemies, and perish for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV.] V. 1. *His hands*, &c.] Perhaps Ish-bosheth was not before certainly informed that Abner was deserted to David: or both he, and the people hoped by his means to have obtained better terms. But by his death their affairs were left in confusion, and they had no capable person either to lead them to battle, or to negotiate a treaty.

V. 3. *Fled to*, &c.] When Saul's army was routed, and he and his sons slain, they deserted their city, and went to so-

4 And

4 And Jonathan, Saul's ſon, had a ſon *that was* lame of *his* feet. He was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurſe took him up, and fled: and it came to paſs, as ſhe made haſte to flee, that he fell, and became lame. And his name *was* Mephiboſheth.

5 And the ſons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went, and came about the heat of the day to the houſe of Iſh-boſheth, who lay on a bed at noon.

6 And they came thither into the midſt of the houſe, *as though* they would have fetched wheat; and they ſmote him under the fifth *rib:* and Rechab and Baanah his brother eſcaped.

7 For when they came into the houſe, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they ſmote him, and ſlew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.

8 And they brought the head of Iſh-boſheth unto David to Hebron, and ſaid to the king, Behold the head of Iſh-boſheth the ſon of Saul thine enemy, which ſought thy life; and the LORD hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his ſeed.

9 And David anſwered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the ſons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and ſaid unto them, *As* the LORD liveth, who hath redeemed my ſoul out of all adverſity,

10 When one told me, ſaying, Behold, Saul is dead, (thinking to have brought good tidings,) I took hold of him, and ſlew him in Ziklag, who *thought* that I would have given him a reward for his tidings:

11 How much more, when wicked men have ſlain a righteous perſon in his own houſe upon his bed? ſhall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth?

12 And David commanded his young men, and they ſlew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged *them* up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Iſh-boſheth, and buried *it* in the ſepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

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journ at Gittaim: at the ſame time the calamity, after mentioned, befel Mephiboſheth, which ſeems to have been inſerted on that account.

V. 5. *Lay on a bed*, &c.] Iſh-boſheth had enough to do in this emergency, without ſleeping on his bed at noon! But he appears to have been an inactive, ſelf-indulgent man.

V. 8. *The Lord hath*, &c.] Theſe men not only miſtook David's character, as if he ſo thirſted for revenge, that he would reward any villany, by which it could be accompliſhed: but they pretended to have performed the will of God, in this complicated treaſon, and parricide. The Lord had indeed avenged his ſervant of many of his enemies: but neither David, nor David's Lord had commiſſioned them to murder their prince, whom they profeſſed to ſerve.

V. 9. *Who hath redeemed*, &c.] (*Note*, *Gen.* c. xlviii. v. 16.) David, in the uſe of this expreſſion, intended that the hearers ſhould recollect, that the Lord had delivered him out of his troubles; and that he had not uſed any treachery or cruelty to extricate himſelf, nor allowed any of thoſe about him to do it: and therefore he needed not the aſſiſtance of ſuch vile traitors.

V. 11. *A righteous man*, &c.] Whatever Iſh-boſheth's character was before God, he was righteous *as to them*; and in ſlaying him, they ſhed innocent blood, from the baſeſt motives, and with the greateſt aggravations: and David, as God's vicegerent, moſt juſtly executed vengeance upon them for it. It had been well, if he had been equally deciſive in the caſe of Joab: that there might have been no appearance of partiality, and no hope of impunity to any criminal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Innumerable are the perils, to which our tender years are expoſed; and we owe gratitude both to the Lord and to our parents, if we were preſerved during that period, from loſing our limbs, or ſenſes, or contracting harms, which would have rendered our whole future lives uncomfortable to ourſelves, and others. Parents too ſhould take occaſion from this reflection, not only to be very attentive to their offſpring, but by prayer to commit them continually to the Lord's keeping. Every thing will concur in forwarding the accompliſhment of God's word, of promiſe, or of wrath, when the appointed time approaches: on one hand there can be no failure, on the other no eſcape. Wretched indeed are they, who are engaged in ſuch undertakings, that none can ſerve them, without oppoſing the known will of God! The more exalted their ſtation, the greater is their danger: for they, in whom they repoſe the greateſt confidence, are deſtitute of principle, only ſerve them for gain, and will betray, or murder them, when their mercenary ſchemes require it. Alas! what numbers ſink from ſelf-indulgence, and carnal ſecurity into unſuſpected, and inevitable deſtruction! Many are ſo conſcious, whatever they pretend, that they ſhould be pleaſed with villainy, which conduced greatly to their profit, that they are led confidently to conclude, that others will be ſo too: and as numbers are rewarded for ſuch vile ſervices, they expect the ſame. Perſons in authority therefore ſhould decidedly manifeſt, that they will not be ſerved by ſuch wretches, but will puniſh their crimes, inſtead of rewarding their ſucceſs in villainy. The ſervants of God are encou-

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Contains, 1st. David anointed king over all Israel, &c. v. 1—5. 2d. Obtaining possession of Jerusalem, v. 6—10. 3d. Employing the servants of the king of Tyre to build him an house; and taking more wives, by whom he had several children, v. 11—16. 4th. Gaining two victories over the Philistines, v. 17—25.

THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we *are* thy bone and thy flesh.

2 Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel: and the LORD said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel.

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David *was* thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* he reigned forty years.

5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months: and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty and three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land: which spake unto David, saying, Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither: thinking, David cannot come in hither.

7 Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same *is* the city of David.

8 And David said on that day, Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, *that are* hated of David's soul, *he shall be chief and captain.* Wherefore they said, The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.

9 So David dwelt in the fort, and called it

raged by the scriptures, and their own experience, to trust him in the path of duty, to redeem them from all adversity, without countenancing, any more than committing, sin for that purpose; and they will pity and pray for, behave kindly to, and speak as favourable of their opposers, as they can, and not become their own avengers: and the Son of David will requite those, who pretend to serve his cause by frauds, treasons, massacres, and persecutions, with more dreadful vengeance, than was inflicted on Ish-bosheth's murderers: he hath given contrary orders, and employs no such helpers.

NOTES.

CHAP. V.] V. 1—2. *We are thy bone,* &c.] (1 *Chron.* c. xii. v. 23—40.) When Abner, and Ish-bosheth were dead, the tribes of Israel were left as sheep without a shepherd; and had no inclination to set up another of Saul's family in opposition to David; and having observed the quiet and prosperous state of Judah under his government, they began to entertain higher, and more honourable thoughts of him. Of their own accord therefore they applied to him by their elders; and as a reason why he should forgive their ill-usage, and terminate the civil war, they pleaded their near relation to him, being his brethren, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: they now recollected, and praised his former services, which before they had overlooked; and mentioned the Lord's appointment of him, which before they had resisted. From all this they meant to infer, that, as they were desirous of submitting to his authority, and putting themselves under his protection, so they hoped that he would rule over them in tenderness, and equity, for their safety, and comfort; as a shepherd feeds his flock: as well as that he would lead them forth to victory over their enemies; this is introduced as a part of the Lord's commission to him, when he appointed him to the kingdom; by which they conveyed this hint in the most unexceptionable, and efficacious manner.

V. 3. *Made a league,* &c.] He consented, not only to pass an act of indemnity for the past, but to bind himself by a solemn compact, that he would not tyrannize over, or oppress them.

V. 6—8.] The greater part of Jerusalem lay in the lot of Benjamin; and had hitherto been possessed by the Jebusites: but as soon as that part of the land had submitted to David, he marched to dispossess them. The citadel, called the Strong Hold of mount Zion, was fortified by nature and art, and the Jebusites set him at defiance: confiding therein, they told him that blind, and lame men could defend it against his army; and perhaps in derision placed a company of such persons upon it, who insulted his soldiers, uttering also blasphemies against the God of Israel: for the last clause, (v. 8,) may be read, "they had said, even "the blind and the lame, that he shall not come into the "house." But David commanded his men, when "they smote "the Jebusites, to throw down the blind, and the lame, into "the gutter," or ditch; as it might be read; which under the conduct of Joab, they effected accordingly, (1 *Chron.* c. xi. v. 4—7.) These were said to be "hated of David's "soul;" for they were devoted Canaanites, and idolaters, if not blasphemers of God. But by the blind and the lame, some understand the idols of the Jebusites, which David's soldiers had thus called in contempt, but their worshippers so confided in them, that they defied David to take the citadel, whilst they kept their station, or by any means to remove them; and declared, that if he did, they would no longer admit them into their temples or houses. However David got possession: and on this mount the ark was placed, and the temple was built, and the kingdom of the family of David was established.

V. 9. *Millo,* &c.] Millo seems to have been some town-hall, or council-chamber, all around which David erected such buildings, as were proper for rendering the city the seat of government.

the city of David. And David built round about Millo and inward.

10 And David went on and grew great; and the LORD God of hoſts *was* with him.

11 And Hiram king of Tyre ſent meſſengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and maſons: and they built David an houſe.

12 And David perceived that the LORD had eſtabliſhed him king over Iſrael, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Iſrael's ſake.

13 And David took *him* more concubines and wives out of Jeruſalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet ſons and daughters born to David.

14 And theſe *be* the names of thoſe that were born unto him in Jeruſalem; Shamuah, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon,

15 Ibhar alſo, and Eliſhua, and Nepheg, and Japhia,

16 And Eliſhamah, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.

17 But when the Philiſtines heard that they had anointed David king over Iſrael, all the Philiſtines came up to ſeek David; and David heard *of it*, and went down to the hold.

18 The Philiſtines alſo came, and ſpread themſelves in the valley of Rephaim.

19 And David enquired of the LORD, ſaying, Shall I go up to the Philiſtines? wilt thou deliver them into mine hand? And the LORD ſaid unto David, Go up; for I will doubtleſs deliver the Philiſtines into thine hand.

20 And David came to Baal-perazim, and David ſmote them there, and ſaid, The LORD hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters. Therefore he called the name of that place Baal-perazim.

21 And there they left their images, and David and his men burned them.

22 And the Philiſtines came up yet again, and ſpread themſelves in the valley of Rephaim.

23 And when David enquired of the LORD, he ſaid, Thou ſhalt not go up; *but* fetch a compaſs behind them, and come upon them over againſt the mulberry trees.

24 And let it be, when thou heareſt the ſound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees, that then thou ſhalt beſtir thyſelf: for then ſhall the LORD go out before thee, to ſmite the hoſt of the Philiſtines.

25 And David did ſo, as the LORD had commanded him; and ſmote the Philiſtines from Geba until thou come to Gazer.

V. 11. *Hiram ſent*, &c.] (1 *Chron.* c. xiv.) Hiram ſent to congratulate David on his acceſſion to the throne, and to enter into a league with him; and as his ſubjects were better architects than the Iſraelites, they were employed in building him a palace, ſuited to his exalted ſtation. Though Saul affected the ſplendour of royalty, yet he built not a royal palace; but David did; perhaps as a token of his belief, that the kingdom would be continued in his family.

V. 13—16.] It was cuſtomary for kings in thoſe times to multiply wives, and to ſtrengthen their intereſt by many alliances: to this David too much conformed: (*Deut.* c. xvii. v. 17.)

V. 17. *All the*, &c.] The Philiſtines, ſatisfied with the advantages, that they had enjoyed, ſince the death of Saul, had been reſtrained from moleſting the Iſraelites during their civil diſſentions; but invaded them as ſoon as they were united again under one king. Thus they delivered David from any embarraſſment about attacking thoſe, who had previouſly protected him. He immediately therefore marched to ſome fortified place, where he might check their incurſions, and conſult what meaſures to take. The valley of Rephaim was not far from Jeruſalem.

V. 20. *Baal-perazim*, &c.] That is, "the Lord "of Breaches." By ſome evident interpoſition the Lord himſelf fought againſt the Philiſtines, like the breaking forth of impetuous torrents, which bear all down before them. David therefore gave the place this name, by way of aſcribing to the Lord all the honour of the victory. Probably he meant, that the Lord had left him "Maſter of "the Breaches:" and that this was an earneſt of further victories; as the bank being broken makes way for further inundations.

V. 21.] They expected protection from their images, but they could not preſerve them from the conquerors. When the Philiſtines captivated the ark, the Lord by ſore judgments conſtrained them to reſtore it: but the Iſraelites burnt their idols without either fear, or hurt.

V. 24 *The ſound of a going*, &c.] Like the march of an army in the air; denoting the aſſiſtance of angels, or of God himſelf: yet then David was to beſtir himſelf. Sometimes the Lord commands, and employs, and ſometimes he rejects man's concurrence; that we may neither be ſelf-important, nor negligent.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Mercies long waited for in faith, and patience, will be conferred in the moſt reputable and comfortable manner: nor ſhall they go unrewarded, who perſiſt in refuſing to employ ſinful means for their own deliverance, or advance-

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Contains, 1st. David, and the people attempting to bring the ark to Jerusalem: Uzzah smitten, David disconcerted, and the ark left with Obed-edom, v. 1—11. *2d. Another attempt made: David offering sacrifices, and dancing before the ark, placing it in a tent prepared for it; blessing the people, and exercising liberality to them, v.* 12—15. 17—19. *3d. Michal despising, and ridiculing David; his answer, and her barrenness, v.* 16. 20—23. (1 *Chron.* c. xiii. xv. xvi.)

AGAIN, David gathered together all *the* chosen *men* of Israel, thirty thousand.

2 And David arose, and went with all the people, that *were* with him, from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God, whose name is called by the name of The LORD of hosts, that dwelleth *between* the cherubims.

3 And they set the ark of God upon a new

ment. Civil government is fixed on its firmest basis, and is like to produce the most permanent blessings; when it is voluntarily delegated, and regulated by wholesome laws; marking out duties, prerogatives, and privileges to prince and people, and reciprocally ratified as in the presence of the Lord, by the most solemn assurances, with a view to his authority, appointments, and commandments. As we are all brethren; "of one bone, and of one flesh," none ought to lord it over, to oppress, or to be cruel to another: princes should use clemency, and watch over, take care of, and be tender towards their people, like shepherds over their flocks: and the people should gratefully acknowledge the blessings they enjoy under their government, honour the authority of God in them, and yield them willing submission in all things lawful. Thus Jesus became our brother, assumed, and inhabits our nature, that he might be our Prince and Saviour: thus the humbled sinner takes encouragement from this endearing relation; applies for his salvation, and voluntarily submits to his kind authority, and craves his powerful protection. The false confidences of ungodly men will assuredly deceive them, and their proud boastings will hasten their ruin: whilst they go on, and grow great, with whom is the Lord God of hosts. In the day of his power satan's strong hold, the human heart, is converted into an habitation of God, through the Spirit; and into a throne, on which the Son of David rules, and brings every thought into obedience to himself. May he thus come and claim, and cleanse each of our hearts; and having destroyed every idol, may he dwell, and reign therein for ever. It is in mercy to a nation, when wise, and righteous persons are exalted to authority; and every advancement, or endowment, that we receive, should remind us, that the Lord alone hath conferred the distinction upon us: and that he did it, that we might be useful to his people, by the talents entrusted to us. We have therefore the more cause to be thankful, and watchful; and to pray the more earnestly for grace sufficient, to enable us duly to improve them; nay we have double cause for humility, when we reflect how little we do so. But alas! even good men are apt to grow secure, and self indulgent in prosperity, and to sanction by their example those abuses, which they should oppose, or repress: and all our returns for the Lord's mercies are deeply tinged with ingratitude. When the church of God begins indeed to prosper, it's enemies will generally bestir themselves: and the great exemption from all kinds of persecution, and the friendliness of the world to religion, with which many are pleased, arise from the *policy* of the enemy, who determines to let men alone with their empty notions, forms, and profession. In our spiritual warfare, we must decidedly declare for the Lord, though against relatives, or benefactors; and if we consult him, he will teach us to do it, without the appearance of evil. All those objects, which men idolize, will prove an useless incumbrance to them, when the Lord shall arise to execute judgment upon his enemies: and when the wicked shall be swept into destruction, as with an impetuous flood, the earth, and all its contents, the sum total of the worldling's idols, shall be burnt up. But, they who depend upon the Lord, and act according to his directions, who bestir them as and when he bids them, and are ready to give him all the praise, will doubtless prevail against all enemies, add one victory to another; and at length be admitted into his presence, to see and adore their before invisible helper.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI.] V. 2. *And David*, &c.] Probably this was proposed, and attempted, soon after the late victories over the Philistines. This great number of Israelites was collected to put the greater honour upon the ark, which had been so long left in obscurity.

V. 2. *From Baale*, &c.] Another name for Kirjath-jearim: Gibeah, (v. 3.) signifies the hill, and means that division of the city, where Abinadab's house was situated. The terms here used in speaking of the ark are very expressive of reverence: "The ark of God, whose name "is called by the name of the Lord of hosts; that dwelleth "between the cherubims." The name of Jehovah Sabaoth, the Lord of hosts, was, as it were, affixed to the ark, as it was the most honoured external representation of his glory. And when the ark was in its proper place, in the holy of holies, the Lord manifested his presence, by the visible glory above it, as the protector, worship, and glory of Israel. But especially it was typical of Christ, and his merits, and mediation, wherein the name of Jehovah, and all his glorious excellencies are harmoniously displayed; whilst all his hosts, or armies of angels, represented by the cherubims, desire to look down into those mysteries, or to be employed by him, who is the protector, Saviour, and glory of his redeemed people, and whom sinners may now approach upon a mercy seat.

V. 3. *Upon a new cart*, &c.] Thus they made the Philistines their precedent, instead of consulting the law of God. Abinadab and Eleazar his son were probably dead before this time, as the ark had continued there near seventy years: but Uzzah, and Ahio, two other sons, or descendants of Abinadab, had succeeded in the attendance upon the ark; and they now undertook to drive the cart, upon which it was to be conveyed. They probably were

cart,

cart, and brought it out of the houſe of Abinadab that *was* in Gibeah: and Uzzah and Ahio, the ſons of Abinadab, drave the new cart.

4 And they brought it out of the houſe of Abinadab, which *was* at Gibeah, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.

5 And David, and all the houſe of Iſrael, played before the LORD on all manner of *inſtruments made of* fir wood, even on harps, and on pſalteries, and on timbrels, and on cornets, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to Nachon's threſhing-floor, Uzzah put forth *his hand* to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen ſhook *it*.

7 And the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt Uzzah: and God ſmote him there for *his* error; and there he died by the ark of God.

8 And David was diſpleaſed, becauſe the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah to this day.

9 And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and ſaid, How ſhall the ark of the LORD come to me?

10 So David would not remove the ark of the LORD unto him into the city of David; but David carried it aſide into the houſe of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 And the ark of the LORD continued in the houſe of Obed-edom the Gittite three months: and the LORD bleſſed Obed-edom, and all his houſhold.

12 And it was told king David, ſaying, The LORD hath bleſſed the houſe of Obed-edom, and all that *pertaineth* unto him, becauſe of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the houſe of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladneſs.

13 And it was *ſo*, that when they that bare

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not of the tribe of Levi; (*Note*, 1 *Sam.* c. vii. v. 1.) And if there were any prieſts, or Levites preſent, they ſeem to have been unemployed: it does not appear that any care was taken to cover the ark; (*Numb.* c. vi. v. 5, 6:) nor were any ſacrifices offered upon the occaſion.

V. 7. *For his error*, &c.] It is enquired what Uzzah's error was? When he feared leſt the ark ſhould be thrown from the cart, with apparently good intentions, he laid hold of it to uphold it. But probably he had contracted an irreverent familiarity with this ſacred ſymbol, and preſumed upon the ſervices, which he, and his family had performed, in ſo long entertaining, and taking care of it, when others neglected it: and imagined, that he had thereby acquired a ſanctity, equal to that of the prieſts, or Levites. On this occaſion, when all orders of men combined in ſhewing honour to the ark, he ought to have declined any further interference; but he and his brother ſeem to have taken the whole charge upon themſelves, to the excluſion of the prieſts. Some think that he propoſed this method of conveyance, and was in ſome ſenſe anſwerable for the conſequences: even the Kohathites, who were appointed to carry the ark, were expreſsly forbidden "to touch it, leſt they die;" (*Numb.* c. iv. v. 15.) And there might be many circumſtances, which ſhewed his touching the ark to be raſh, irreverent, ill-timed, and unneceſſary; and many things in the temper of his mind diſpleaſing to God, which are not expreſsly recorded. But though Uzzah was ſingled out to be made an example of; the rebuke and warning were intended for David, for the prieſts, and for all Iſrael.

V. 8, 9.] Though David's heart was upright, his intentions good, and his zeal and love very fervent: yet there was much amiſs in the frame of his ſpirit, as well as irregular in his proceedings, on this occaſion. He ſeems to have been poſſeſſed with ſome meaſure of ſelf-preference, or ſelf-complacency, on account of the important ſervice, which he was performing, after it had been ſo long neglected by all others; and to have thought that the goodneſs of the work would counterbalance every informality in the manner of performing it, and enſure to him comfort and commendation: and he had not taken time, to examine the law of God, how this good work ought to have been performed. When therefore matters turned out contrary to his expectations, he was greatly diſconcerted, his lively religious affections were at once extinguiſhed; and hard thoughts of God, and ſervile fear of his ſeverity, ſucceeded to his zeal, hope, and joy; and he would not venture to bring the ark any nearer to him, leſt he ſhould be deſtroyed in like manner. Perez-uzzah ſignifies the breach of Uzzah.

V. 10, 11.] Until David had further conſidered the matter, and come to ſome determination, what to do with the ark, it was carried to the houſe of Obed-edom; who with humble confidence was ready to receive it, notwithſtanding the example of Uzzah. There it abode three months, and the whole multitude returned home, and left their buſineſs unfiniſhed. Obed-edom was a Levite, (1 *Chron.* c. xv. v. 18. 21. 24;) and he is called a Gittite, probably from the place of his birth, or of his abode. Every thing relating to his health, family, and circumſtances, proſpered in ſo extraordinary a manner, whilſt the ark was with him, that every one noticed, and mentioned it to others; ſo that David heard of it, and was thereby inſtructed, and encouraged. Doubtleſs he behaved to the ark with due reverence.

V. 13. *They, who bare*, &c.] David had by this time

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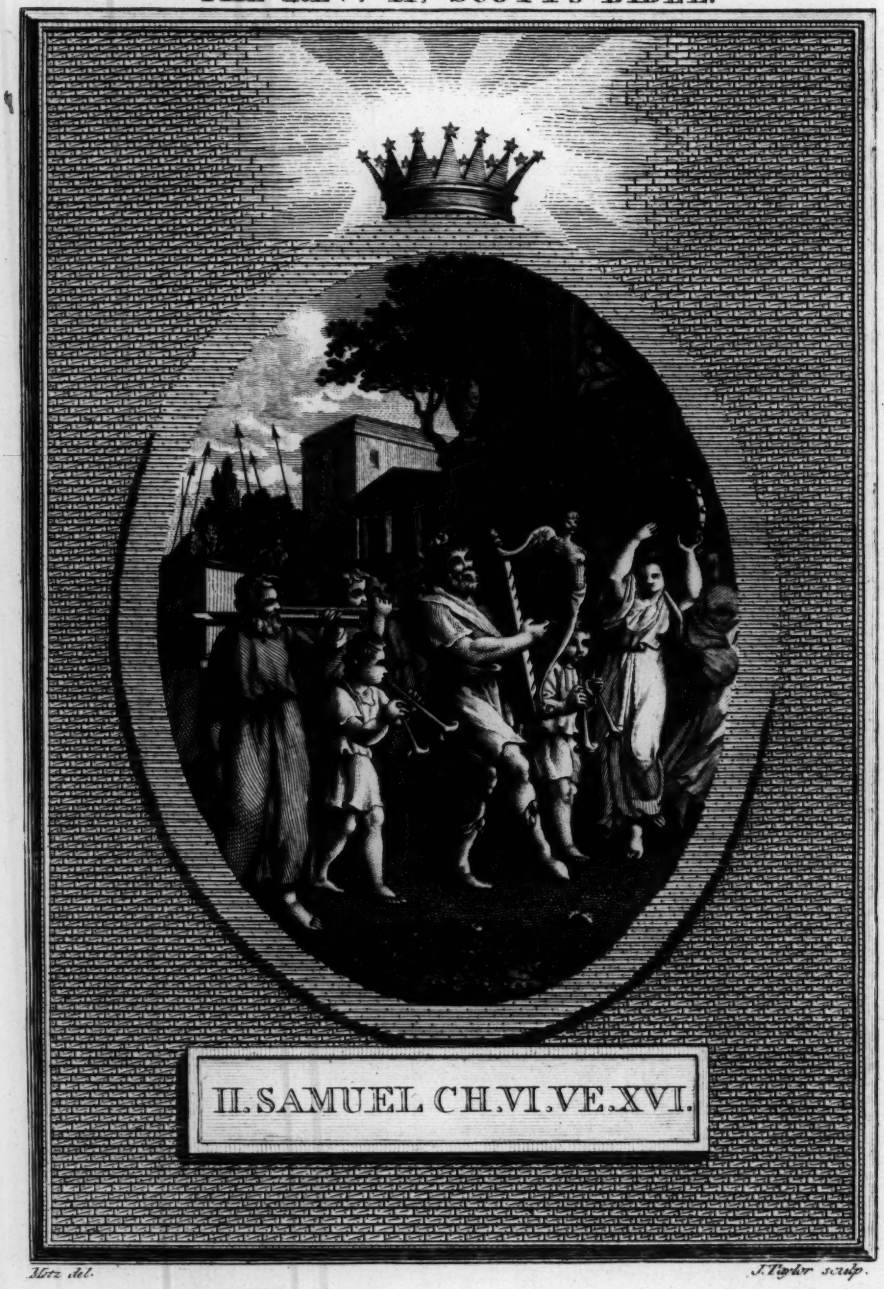

II. SAMUEL CH. VI. VE. XVI.

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the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed oxen and fatlings.

14 And David danced before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* girded with a linen ephod.

15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 And as the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.

17 And they brought in the ark of the LORD, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it: and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the LORD.

18 And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts.

19 And he dealt among all the people, *even* among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece *of flesh*, and a flagon *of wine*. So all the people departed every one to his house.

20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to-day, who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!

21 And David said unto Michal, *It was* before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD.

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discovered his fault, and the reason of the breach upon Uzzah; and had recovered his temper, and experienced the revival of his zeal, love, hope, and joy; and moreover was become better acquainted with the rule of his duty, and more humble-minded in performing it. "His "love abounded *in knowledge, and in all judgment*," which before it did not. Therefore, conscious of his own unworthiness of being employed in such a service, and sensible of his cause for gratitude, if preserved from grievous miscarriages, he set out with offering sacrifices: and as he thus united humble faith, and holy fear, with his fervent affections, he was accepted, and prospered accordingly.

V. 14. *With a linen ephod.*] Thus David laid aside the distinctions of royalty, and levelled himself with his subjects in the service of God, except as he took the lead therein; but he did not attempt to encroach upon the priestly office. The methods, which were adopted, in expressing their joy and gratitude, were such as were customary amongst them; and their music, blowing of trumpets, and sacred dances, were doubtless accompanied with psalms of praise, sung to the glory of God, by vast multitudes in concert.

V. 16. *Michal, Saul's daughter*, &c.] Saul had neglected the ark, and religion; and had educated his children accordingly. It seems that Michal had no deep sense of the importance and excellency of heavenly things: but she was possessed with high thoughts of temporal dignity, and royalty. Perhaps she considered David's zeal for the ark, as a reproach of her father's negligence: at least she considered his transports of religious joy, in the midst of the people, as a degradation of his character, and as exposing him to contempt. David the brave captain, leading forth the people to battle, and returning with them in triumph, she had admired: but David the saint, leading the people in the ordinances of God, and setting them an example of fervency of spirit in his service, she despised in her heart: yet this was the most illustrious part of his character, in the judgment of all, who savoured heavenly things.

V. 17. *The tabernacle*, &c.] The tabernacle, which had been situated at Shiloh, was not removed to Jerusalem, but was placed about this time at Gibeon, with the altar of burnt-offering, &c: but David prepared another tent for the reception of the ark, where an altar was erected, and sacrifices offered; as they were also upon the former altar. Perhaps the building of a temple was already in contemplation, and this was intended for a temporary accommodation, until that were accomplished.

V. 18, 19. *He blessed the people*, &c.] He prayed with, and for the people, and as a prophet solemnly blessed them in the name of the Lord; not using the ministry of the priests on this occasion. And afterwards he distributed of the flesh of the peace-offerings, which he sacrificed at his own expence, a sufficiency to every one present for a sacred feast, with bread and wine in proportion.

V. 20. *David returned*, &c.] That is to worship God with his own family, as probably he was wont, and to join with them in a religious feast.

How glorious, &c.] This was the language of ridicule, and contempt: because David had expressed great zeal, and earnestness, Michal would suggest, that he had behaved in an indecent manner: as he had laid aside his royal robes, she would represent it, as if he had laid aside all his clothes. But we have no reason to suppose that David did any thing improper on the occasion, except as she considered his piety, and activity in religion as unbecoming the dignity of a king. (*See* 1 *Sam.* c. xix. v. 23, 24.)

V. 21, 22. *It was before the Lord*, &c.] David very properly gloried in his zeal for the service, and glory of God: *before him* he was willing to be abased both in his

22 And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight; and of the maid-servants, which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour.

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death.

own eyes, and in those of others: and if his earnestness in religion was considered as "playing the fool," and rendering himself vile, he desired to be still more vile; for he resolved to be still more zealous in that good cause. But he intimated to her, that it was for want of that zeal, that her father was rejected; when he was chosen, in his stead to be ruler of "the people of the Lord;" and he was therefore bound by every tye to be very earnest in promoting his worship: and that that would prove his chief honour, which she despised as disgraceful to him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our judgment in religion must be regulated by the word of God, and not by the customs of the world, or even of the church: as therein many human inventions have often, and long prevailed, when divine appointments have grown into disuse, and contempt. Notwithstanding these errors, and abuses, true believers will be accepted, who either discern not, or are unable to rectify them: yet they, who have it in their power, should embrace the first opportunity of replacing matters upon the scriptural foundation, and of bringing to light, and reputation those parts of true religion, which have been most neglected, and obscured. This is best done by shewing the nature, use, and importance of them, that others may willingly concur, and gradually call the attention of more, and more towards them: thus the change will appear to be effected by the authority of God, and of truth, and not by that of man. That the Lord dwelleth upon the mercy seat between the cherubims; that the name and perfections of Jehovah are in Jesus, the true ark of the covenant, forms the foundation of every genuine human hope of felicity, and is the source of every believer's privileges and comforts: whilst with all his hosts and all his authority, the Lord is his reconciled friend, father, and protector. Whatever else may be overlooked, these capital truths should be always placed in the most convincing, and conspicuous light, in every sermon, or religious ordinance; that sinners may be called upon to believe, and believers to rejoice in, and glorify God our Saviour. But not only is utter ignorance fatal to the soul; the irreverent abuse of the gospel may be equally destructive. Men frequently *by office*, or by habit, are conversant about the most important truths, or observances of religion with a carnal mind, till they contract a contemptuous familiarity with them; till they grow proud of their formal exercises; and till they presumptuously thrust themselves forward in such services, as do not belong to them; and, in their rash zeal for the supposed cause of godliness, use such means, as God hath not commanded, nay such as he hath prohibited. Whatever necessity may be imagined, or whatever good intentions may be pleaded, God will resent, and perhaps in this world, punish such forbidden touches of his ark: we should therefore be careful to keep our proper place, to do our own work, and to proceed in the manner prescribed in his word. Even eminently wise, and good men cannot perform very important services, without feeling, at some times and in some degree, the workings of pride, and self-preference. And though religion consists much in high affections, and great love, and delight in spiritual things; yet even when the affections are genuine, and gracious, except they are accompanied with proportionable knowledge, judgment, and humility, they will betray us into many unwarrantable practices, and expose us to severe rebukes. In the fervency of our zeal we are all very prone to forget God's precepts, and are too eager about the substance of our services, to consult the scriptures about the right method of conducting them. Thus we are unawares drawn into transgression, and meet with severe checks, when we expected great success, and comfort. This is indeed needful, and salutary, but it often exceedingly disconcerts the mind. Then the transition is very sudden from elevated joy, and confidence, to great dejection, and fretfulness; from a hope bordering on irreverence, to slavish fear, which verges to despondency, and disheartens from present duty. Such sudden changes the believer recollects with shame, often, especially in the time of his injudicious, and inexperienced zeal, he too has been "greatly displeased," and discouraged by those things, which were only intended to humble, and instruct him: and whilst he cannot excuse David, he sees more cause to condemn himself, and to pray, "enter "not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy "sight shall no man living be justified." But when one is disheartened from active service, through servile fear, others will be animated with humble faith and hope, and not dread the ark, or the ordinance; but the sin, which occasioned the rebuke, or against which the threatning is denounced. And the Lord will abundantly recompense those, who are humbly bold for him, whilst others are either presumptuous, or desponding. When godly men, who have been betrayed into any unwarrantable conduct, have had time for self-examination, searching the scriptures, and prayer, they will discover, and confess their mistakes, and be reduced to a better temper; they will justify God in his corrections; they will be convinced, that safety, and comfort consist, (not in absenting themselves from God's ordinances, or in declining dangerous services, but) in attending to their duty in a proper spirit, and manner; they will profit by their own blunders, and stand the stronger for their falls: and they will not abate in their zeal, and affections, but learn to connect them with humility, and to regulate them according to the precepts of God's word: then they may expect to prosper in their attempts to glorify God, and promote the cause of true religion. We are so unworthy, and our services are so defiled, that all our joy in God must be connected with the exercise of repentance, and faith in the Redeemer's atoning blood: and the more we are preserved from gross sins, and the more we are enabled to do in the work of God, with acceptance and comfort, the greater obligations we are brought under, and the more thankful we ought to be. We ought to serve God with our whole body, and soul, and with every endowment, or capacity we possess; our religious affections cannot be too intense, if properly directed; nor our expressions of them too strong, provided all be done decently, and in order, according to the spirit of that dispensation, which we are under. The greatest of

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Contains, 1st. David purposing, and encouraged by Nathan, to build a temple, 1—3. 2d. The Lord by Nathan forbidding him to proceed, reminding him how the ark had hitherto been accommodated; and how God had advanced and honoured him, and giving many promises to Israel, to David, and to his seed, &c. v. 4—17, 3d. David's prayer before the Lord on that occasion, 18—29.

AND it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies,

2 That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains.

3 And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that *is* in thine heart: for the LORD *is* with thee.

4 And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying,

5 Go and tell my servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?

6 Whereas I have not dwelt in *any* house since the time that I brought up the children

men are as nothing before the infinite God; their dependance is as entire, and their obligations, and accountableness are greater, than those of their inferiors: the meanest employment in his service is in truth the greatest honour of the mightiest princes: they ought to be as base in their own eyes, when worshipping the Lord, and confessing their sins before him, as their meanest subjects: and they should take the lead, and set the example in every thing good: and though some will despise their piety, as madness, or meanness, they will be had in honour for it by numbers, yea by many, who are not themselves religious. Indeed proud, and carnal persons always have ridiculed fervent piety, and zealous devotion, as folly, or enthusiasm. Satan hath long deluded men into a persuasion, that such holy earnestness is unmanly, or unprincely; nay unbecoming men of genius, learning, wealth, or influence, and only fit for inferior persons, for ignorant poor people, for women, or children. However wise, eminent, or excellent a man may be in other respects, if he be *scripturally* zealous, and devoted to God, he must expect contempt, and insult, even from his inferiors, his relatives, and those, on whom he hath conferred the greatest obligations: nay he need not wonder, if he be accused of the most shameless practices, without the least ground for such a charge. This is the natural effect of man's enmity to God's holiness, and of satan's subtlety in opposing true religion. But if the Lord hath chosen, and accepted us, and these things come upon us for doing his will, as in his presence, and for his glory, we should deem reproaches honourable, and determine to become still more vile in the eyes of ungodly revilers, by abounding in those services, which they despise: and whilst we meekly rebuke such opposers, the Lord will certainly plead our cause against them: and they who condemn great revivals of religion, because not conducted just to their mind, are often punished by being totally excluded from all share in so honourable a work. Piety should always be attended with liberality, as we have power: public exercises of religion must not exclude secret, and family worship; which should be neglected by none in any rank of life. And finally in this removal of the ark let us contemplate the Redeemer's ascension to glory, and seek to participate his precious gifts, and to serve him with ardent love and joy.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII.] V. 1—3.] This chapter is nearly the same with the seventeenth chapter of the first book of Chronicles, and there will be a continual reference to it, in the notes upon it. David being quietly possessed of the kingdom, and victorious over all his enemies, and at rest in his palace, considered how he might employ his leisure, and prosperity in the service of God; (*Dan.* c. iv. v. 29, 30:) when it occurred to his mind how stately his own house was, and how meanly the ark was lodged; and he conceived a design of building a magnificent temple for it's reception. This design he intimated to Nathan the prophet, a man of great piety, and wisdom, who was his companion, and counsellor. Nathan, assured that the design arose from zeal for the glory of God, and that the Lord was with David in all his undertakings, encouraged him to proceed; but not by revelation from God, but according to his private judgment as a godly man.

V. 4. *That night*, &c.] This message was sent without delay, that David might not remain under a mistake, or set his heart upon a work, that was not intended for him: and it was sent by Nathan, that he might not be discouraged, or despised, by having his counsel contradicted by another prophet. Nathan was not faulty in encouraging David, any more than David was in purposing to build a temple: they both did well, but the Lord had wise reasons for determining otherwise: (1 *Kings*, c. viii. v. 18.

V. 5. *Shalt thou*, &c.] That is, dost thou entertain such a purpose, which did not enter into the thoughts of any, that were before thee? yet thou shalt not accomplish that design, for the work is assigned to another person. It appears that Nathan spake more to David, than is here recorded; for we shall meet with other reasons hereafter, why David was not permitted to build the temple; and in general we have only abstracts of the messages and discourses recorded in the Bible; (*Acts*, c. ii. v. 40.)

V. 6, 7.) Though the building of a temple accorded with the spirit of the Mosaic dispensation, it was not commanded by any law, and was not therefore peculiarly any one's duty, without some further intimation from God. In the days of Moses the Lord had, by the ark the symbol

of

of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle.

7 In all *the places* wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel, spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?

8 Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel.

9 And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth.

10 Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more, neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime;

11 And as since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee, that he will make thee an house.

12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son: if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

15 But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took *it* from Saul, whom I put away before thee.

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of his presence, dwelt, and removed with his people, in a tabernacle of his own appointing. Since Israel was settled in Canaan, none of their rulers or judges, who had been raised up out of several of their tribes, were commanded to build a temple. Yet the Lord had accepted their worship, though the ark abode within curtains. It was not necessary either to the glory of God, or the good of Israel to have a temple, or it would have been prepared before: and it might therefore very well be delayed a little longer.

V. 8—11.] Though the Lord did not employ David in this service, yet he did not refuse him in anger: but he was neither to engross all the honour, nor do all the work. He had been advanced from an inferior situation to the throne of Israel, and employed in subduing *their* enemies, as well as made triumphant over his own; and he was become one of the most honourable, and renowned characters in the world. Moreover the Lord had further work for him to do of another sort, which was proper to be done before the building of the temple. The Canaanites still dwelt amongst them in the land, and greatly harassed them; and the neighbouring nations frequently afflicted them grievously: and this had been the case from their first entrance into Canaan, even in the time of the judges, who only wrought temporary deliverances, from their more grievous oppressors. It was reserved for David to crush the remnant of the Canaanites, to subjugate their other enemies, and to effect their full and quiet possession of the land of promise; and it was only by their revolts, and apostacies, that they afterwards lost the benefit of his victories. This was his peculiar work; and though given as a promise to Israel, was intended to mark out David's line of usefulness, for which the Lord had "caused him to "rest from all his *personal* enemies." And he moreover greatly reformed the state of religion, and settled the courses of the priests, and Levites, and composed hymns of praise for the use of the church in after ages, and made vast preparations for the temple itself. All this honour, and usefulness might then suffice him; though the building of the temple were reserved for another.

V. 12—16.] The Lord intended to establish David's posterity upon the throne of Israel; which was not granted to Moses, Joshua, or any of his predecessors: and therefore this part of the work, and honour was to be reserved for his son, who was hereafter to be born; (by which expression Absalom, Adonijah, and all the children, which David then had, were excluded from the succession.) He would be of a peaceable disposition, and enabled to live at peace, through the success of David's wars; and would have more leisure and ability to complete the design. To this son of David, and his posterity very precious promises were given: the Lord promised to be a father to him, and treat him as his son, and to establish the throne of his kingdom; and if he sinned, to correct him as men do their children, according to what they are able to endure, and for their good, but not to take the kingdom from him, as he had done from Saul, but to establish it from generation to generation: and though for Solomon's sin the ten tribes were rent from his son, yet the kingdom over Judah remained, to the Babylonish captivity, in the family of David, and Solomon. But these promises were also predictions of Christ, the Son of David, the true Solomon, the prince of peace, who builds the spiritual temple of true believers, to be an habitation of God through the Spirit. Part of that, which is here spoken, is applied to Christ in the New Testament; (*Heb.* c. i. v. 5.) The stability, and perpetuity of the kingdom in the house of David is in him fully accomplished: and the clause concerning the merciful chastisement of David's son, if he offended, and

16 And

16 And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

17 According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David.

18 Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

19 And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And *is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?

20 And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant.

21 For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know *them*.

22 Wherefore thou art great, O Lord GOD: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* god beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears.

23 And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods?

24 For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel, *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

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the engagement not to reject him for his transgressions, belongs to his people, who are his seed, and one with him: and in a parallel passage, (*Psalm* lxxxix. v. 19—37;) it is put in the plural number, "If his children forsake, &c." In the expression (v. 16,) "before thee," is a gracious intimation, that though these things would take place after David's death, yet he would be acquainted with, and rejoice in them. In short David had had, and would have much honourable work of another kind: he had shed much blood in war, (1 *Chron.* c. xxviii. v. 3;) and lived in troublesome times: the appointed season was not yet arrived, nor were suitable preparations made; and the typical meaning of the temple required that his son Solomon should build it.

V. 17. *So did Nathan*, &c.] He did not hesitate to contradict his own counsel; nor did he fear the censure, or contempt, to which this might expose him: and David *wisely* thought no worse of either him, or his message, on that account.

V. 18. *Then went*, &c.] David both acquiesced in the Lord's will in this matter; and found his love, gratitude, hope, and joy greatly excited, by these remembrances of past, and promises of future mercies to himself, and his people, and posterity; especially as they all centred in the promised Saviour, that was to descend from him. Without delay therefore he went to the tabernacle of God before the ark, and poured out the fulness of his heart in prayer. It is said, that "he sat before the Lord;" but it is the only place in Scripture, which mentions sitting, as the posture of any servant of God in religious worship. And, though circumstances may frequently render it necessary, it does not seem otherwise becoming: probably, the expression only means his *continuance* before the Lord for a considerable time, and does not determine the posture, in which he prayed.

Who am I, &c?] When David considered the mean estate, from which he had been advanced to the throne; and how he had been brought forward, employed, prospered, and honoured: and when he recollected, the infinite majesty, and holiness of God, and his own sinfulness, and insignificancy before him; he thought nothing of his own endowments, or performances, but regarded the whole of what had been given to him, and done by him, as the subject of admiring gratitude and praise; and was surprised that the Lord had born with, upheld, and blessed so worthless a person hitherto, in such a manner.

V. 19. *Is this the manner*, &c.] David was further led to reflect upon the blessings, which had now been entailed upon his family, as well as upon himself, and his admiration was thereby still more increased; and he adored the riches of the divine mercy, as infinitely surpassing the largest bounty of man. It is not their manner thus to notice the mean, the vile, the unworthy: thus to make one kindness an introduction to, and an earnest of, and reason for, further favours: No, this was beyond example, or conception. Or it may mean, "Is this thy manner of "dealing with guilty, polluted rebellious man?" How wonderful the love of a holy God to such sinful creatures, especially in the promise and gift of his only-begotten Son, to be the propitiation for their sins!

V. 20. *What can David*, &c?] He could find nothing to ask for himself, kingdom, or posterity, but what had already been covenanted to him: his prayer therefore consisted of thankful repetitions of the promises: for the Lord knew his servant, and would do every thing in perfect truth, wisdom, and love, for his good; and he desired not prosperity, wealth, or honour; except in reference to the will, and glory of God.

V. 21. *For thy word's sake*, &c.] David could assign no reason for the Lord's former kindness to him, but his sovereign will, according to his own heart, dictating his gracious promises, and then for his word's sake fulfilling them: and he had the same ground for expecting all the remaining covenanted blessings.

25 And now, O Lord GOD, the word that thou haſt ſpoken concerning thy ſervant, and concerning his houſe, eſtabliſh *it* for ever, and do as thou haſt ſaid.

26 And let thy name be magnified for ever, ſaying, The LORD of hoſts *is* the God over Iſrael: and let the houſe of thy ſervant David be eſtabliſhed before thee.

27 For thou, O LORD of hoſts, God of Iſrael, haſt revealed to thy ſervant, ſaying, I will build thee an houſe; therefore hath thy ſervant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

28 And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou haſt promiſed this goodneſs unto thy ſervant.

29 Therefore now let it pleaſe thee to bleſs the houſe of thy ſervant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, haſt ſpoken *it*, and with thy bleſſing let the houſe of thy ſervant be bleſſed for ever.

V. 26. *And let thy name*, &c.] By his promiſes the Lord had connected the glory of his own truth, with the eſtabliſhment of David's family: David alſo expected, and deſired, that they might be inſtrumental in maintaining true religion for the glory of God. And in Chriſt all the perfections of the Godhead are glorified; and by him the cauſe of truth, and righteouſneſs is, and will be eſtabliſhed upon earth. In all theſe ways David prayed for the magnifying of God's name, in the eſtabliſhment of his poſterity.

V. 27. *Therefore hath*, &c.] He could not have ventured to make ſuch large requeſts; if the Lord had not promiſed the bleſſings that he craved: but he was humbly bold to aſk all, that he had engaged to give. The promiſes of God are not made perſonally to us by name, as theſe were to David: but they belong to all, who believe in Jeſus Chriſt, and plead them in his name: and as far as we are conſcious that this is our deſire, experience, and practice, we may find in our heart to make our requeſts as large as the largeſt of God's promiſes, and we ſhall not meet with a refuſal.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The due conſideration of the author of our temporal mercies, and of the end, for which they were beſtowed, will beſt preſerve us from abuſing them, in the gratification of pride, avarice, luxury, or ſenſuality. The more leiſure, and ability any man is favoured with; the more ſhould he deviſe, and attempt ſchemes of important uſefulneſs: and they, who are largely repleniſhed with the grace of God, will moſt comfortably enjoy their poſſeſſions, when they can render them ſubſervient to his glory, and the ſalvation of ſouls: they will be grieved to reflect how much is expended upon themſelves, and how little in the ſervice of God; and ſcarce deem any thing done for him, whilſt ſo much remains undone. They ſhould be encouraged by their brethren, and by miniſters, who conceive great deſigns for the advancement of religion, as far as they accord to the word of God: yet many plans, which are conſiſtent with both the law of love, and the goſpel of grace, may prove unſucceſsful: for the Lord, in his infinite wiſdom, may not ſee good, at that time, or in that manner, to work by them: but he will always accept, and recompenſe the willing mind. As far, as the Lord is with us, and we are influenced by his grace, we ſhall aim at nothing, but what is good in itſelf: yet we may miſtake the ſervice allotted to us, and attempt the work, which is intended for another perſon. The wiſeſt and beſt of men (not excepting prophets and apoſtles, unleſs when immediately ſpeaking by inſpiration from God,) have been liable to error; and therefore the claim of infallibility forms the very eſſence of blaſphemous arrogance. But the Lord will rectify the prejudicial miſtakes of his upright ſervants, and prevent every bad conſequence of them: and it is their true honour, as well as their duty, to retract what they have unadviſedly advanced, and to acknowledge themſelves miſtaken: and all wiſe men will reſpect them the more for doing ſo. Yet many, having once erred, fooliſhly account it their point of honour to vindicate their miſtakes, at all adventures: and thus their whole conduct becomes a continuation of blunders, ruinous to themſelves, and to others, who are deceived by them. The Lord doth not need, though he uſes, the ſervices of man: neither doth he regard external ſplendour; we cannot therefore pleaſe him in his inſtituted worſhip, if we have not the warrant of his word for what we do. He hath dwelt amongſt, accepted and bleſſed thoſe, who ſpiritually worſhipped him, in the midſt of external meanneſs; and he never rejected, or found fault with them on that account: but no outward magnificence will render formal ſervices more pleaſing to him. To be employed by the Lord is a great honour, and favour; and the more we do for him, acceptably and uſefully, the greater are our obligations to him: but even theſe gracious deſires muſt be ſubordinated to his holy will, and regulated by his precept. He appoints unto every man his work, and endows him with ſuitable qualifications: and every one of us ſhould thankfully, and faithfully mind our proper buſineſs; and rejoice in the ſuperior talents, and more honourable and important ſervices of our brethren. When our envious, diſcontented hearts are ready to murmur at diſappointments, we ſhould reflect on what the Lord hath already done for us; from what a wretched condition he hath brought us; what favours he hath conferred on us; and what bleſſings he hath prepared for us: and we ſhall readily perceive that it is much better with us, than we have deſerved, or could reaſonably have expected: nay that our deſires are not granted, becauſe our wiſe, and gracious Lord ſees it better for us, that they ſhould be refuſed. Our own plans, though well intended, and formed, are commonly fit for nothing but to be daſhed in pieces, to make way for the Lord's purpoſes reſpecting us, of which perhaps we had no conception. But, in one way or other, God will bleſs, and make uſeful to his church, thoſe perſons, who ſimply devote themſelves, and

CHAP. VIII.

Contains, 1st. David subduing the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, and dedicating their spoil to the Lord, v. 1—14. *2d. Ruling with equity over Israel; and the names of his chief servants.* (1 *Chron.* c. xviii. *Psalm* c. lx.)

AND after this it came to pass, that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them: and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hand of the Philistines.

2 And he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive: and *so* the Moabites became David's servants, *and* brought gifts.

3 David smote also Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates.

4 And David took from him a thousand *chariots*, and seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand footmen: and David hough-

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all they have, to his glory. If the Lord deny them one imagined blessing, he will counterbalance the refusal with other tokens of his love, and with raising their expectations of other promised mercies: and he teaches them to rejoice in the prosperity of his church, as in their own felicity. And though Israel according to the flesh forfeited by their sins, the rest, to which they were brought; and the cause of God hath hitherto been greatly opposed, and run down: yet the time is coming when it will gain the entire ascendancy, and overspread the earth; and the whole Israel of God shall at last be planted, and dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more for ever. The most favoured, and honoured of men will soon fulfil their days in this world, and sleep with their fathers; but they die at peace with God, and depart hence to join the blessed company before the throne. Though we should desire the entail of our blessings upon our posterity, that they may be the children of God also; yet our chief comfort in life, and death must arise from looking unto Jesus, the Son of God, and the everlasting King of Israel, and in participating his covenanted mercies. In his human nature all the fulness of the godhead dwelleth bodily, and by uniting his people to himself through his holy Spirit, he builds the living temple, in which the Lord will dwell for ever. If we thus belong to him, he will not finally reject us; but when we offend, he will by rebukes, and chastenings bring us to repentance, and he will establish us, as kings, and priests before him to all eternity. We should then attend unto the word, which he hath spoken; and when our affections are excited, or our consciences are alarmed thereby, we should without delay retire, to pour out our hearts before the Lord in fervent prayer, grounded upon his gracious promises in Christ Jesus. The more the Lord really honours any man, the lower he will sink in self-abasement; as conscious that he hath nothing of his own, but meanness, sin, and misery, and that he owes all the rest to the free mercy, and goodness of God: but if the blessings, that we have already received, are so vast, and unmerited; if it appear wonderful, as it doth to every humble believer, that the Lord hath brought him hitherto; what shall we say to the future, the eternal felicity, which he hath covenanted to his people? Or of the gift of his Son to be the ransom of our souls? The Lord's thoughts, and ways are not like ours, or he never would have bestowed such blessings on rebellious polluted man! What can we then say more unto the Lord? What can we ask, or desire, but the performance of those promises, which of his own sovereign mercy he had made unto us? Comparing the former displays of the glorious excellencies of our God, with those, which he hath manifested in his dealings with us, we shall at once have our admiring gratitude enlarged, and our expectation of further blessings increased; and shall find in our hearts to plead his precious promises, neither deeming them too large, nor too hard for him to perform to us wretched sinners. Though he have not given us "a great name, like to that "of the great men, that are in the earth;" we shall be contented with a name written in the book of life, and a clear character amongst our brethren: and we can desire no more for our posterity, than that they may be blessed with the blessing of the Lord for ever.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII.] V. 1. *Metheg-ammah*, &c.] This signifies the bridle of Ammah: it was probably some place, where the Philistines by a garrison curbed the Israelites. It was perhaps one of the towns belonging to Gath, which David took at this time. The Philistines had long oppressed Israel; Samson had begun to deliver his people from them; but David effectually subjugated them, and left them no power any more to molest them.——N. B. In these chapters, where any thing is mentioned, that is neither in the text, nor referred to in the place, it may be found in the parallel scriptures, referred to, at the close of the contents.

V. 2. *He smote Moab*, &c.] The Jews say that the Moabites had slain David's parents: but doubtless he had some just cause for this war; and for the severity, with which he treated them: as he seems to have measured out, and desolated two thirds of the country; and to have slaughtered two thirds of the captives. Thus the Moabites became tributaries to Israel, as had been predicted: (*Num.* c. xxiv. v. 17.)

V. 3. *As he went*, &c.] Or "to establish his domi-"nion, &c." Some understand this of David, others of Hadadezer. Probably this prince was jealous of David's growing greatness, and came to assist the Moabites, in order to secure his own dominions towards the Euphrates: by which means David had a fair opportunity given him, of extending his conquests to that river, as had been promised: (*Gen.* c. xv. v. 18. *Deut.* c. xi. v. 24.)

V. 4. *Seven hundred*, &c.] Seven thousand are mentioned in Chronicles: perhaps they were divided into seven hundred divisions of ten men each: however David dis-

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ed all the chariot *horſes*, but reſerved of them *for* an hundred chariots.

5 And when the Syrians of Damaſcus came to ſuccour Hadadezer king of Zobah, David ſlew of the Syrians two and twenty thouſand men.

6 Then David put garriſons in Syria of Damaſcus; and the Syrians became ſervants to David, and brought gifts. And the LORD preſerved David whitherſoever he went.

7 And David took the ſhields of gold that were on the ſervants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jeruſalem.

8 And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took exceeding much braſs.

9 When Toi king of Hamath heard that David had ſmitten all the hoſt of Hadadezer,

10 Then Toi ſent Joram his ſon unto king David, to ſalute him, and to bleſs him, becauſe he had fought againſt Hadadezer, and ſmitten him: (for Hadadezer had wars with Toi:) and *Joram* brought with him veſſels of ſilver, and veſſels of gold, and veſſels of braſs;

11 Which alſo king David did dedicate unto the LORD, with the ſilver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he ſubdued:

12 Of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philiſtines, and of Amalek, and of the ſpoil of Hadadezer, ſon of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David gat *him* a name when he returned from ſmiting of the Syrians in the valley of ſalt, *being* eighteen thouſand *men*.

14 And he put garriſons in Edom; throughout all Edom put he garriſons: and all they of Edom became David's ſervants. And the LORD preſerved David whitherſoever he went.

15 And David reigned over all Iſrael; and David executed judgment and juſtice unto all his people.

16 And Joab the ſon of Zeruiah *was* over the hoſt; and Jehoſhaphat the ſon of Ahilud *was* recorder;

17 And Zadok the ſon of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the ſon of Abiathar, *were* the prieſts; and Seraiah *was* the ſcribe;

18 And Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada *was over* both the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's ſons were chief rulers.

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abled the moſt of them, not deſiring to truſt in chariots, or in horſes, but in the living God.

V. 5. *The Syrians of*, &c.] Theſe were in alliance with, but not ſubject to Hadadezer. The Syrians of Aram-naharaim, or Meſopotamia, were another diſtinct people, and on this occaſion oppoſed David.

V. 9—11.] Hamath lay north of Canaan, and ſouth of Damaſcus. Thus by arms, or alliances, the heathen nations became tributary to David, and furniſhed thoſe riches, which he dedicated to the Lord for the building of the temple.

V. 12. *Of the children of Ammon*, &c.] Either ſome of them at this time aſſiſted the Moabites; or this is ſpoken by way of anticipation. (c. x.)

V. 13. *Of the Syrians*, &c.] They ſeem to have been Edomites fighting in behalf of the Syrians: this laſt victory obtained David great renown, though Joab and Abiſhai commanded in the battle. Thus the predictions concerning the Edomites began to be fulfilled: (*Gen.* c. xxv. v. 23. c. xxvii. v. 40. *Num.* c. xxiv. v. 18.)

V. 15—18. *David executed*, &c.] This marks the aſſiduity, as well as the equity, and impartiality of David's adminiſtration; in which, as well as in his victories, he was a type of Chriſt. Under him Joab was chief commander of the forces. Jehoſhaphat recorded and brought forward every buſineſs in an orderly manner. Under Abiathar the High Prieſt, Ahimelech his ſon, and Zadok deſcended from Eleazar, were the preſiding prieſts, probably the one on Mount Zion, the other at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was. Seraiah was ſcribe, or ſecretary, to inſpect and manage all writings concerning foreign or domeſtic tranſactions. And Benaiah commanded the Cherethites and Pelethites; David's conſtant attendants, or guards, who were choſen out from his other troops, and probably conſiſted mainly of thoſe, who had accompanied him in his diſtreſſes. Whilſt his ſons, who were grown up, were initiated into public buſineſs, as they became capable of it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In due ſeaſon, and ſucceſſion, every promiſe, and prediction of God's word will receive their full accompliſhment: ſhort is the triumphing, and certain the ruin of all his enemies, however ſtrong, and confederated they are. They, who confide in the Lord's protection, and are doing his work, will be preſerved, and proſpered by him, whitherſoever they go. Theſe will not allow themſelves to glory in their ſucceſs, or to eſtabliſh any other ground of confidence, than the power, and truth of him, who hath hitherto helped them: to him they will dedicate the fruits of their proſperity; and in this they will be diſtinguiſhed from all mighty ones, who have been renowned upon the earth. It is true wiſdom to court their friendſhip, whom the Lord proſpers. A ſafe, and honourable peace ſhould be the object of all wars: and diligent impartial admini-

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Contains, 1st. David's enquiry after the remains of Saul's family, and his discovery of Mephibosheth, v. 1—4. 2d. Mephibosheth sent for, the provision made for him, and his behaviour on the occasion, v. 5—13.

AND David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

2 And *there was* of the house of Saul a servant, whose name *was* Ziba: and when they had called him unto David, the king said unto him, *Art* thou Ziba? And he said, Thy servant *is he*.

3 And the king said, *Is* there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may shew the kindness of God unto him? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, *which is* lame on *his* feet.

4 And the king said unto him, Where *is* he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he *is* in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in Lo-debar.

5 Then king David sent, and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo-debar.

6 Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, was come unto David, he fell on his face, and did reverence. And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold thy servant.

7 And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually.

8 And he bowed himself, and said, What *is* thy servant, that thou shouldest look upon such a dead dog as I *am*?

9 Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house.

10 Thou therefore, and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in *the fruits*, that thy master's son may have food to eat: but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table. Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then said Ziba unto the king, Accord-

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stration of justice, the business of those, who are advanced above others; for their authority was given them, not to look great, but to do good with. Thus the Son of David subjects his enemies: his gospel is a favour of life to some, and of death to others: he will be glorified *upon* his obstinate opposers; and *by* those, who welcome him as their Lord, and Saviour. Many assist in building his spiritual temple, who have no place in it: his government is in judgment, and in justice, as well as in mercy: and all, who adhere to him faithfully in a state of humiliation, and suffering, shall reign with him for ever in glory. To him let us submit, his friendship let us seek, and his service let us count our honour, and our pleasure; and diligently attend to the work, which he assigns to each of us.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX.] V. 1. *And David said*, &c.] Mephibosheth was only five years old at his father's death, (c. iv. v. 4;) but at this time he had a son, (v. 12.) So that many years had elapsed before David made this enquiry. For above seven years he had been opposed by Ish-bosheth, and had had many engagements afterwards: he had not injured any of Saul's family; but he seems to have been too forgetful of his friendship with, and engagements to Jonathan. As Mephibosheth was brought up in obscurity beyond Jordan, and perhaps purposely concealed by the suspicious care of his friends, David probably knew not that Jonathan had any child living. But to shew his entire forgiveness of Saul's injuries, and his gratitude for Jonathan's kindness, he wished to restore Saul's estate to, and confer other favours, on some of his remaining posterity, for the sake of his friend.

V. 3. *The kindness of God*, &c.] That is, for the sake of the oath of God sworn to Jonathan: or according to the example of the Lord's kindness unto himself.

V. 4. *Of Machir*, &c. &c.] This same person was afterwards a very useful friend to David; (c. xvii. v. 27—29:) and perhaps the more willingly on account of David's kindness to Mephibosheth, whom he had generously brought up.

V. 6. *And David said*, &c.] David might have heard of the name of Mephibosheth, or perhaps had seen him in his infancy, and now recollected his features, though he knew not before that he was living.

V. 7. *All the land of*, &c.] Saul's paternal estate, which came into David's hands after the death of Ish-bosheth, and which seems to have been very large, was restored by him to Mephibosheth, as the right heir; and he was besides admitted to a place at David's own table.

V. 8. *A dead dog*, &c.] That is, a person, who is very mean, and incapable of being any ways serviceable: Mephibosheth not only adverted to his unworthiness, but to his bodily infirmities, in this expression of grateful surprise. He seems to have been an unambitious, modest, friendly and pious man.

V. 9—12.] Ziba had been greatly enriched under Saul, and was now entrusted with the management of Mephibosheth's estate, because of his professed affection for his family:

ing to all that my lord the king hath commanded his ſervant, ſo ſhall thy ſervant do. As for Mephiboſheth, *ſaid the king*, he ſhall eat at my table, as one of the king's ſons.

12 And Mephiboſheth had a young ſon, whoſe name *was* Micha: and all that dwelt in the houſe of Ziba *were* ſervants unto Mephiboſheth.

13 So Mephiboſheth dwelt in Jeruſalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet.

CHAP. X.

Contains, 1ſt. David's embaſſy to the king of Ammon, and the abuſe, which his ambaſſadors met with, v. 1—5. 2d. His ſucceſsful wars with the Ammonites, and their allies, v. 6—19. (1 Chron. c. xix.)

AND it came to paſs after this, that the king of the children of Ammon died, and Hanun his ſon reigned in his ſtead.

2 Then ſaid David, I will ſhew kindneſs unto Hanun the ſon of Nahaſh, as his father ſhewed kindneſs unto me. And David ſent to comfort him, by the hand of his ſervants for his father. And David's ſervants came into the land of the children of Ammon.

3 And the princes of the children of Ammon ſaid unto Hanun their lord, Thinkeſt thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath ſent comforters unto thee? hath not David *rather* ſent his ſervants unto thee to ſearch the city, and to ſpy it out, and to overthrow *it?*

4 Wherefore Hanun took David's ſervants, and ſhaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, *even* to their buttocks, and ſent them away.

5 When they told *it* unto David, he ſent to meet them, becauſe the men were greatly

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but David ſeems to have been more generous, than prudent in this appointment. Mephiboſheth's family, and eſpecially his ſon Micha, were to be provided for out of the eſtate, though he himſelf lived at David's table. Some underſtand the laſt clauſe of the 11th verſe, as the words of Ziba, propoſing in a boaſting manner to entertain Mephiboſheth royally at his own table, without troubling David.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Amidſt a multiplicity of affairs, we are prone to forget the gratitude we owe, and the engagements we are under, not only to our friends, but to the Lord himſelf: but perſons of real, and eminent godlineſs, when they recall to mind their obligations, will have no reſt till they have diſcharged them: they will be burthened with thoſe poſſeſſions, which they but ſuppoſe *in equity* to belong to another: and they will be impatient to expreſs their forgiveneſs of thoſe, who have injured them; and their gratitude to the perſons, or the relations of thoſe, who have been kind to them. They, who have much in their power, ſhould enquire after opportunities of doing good; for frequently the moſt deſerving objects of our compaſſion are concealed by their modeſty, and patience. Kindneſs ſhewn to the moſt helpleſs perſons is ſometimes recompenſed, in a very ſeaſonable manner, by thoſe, from whom we had no expectation of obtaining, or wanting aſſiſtance. To be trained up in privacy, poverty, and hardſhip, and afterwards more proſpered, is vaſtly more comfortable; than to be brought up in pride, and delicacy, with great expectations, and then to be tumbled into poverty, and diſtreſs. But "when riches "increaſe, they are increaſed that eat them;" and though the liberality of friends ſhould be thankfully acknowledged, it can contribute little towards our real happineſs, further than the providing of us with food and raiment, and the other neceſſaries of life. But the love of Jeſus, who ſeeks out, provides for, enriches, and entertains us poor ruined, worthleſs ſinners, confers ſubſtantial, and enduring felicity. May we humbly acknowledge our unworthineſs of his mercies, thankfully accept of them, and return him our chearful praiſes, and willing ſervices.

NOTES.

CHAP. X.] V. 2. *His father ſhewed*, &c.] Nahaſh probably ſhewed kindneſs to David in the days of Saul, and out of enmity to that prince, (1 *Sam.* c. xi.). It is queſtioned whether David ought to have ſhewn ſuch reſpect to the memory of ſo cruel an enemy to his people; eſpecially as the law forbad them to ſeek the peace, and proſperity of the Ammonites: (*Deut.* c. xxiii. v. 3—6.) But they were not of the devoted nations, and perhaps it was not wrong for David to expreſs a ſenſe of gratitude to a benefactor, without deciding upon the motives of his conduct, and to render the cuſtomary civilities to his ſon, upon his deceaſe. However the Lord over-ruled it, contrary to David's intention, for the avenging his people, and for the cruſhing of the force, and diminiſhing the poſſeſſions of their encroaching neighbours.

V. 3, 4.] The conſciouſneſs of the injuries, which they had done to, and ſtill meditated againſt the Iſraelites, ſuggeſted theſe ſuſpicions; and they judged of David by their own diſpoſitions, and deſerts. But if they had ſeen cauſe to have been reſerved, they ſhould not have ill-treated David's ambaſſadors: this was a violation of the moſt ſacred laws of nations; the greateſt affront imaginable to the prince, whom they repreſented; and a direct declaration of war againſt him. According to the ſentiments and cuſtoms of thoſe days, they treated them in the moſt contemptuous manner, which they could deviſe.

V. 5. *Tarry at Jericho*, &c.] This was ſome village near the ſpot, where Jericho had ſtood; for that city was not yet rebuilt. In this place, as ſoon as they had croſſed over Jordan, they were adviſed to tarry till their beards were grown; (which were conſidered as neceſſary to the

aſhamed:

aſhamed: and the king ſaid, Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and *then* return.

6 And when the children of Ammon ſaw that they ſtank before David, the children of Ammon ſent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thouſand footmen, and of king Maacah a thouſand men, and of Iſh-tob twelve thouſand men.

7 And when David heard of *it*, he ſent Joab, and all the hoſt of the mighty men.

8 And the children of Ammon came out, and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate: and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Iſh-tob, and Maacah, *were* by themſelves in the field.

9 When Joab ſaw that the front of the battle was againſt him before and behind, he choſe of all the choice *men* of Iſrael, and put *them* in array againſt the Syrians.

10 And the reſt of the people he delivered into the hand of Abiſhai his brother, that he might put *them* in array againſt the children of Ammon.

11 And he ſaid, If the Syrians be too ſtrong for me, then thou ſhalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be too ſtrong for thee, then I will come and help thee.

12 Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God: and the LORD do that which ſeemeth him good.

13 And Joab drew nigh, and the people that *were* with him unto the battle againſt the Syrians: and they fled before him.

14 And when the children of Ammon ſaw that the Syrians were fled, then fled they alſo before Abiſhai, and entered into the city. So Joab returned from the children of Ammon, and came to Jeruſalem.

15 And when the Syrians ſaw that they were ſmitten before Iſrael, they gathered themſelves together.

16 And Hadarezer ſent, and brought out the Syrians that *were* beyond the river; and they came to Helam: and Shobach the captain of the hoſt of Hadarezer *went* before them.

17 And when it was told David, he gathered all Iſrael together, and paſſed over Jordan, and came to Helam: and the Syrians ſet themſelves in array againſt David, and fought with him.

18 And the Syrians fled before Iſrael; and David ſlew *the men of* ſeven hundred chariots of the Syrians, and forty thouſand horſemen, and ſmote Shobach the captain of their hoſt, who died there.

19 And when all the kings *that were* ſervants to Hadarezer ſaw that they were ſmitten before Iſrael, they made peace with Iſrael, and ſerved them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more.

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appearing in public of grave, and venerable perſons;) that thus the diſgrace, that they had received, might be obliterated.

V. 6. *They ſtank*, &c.] (*Gen.* c. xxxiv. v. 30. 1 *Sam.* c. xiii. v. 4.) The Ammonites had made themſelves ſo odious to David, that they could expect no other but war; and therefore they determined to form alliances, and act offenſively. The numbers of forces, which they hired, are nearly the ſame as in Chronicles: but they are there ſaid to be thirty-two thouſand chariots, which is very improbable; and either is ſome error, that hath crept into the text, or admits of ſome other conſtruction. But it is of ſmall importance to us.

V. 8—14. *The gate*, &c.] That is, of Medeba, a city upon the borders of the Ammonites, and in their poſſeſſion. Thus Joab's forces were oppoſed by two armies, before and behind: but his arrangement was judicious, and his addreſs ſpirited. His valour, and regard to his country were *real*, and eminent: and the language of faith, and piety, which he employed, was honourable to God, and might be uſeful to the ſoldiers.

V. 18. *Seven hundred*, &c.] Perhaps ſeven thouſand men belonging to ſeven hundred chariots; and forty thouſand men, who fought on foot, or on horſeback, as there was occaſion, or opportunity. (1 *Chron.* c. xix. v. 18.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We ought to ſympathize with the afflicted, and ſhew gratitude to our friends: but nothing, except vexation, and diſappointment, can be expected by courting the friendſhip of ungodly perſons. Treacherous minds are always ſuſpicious: they are conſcious, that they mean to deceive, when they can gain by it; and they naturally ſuppoſe that others mean the ſame: and weak, and wicked princes will generally employ ſuch counſellors. It is the height of folly to awaken the reſentment of thoſe by inſult, and contempt, whoſe power of taking vengeance cannot be thus diminiſhed: and the fatal effects of ſuch raſh affronts, though little feared, are often ſeverely felt. We ſhould ſhew reſpect and kindneſs to thoſe, who have been unjuſtly diſgraced: but yet it is needleſs to lay ſuch things to heart. Unmerited reproaches or contempt will ſoon wear

CHAP. XI.

Contains, 1ſt. Joab's ſucceſs againſt the Ammonites, v. 1. 2d. David committing adultery with Bath-ſheba the wife of Uriah, v. 2—4. 3d. Informed of her pregnancy, ſending for Uriah, and in vain attempting to induce him to viſit his wife, v. 5—13. 4th. Projecting, and compaſſing his death, with that of other Iſraelites, by the ſword of the Ammonites, v. 14—17. 5th. Joab's meſſage, and David's anſwer on this occaſion, v. 18—25. 6th. His marriage with Bath-ſheba, and the Lord's diſpleaſure, v. 26, 27.

AND it came to paſs, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David ſent Joab, and his ſervants with him, and all Iſrael; and they deſtroyed the children of Ammon, and beſieged Rabbah: but David tarried ſtill at Jeruſalem.

2 And it came to paſs in an evening-tide, that David aroſe from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's houſe: and from the roof he ſaw a woman waſhing herſelf; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David ſent and enquired after the woman. And *one* ſaid, *Is* not this Bath-ſheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David ſent meſſengers, and took her: and ſhe came in unto him, and he lay with her, (for ſhe was purified from her uncleanneſs,) and ſhe returned unto her houſe.

5 And the woman conceived, and ſent and told David, and ſaid, I *am* with child.

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away, and a clear conſcience ſhould be ſufficient to counterbalance the preſent uneaſineſs of it. Yet by ſuch means valuable perſons are driven into obſcurity for a ſeaſon, to the loſs of the public, rather than of themſelves. They, who are the moſt ready to commit injuſtice, are commonly the moſt averſe to a reconciliation: and confidence in numbers, ſtrength, or valour frequently buoys up men to their deſtruction; for though hand join in hand the wicked ſhall not be unpuniſhed. But a good cauſe, and a ſingle dependance upon the Lord form the ſureſt indications of ſucceſs: and when valiant men are cordial to the intereſts of their country, and are defending its civil, and religious liberties, their animation, and preſence of mind will often increaſe in proportion to their dangers, and difficulties. It is our duty, in every emergency, to exert all our powers of body, and mind, to do our uttermoſt, to encourage others to do the ſame, and to be helpful to one another, as there may be occaſion; and then to commit the event to the Lord: "Let him do what ſeemeth him "good." But alas many uſe good words, and ſeem in perilous circumſtances, to depend on, and to be ſubmiſſive to the Lord, whoſe hearts are not upright in his ſight: and many are very ſerviceable to his church, who have no part in it's peculiar bleſſings. But let ſinners recollect that the Son of David will aſſuredly reſent their contempt of his ambaſſadors, whom he ſends to them with a meſſage of peace, and love; and that he will conſider their illuſage of them, as a declaration of war againſt himſelf. In this warfare numbers and confederacies are utterly unavailing, and deſtruction is inevitable; except to thoſe, who ſubmit, ſue for peace, and become his ſervants. They ought therefore to ſeparate from his enemies, fearing any longer to help them; and to make it their great object to obtain his forgiveneſs, and to be numbered amongſt his ſubjects. All his people ſhould be valiant in his cauſe, and for his truth, and righteouſneſs: and miniſters ſhould neither fear, nor be aſhamed to execute their embaſſy of reconciliation, however they are deſpiſed, inſulted, or perſecuted: for he will plead their cauſe, comfort them under their trials, and reward their faithfulneſs with a crown of glory, which fadeth not away.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI.] V. 1—5.] David committed the management of the war wholly to Joab, and continued at eaſe in his palace, when he ought to have been fighting the battles of the Lord: this ſeems to have been his firſt falſe ſtep in this moſt lamentable tranſaction. Being out of the line of preſent duty, he ſlothfully waſted his time: without doubt his proſperity had gradually rendered him more negligent in his devotional exerciſes, and more indulgent to his ſenſual inclinations; and perhaps occaſioned ſome meaſure of ſelf-confidence, and carnal ſecurity. Thus his natural paſſions gathered force, in proportion as his holy affections were abated: and having been accuſtomed without cenſure to marry any ſingle woman, for whom he conceived an affection, his inclinations had not been habituated to a denial. When therefore, after an unſeaſonable ſleep, he was walking vacantly on the flat roof of his houſe, and by ſome means had a view of a beautiful woman, who was waſhing herſelf from a ceremonial uncleanneſs (v. 4;) he allowed himſelf to gaze upon her, until he luſted after her in his heart; and perhaps not ſuppoſing her to be a married woman, he ſent to enquire after her, in order to add her to the number of his wives: but his ſinful paſſion had got ſuch aſcendancy that he was the more inflamed, by being informed, that ſhe was the wife of one of his braveſt, and moſt faithful officers: and he ſent meſſengers for her, (who could not well be ignorant of his intentions,) and committed adultery with her. And though ſhe was previouſly a perſon of virtue, and reputation, he obtained her compliance, probably by means of thoſe hopes, which his rank in life was capable of inſpiring. This crime was attended with manifold aggravations: It was a violation of the ſeventh commandment, and was puniſhable by the death of both parties by the judicial law. David was chief magiſtrate, to whom it belonged to carry that law into execution: he was at this time about fifty years of age; and,

6 And

6 And David ſent to Joab, *ſaying*, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab ſent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded *of him* how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war proſpered.

8 And David ſaid to Uriah, Go down to thy houſe, and waſh thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's houſe, and there followed him a meſs *of meat* from the king.

9 But Uriah ſlept at the door of the king's houſe with all the ſervants of his lord, and went not down to his houſe.

10 And when they had told David, ſaying, Uriah went not down unto his houſe, David ſaid unto Uriah, Cameſt not thou from *thy* journey? why *then* didſt thou not go down unto thine houſe?

11 And Uriah ſaid unto David, The ark, and Iſrael, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the ſervants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields: ſhall I then go into mine houſe to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my wife? *as* thou liveſt, and *as* thy ſoul liveth, I will not do this thing.

12 And David ſaid to Uriah, Tarry here to-day alſo, and to-morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jeruſalem that day and the morrow.

13 And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the ſervants of his lord, but went not down to his houſe.

14 And it came to paſs in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and ſent *it* by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, ſaying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hotteſt battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be ſmitten, and die.

16 And it came to paſs, when Joab obſerved the city, that he aſſigned Uriah unto a place, where he knew that valiant men *were*.

17 And the men of the city went out and

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he had already many wives; and many children, to whom the example would be very prejudicial: his acquaintance with the divine law, his bold profeſſion of true religion, his high reputation for piety, and wiſdom, and the immenſe obligations, which the Lord had conferred on him: the rank, and character of Bath-ſheba, and the ſervice for him and his country, in which Uriah was then engaged, were all aggravating circumſtances: and we can only ſay in his behalf, that it was not his cuſtom, but was one crime, into which he was betrayed. When Bath-ſheba found that ſhe was with child by David, ſhe juſtly dreaded the reſentment of her huſband, who had been abſent from her a conſiderable time; and ſhe ſent to inform David, that by the abuſed interpoſition of his authority, which perhaps he had promiſed, ſhe might be preſerved fron being made a public example.

V. 6. *Uriah the Hittite*, &c.] Uriah was probably a deſcendant from the Hittites; but he was a proſelyte, and had the heart of an Iſraelite. Under the guilt of ſo heinous a ſin, David was more anxious to conceal his ſhame, and prevent the temporal conſequences, than to obtain forgiveneſs from God! Perhaps he feared leſt Uriah, in his deep reſentment, ſhould raiſe rebellion againſt him: certainly he feared the reproaches, which he might expect from every quarter, when it ſhould be publicly known, that he had acted ſo inconſiſtent with his character, and his zeal for the worſhip of God, and the honour of his law. In this confuſed ſtate of mind, he did not perceive the treachery, and injuſtice, of drawing in Uriah to conſider himſelf, as the father of the child, with which Bath-ſheba was pregnant. This was the plan, which he formed, and he ſent for Uriah, as if he could depend more on him, to inform him of the ſtate of the war, than upon any other perſon.

V. 8. *Go down*, &c.] Uriah's houſe was near to David's palace: and David never queſtioned but he would gladly embrace the opportunity of viſiting his wife, and accordingly provided them an entertainment: but whether any thing had excited his ſuſpicions; or whether through a hardy ſelf-denied diſpoſition, he ſcorned to fare better than his commander, and comrades, he would not go home, but ſlept with the ſoldiers of David's guard: and thus the Lord defeated David's deſign of covering his tranſgreſſion.

V. 11. *The ark*, &c.] It is not probable, that the ark of the covenant was carried with Joab into the field of battle; and yet the mean accommodation of it at Jeruſalem contains no reaſon, why Uriah ſhould not go home to his houſe; becauſe it was habitually in that ſtate. But in ſuch vehement aſſeverations men do not always attend to exact reaſoning, and argument.

V. 12, 13. *Tarry here to-day*, &c.] David pretended further buſineſs with Uriah, but meant to practiſe upon him, if poſſible, to break his reſolution. Accordingly he entertained him at his own table, and, in addition to his other injuries, became his tempter to drunkenneſs; hoping that when his paſſions were inflamed, and his guard removed, he might be induced to go home to his wife.

V. 14—17.] Satan having gradually drawn David on in one ſinful attempt after another, had prepared his mind for more atrocious wickedneſs. He now perceived that if Uriah lived, he muſt diſcover his wife's infidelity, and expoſe his ſhame: to prevent this was at preſent his leading object, and all other conſequences were forgotten: and to

fought with Joab: and there fell *ſome* of the people of the ſervants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died alſo.

18 Then Joab ſent and told David all the things concerning the war;

19 And charged the meſſenger, ſaying, When thou haſt made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

29 And if ſo be that the king's wrath ariſe, and he ſay unto thee, Wherefore approached ye ſo nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would ſhoot from the wall?

21 Who ſmote Abimelech the ſon of Jerubbeſheth? did not a woman caſt a piece of a milſtone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? Then ſay thou, Thy ſervant Uriah the Hittite is dead alſo.

22 So the meſſenger went, and came and ſhewed David all that Joab had ſent him for.

23 And the meſſenger ſaid unto David, Surely the men prevailed againſt us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

24 And the ſhooters ſhot from off the wall upon thy ſervants, and *ſome* of the king's ſervants be dead, and thy ſervant Uriah the Hittite is dead alſo.

25 Then David ſaid unto the meſſenger, Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto Joab, Let not this thing diſpleaſe thee; for the ſword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more ſtrong againſt the city, and overthrow it; and encourage thou him.

26 And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her huſband was dead, ſhe mourned for her huſband.

27 And when the mourning was paſt, David ſent and fetched her to his houſe, and ſhe became his wife, and bare him a ſon: but the thing that David had done diſpleaſed the LORD.

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attain this Uriah muſt die. But David would not kill him with his own hands, nor order his ſervants to aſſaſſinate him, nor put him to death under colour of law: theſe things were too bare-faced, his reputation would be ruined by ſuch meaſures; nay perhaps the direct injuſtice, and murder would have diſquieted his conſcience, inſenſible as it was become. But a more plauſible, and ſecret method of getting rid of him was ſuggeſted to his mind; which at that moment ſeemed to him leſs atrocious, though in reality it was more complicated, and heinous. The known valour, fidelity, and zeal for his country, of this gallant officer, ſuggeſted the method of diſpatching him: David had ſuch confidence in this much-injured man, that he heſitated not to entruſt him with the letter, which decreed his death; and whatever elſe Uriah ſuſpected, he did not think David capable of ſuch treachery, and betrayed not his truſt. Joab, and thoſe, "who retired from Uriah," were made accomplices in his murder; and his fellow ſoldiers, who were ſlain with him, were no leſs murdered than he was. Whatever caſuiſtry David might uſe with his conſcience, this was deliberate murder, with *malice prepenſe*, aggravated exceedingly by the circumſtance, that theſe men were ſlain in the very act of fighting for him, and his kingdom. Perhaps Joab imagined that David had ſome *political* reaſon for taking off Uriah in that manner: but probably he was rejoiced to ſee him involved in the guilt of murder, as well as himſelf. But is this David, who repeatedly ſpared his enemy; and whoſe heart ſmote him, when he had cut off Saul's ſkirt? Alas! how is he changed, and fallen!

V. 21. *Then ſay thou*, &c.] This was a plain intimation to the meſſenger, that the death of Uriah would be ſo agreeable to David, as to reconcile him to the loſs, that had been ſuſtained. Thus he began already to be deſpiſed even by his accomplices! Amidſt all the painful ſenſations excited by reading this chapter, we are pleaſed to find David's ſoldiers ſo ready at quoting the ſcripture: for probably the book of Judges was then extant as a part of holy writ.

V. 25. *Let not this thing*, &c.] Provided the brave Uriah were dead, David ſeems not to have regarded who were ſlain with him. He ſpake on this occaſion with an indifference almoſt bordering upon infidelity: except he meant to refer the event merely to the providence of God; as if no one was to blame in the affair. On other occaſions he conſidered ſuch events as a rebuke, which required humiliation, prayer, and ſacrifices; and a more entire dependance upon the Lord in future: and he would have cenſured the imprudence of the commanders, and charged them on pain of his diſpleaſure, to be more careful of the lives of their brethren.

V. 27. *She became*, &c.] David married Bath-ſheba as ſoon, as it could be done with decency, and the cuſtomary mourning, (which was in this caſe a vile mockery,) was ended. But though there remained no injured huſband to avenge the adultery, the premature birth of the child diſcovered it. All this time David continued impenitent, and comparatively unconcerned. Probably he ſtill maintained his profeſſion, and went on with his attendance upon the ordinances of religion. By ſome ingenious ſelf-flattery he endeavoured to palliate his conduct to himſelf; and no one elſe called him to account, or reproved him for it. Perhaps the general practice of other princes induced him to conclude, that perſons in his high ſtation were not bound to the ſame ſtrictneſs with their ſubjects. However, though he had no deep remorſe of conſcience, we may be ſure that he loſt all his life, ſpirituality, and comfort in religion, and retained nothing but a barren form: and per-

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Contains, 1st. Nathan sent to David; his parable, and application of it; and David confessing his sin, and assured of forgiveness, v. 1—13. 2d. The death of the child, notwithstanding David's humiliation, and prayers: and his consequent behaviour, 14—23. 3d. The birth of Solomon, and the name, which the Lord gave him, v. 24, 25. 4th. Rabbah taken, and David's treatment of the Ammonites, v. 26—31.

haps wondered how it was, that his attendance on ordinances was so unprofitable to him; as many seem to do, who never seriously enquire into the cause. Small transgressions, like slight wounds, give much pain to the believer's conscience: but enormous crimes, like a violent blow upon the head, leave them for a season in an unaccountable state of insensibility.

But the thing, &c.] Such marriages, as this of David with Bath-sheba, with whom he had previously committed adultery, were not forbidden in the law: (for it was needless, as both parties were condemned to die:) nor was David afterwards ordered to put her away. Yet as he married her in order to cover his iniquity, and as the desire of possessing her may be supposed to have been one inducement to the murder of Uriah, it formed an additional aggravation of the crime: and the whole transaction, from first to last, was displeasing to the Lord. But why was this permitted? or why was it recorded? It is certain that thousands through successive generations have, by this fall of the man after God's own heart, been prejudiced against true religion, hardened in infidelity, or emboldened to blasphemy: whilst others have thence taken occasion to commit *habitual* wickedness under a religious profession, and with presumptuous confidence, to the still greater discredit of the gospel. But these persons have all been previously, either open enemies of, or hypocritical pretenders to religion: and it is the righteous purpose of God, that stumbling-blocks should be thrown in the way of such men, that they may stumble, and fall, and be snared, and taken, and perish: it is his holy will thus to detect the secret malignity of their hearts, and to make way for the display of his justice, in their condemnation. On the other hand thousands, from age to age, have by this awful example been rendered more suspicious of themselves, more watchful, more afraid of temptation, more dependant on the Lord, and more fervent in prayer: and by means of David's fall have been preserved from falling. Numbers, who have been overcome by temptation, have thereby been preserved from despair: every upright soul will *eventually* derive benefit from the impartial record of this event; and none will finally be injured by it, except those, who desire an excuse for sin, or an objection to the religion of the Bible. Bees will collect honey, and spiders poison from the same plants, according to their different natures. No excuse can be made for David; he attempted none for himself: and much self-knowledge is requisite to account for his conduct, or to deem it possible, that a godly man, who had so long enjoyed communion with God, in the highest exercises of fervent devotion, could commit such enormous crimes, and continue so long impenitent. But the Lord's design in leaving his servant to himself was doubtless wise, righteous, and merciful; whether we can see it, or not. He hath been pleased to permit some of the most eminent of his people, to fall very grievously: and if we make a proper use of such instances, our own experience will effectually convince us, that he can educe much good from all this evil. The glory of all the good is his due, the blame of all the evil, *original*, or *consequent*, belongs to those, who committed it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Either *personal experience*, or *repeated experiments* are necessary, to convince us of the desperate wickedness of the human heart, and of our own hearts: and this conviction is of vast importance, in order to the proper exercise of repentance, faith, and every Christian temper. By *the latter method*, the Lord hath evinced to all, who duly attend unto his word, that every enormity dwells in every human heart; and that we are all of us capable of committing any crime, which men ever practised, or conceived; if exposed in certain circumstances to suitable temptations, and left to the natural tendency of our depraved affections. Many have thought themselves *incapable* of some particular sin, they have felt no inclination to it, but a horror, and detestation at the thoughts of it; and yet they have afterwards committed it with greediness, and apparent satisfaction. Neither eminent piety, a long and close walk with God, habits of obedience, and of the government of the passions, the sobriety of advancing age, peculiar obligations from God, great reputation, and usefulness, clear knowledge of the divine law; nor even the spirit of prophecy, have been found capable of extirpating the most hateful propensities of the human heart: though restrained, dethroned, and crucified, they have still lived; and have revived, obtained advantages, and for a season *seemed to reign* with the most dreadful tyranny. Who then are we, that we should deem ourselves secure? All these evils exist in our hearts, and are capable of being excited again, though at present they seem to be extinct. We are never safe in this world; never out of the reach of temptation; never exempted, in respect of any sin, from the necessity of watchfulness, prayer, and dependance upon the grace of God. Let us not then be high-minded; but may God help us to pass the time of our sojourning in this world, in humble, jealous fear. But the declensions of true believers are commonly gradual: exemption from trials, and worldly prosperity induce habits of slackness in duty, and self-indulgence in lesser instances, and the soul contracts a slothful, careless, and unwatchful frame. Thus a man is drawn to the verge of prohibited gratification, and far beyond the bounds of expediency and moderation in things lawful: and when his passions have been accustomed to indulgence, he is the more easily tempted to evident evil. The eye, the ear, the outward senses are not turned away from forbidden objects; by these inlets the sinful imagination is excited, and concupiscence is produced in the heart. Perhaps it is hoped that the desire may be lawfully gratified, and on that vain pretence, it is allowed to dwell within. But when lust is conceived, every restraint generally increases it's vehemence: the

AND the LORD ſent Nathan unto David: and he came unto him, and ſaid unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

thought of future conſequences, and the conſideration of the preſence, purity, and juſtice of God, are excluded; his fear and love, are out of exerciſe; his law and authority are diſregarded; and the enhanced imagination of the ſatisfaction, to be found in indulgence, poſſeſſes, and engroſſes the ſoul. Thus ſin is brought forth: and notwithſtanding palliations, and the hopes of concealment, and impunity, which had been previouſly framed; the mind ſoon is tortured with that dread of future conſequences, which far outweighs all its pleaſures. But when the bait is ſwallowed, ſatan hath ſo caught the ſinner, that no power, except that of God can deliver him, or prevent his being ſtill more entangled. The fear of contempt, and of diſgracing the cauſe of religion combine in exciting a man to deviſe methods of concealment; and ſuch thoughts for a ſeaſon exclude others of much greater importance, and afford ſatan an opportunity of tempting him to ſtill further iniquities. Double attention is required to conceal ſin, than would have ſufficed to prevent it; and the conſcience once corrupted makes feeble oppoſition, to fraudulent meaſures of preſerving the reputation, or preventing the conſequences of tranſgreſſion. Every conceſſion hardens the heart, and provokes the departure of the Holy Spirit. The end being conſidered neceſſary, means of every kind, which promiſe ſucceſs, ſeem needful alſo: and when a man's obligations to the Lord are forgotten, no marvel if all the tyes of juſtice, gratitude, and friendſhip to men, are diſregarded. To impoſe upon their credulity, and confidence, to injure them in their property, reputation, and connexions, and to tempt them to commit ſin, are obvious, and common meaſures: and when any one hath thus far given place to the devil, what ſhall prevent his being puſhed forward, by the ſame influence, and out of the ſame motives, to treachery, malice, and murder; till crimes are multiplied, and magnified beyond computation; and till every nobler conſideration be extinguiſhed? If the heart, and conſcience be thus ſtupified, it will be eaſy for the ſame artful enemy to amuſe the deluded offender, with ſome form of godlineſs, ſome palliation, or cloke of iniquity, which ſhall quiet every riſing ſcruple: and ſucceſs in ſuch a courſe may even be conſidered as a divine ſanction, and induce the language of indifference, or of infidelity: whilſt the heart is rendered callous, when cruelty is connected with the attainment of the end propoſed. But can a real, and eminent believer ever tread this downward path, and thus fall aſleep in the arms of ſatan? Can ſuch a perſon, who hath committed ſuch atrocious crimes, and ſo long remains impenitent, be indeed a child of God, a member of Chriſt, a temple of the Holy Ghoſt, and an heir of eternal glory? Can one ſpark of divine life exiſt unextinguiſhed in ſuch an ocean? It is plain that theſe things are poſſible: but no man in ſuch a caſe can have warranted evidence to conclude that he is a believer: the higher a man's confidence is, who hath ſunk thus low in wickedneſs, the greater proof will there be of his preſumption, and hypocriſy: though grace be not loſt in ſuch an awful caſe, the aſſurance, and conſolation of it muſt be ſuſpended. Let not then any vile hypocrite, who reſembles David in nothing but his tranſgreſſions, and who adds the habit of allowed ſin to all other aggravations, bolſter up his confidence with this example: let him firſt imitate David's humiliation, repentance, and other eminent graces, before he think himſelf, or require others to conſider him, a backſlider. Let no oppoſer, or deſpiſer of the truth object and ſay, are theſe the fruits of faith, and devotion? We anſwer no: they are the effects of a corrupt nature, whoſe tendency to evil muſt be amazing ſtrong, to overcome the contrary tendency of truth and grace, in the heart of an eminent ſervant of God. Let us all watch, againſt the beginnings of negligence, and ſelf-indulgence, and keep at the utmoſt diſtance from that precipice, whence David fell: let us beg of God to cloſe our ſenſes, imaginations, and affections to all forbidden objects, thoughts, and deſires: let us ſtudy moderation, expediency, and ſuperiority to all animal inclinations, in things lawful: and let us continually attend to our proper work, and pray always, that we may not be led into temptation: then will our lives beſt ſhew the tendency of our principles, and confute thoſe, who accuſe us of encouraging men to ſin by the freeneſs of goſpel ſalvation. But again; is it poſſible that ſuch a backſlider from God can be recovered, and admitted to comfortable communion with him again? Doubtleſs it is: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption; and he will caſt out no humble, penitent believer, whatever his former crimes have been: nor will he ſuffer ſatan to pluck any of his ſheep out of his hand. Let then thoſe, who are fallen, return to the Lord without delay, and ſeek forgiveneſs through the Redeemer's atoning blood. Yet the Lord will recover his people in ſuch a way, as ſhall effectually mark his abhorrence of their crimes, and deter all who regard his word, from abuſing the encouragements of his mercy. And how poor is every ſucceſs, and gratification, when the Lord is diſpleaſed with us! and in this world, or the next he will ſurely expoſe us to ſhame for our crimes. It is alſo very painful to obſerve how the ſins of believers quiet the conſciences, and rejoices the hearts of wicked men, who are ready to inſult and ſay, art thou alſo become as one of us? But whilſt many will thus abuſe theſe humiliating inſtances: may we be unfeignedly thankful, if we have been reſtrained from ſuch dreadful falls; may we commit our ſouls to him, who is able to keep us from falling! may we take warning by David's ſins, and imitate the generoſity, ſelf-denial, and attachment to the cauſe of Iſrael, of the gallant, and much-injured Uriah.

NOTES.

CHAP. XII.] V. 1—5.] When the Lord was diſpleaſed with his ſervant David, he did not ſend ſore judgments upon him; but a prophet to him, to bring him to repentance. Nathan did not go of his own accord, and in his own name to reprove David for his offences: but when he was ſent by the Lord, he plainly delivered his meſſage; without being induced, by his royal authority, his eminent character as a ſaint, and pſalmiſt, or his own peculiar affection for him, to conceal, or mutilate it. This probably was ſoon after the birth of David's ſon by Bath-ſheba; when theſe ſcandalous tranſactions began to be generally

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Engravd for the Revd. Mr. Scott's Family Bible.

C. R. Ryley del. *Wray sculp.*

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2 The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds:

3 But the poor *man* had nothing, ſave one little ewe lamb, which he had bought, and nouriſhed up; and it grew up together with him, and with his children: it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his boſom, and was unto him as a daughter.

4 And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he ſpared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dreſs for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dreſſed it for the man that was come to him.

5 And David's anger was greatly kindled againſt the man; and he ſaid to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* ſhall ſurely die:

6 And he ſhall reſtore the lamb fourfold, becauſe he did this thing, and becauſe he had no pity.

7 And Nathan ſaid to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus ſaith the LORD God of Iſrael, I anointed thee king over Iſrael, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul:

8 And I gave thee thy maſter's houſe, and thy maſter's wives into thy boſom, and gave thee the houſe of Iſrael and of Judah; and, if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee ſuch and ſuch things.

9 Wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his ſight? thou haſt killed Uriah the Hittite with

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noticed: but whatever others whiſpered, and circulated, David ſeems not to have been in any due meaſure ſenſible of his exceeding wickedneſs, until the Lord alarmed his conſcience by his prophet. In order to inſinuate the truths, which he was to deliver, without exciting the reſiſtance of David's partial ſelf-love, and to induce him to be council againſt himſelf, before he was aware, Nathan introduced his meſſage with a parable: (*Note Judg.* c. ix. v. 7—15.) Several expreſſions here made uſe of, might have excited a ſuſpicion, that ſomewhat more was intended, than merely pleading the cauſe of an injured poor man, againſt his wealthy oppreſſor: yet David ſuppoſed it to be matter of fact, till Nathan made the application. The rich man, who had many flocks, and herds, repreſented David with his many wives, and concubines: the poor man, with his ewe lamb, which was ſo tenderly brought up by him, was Uriah, with his one well-beloved wife: the traveller may mean the ſenſual luſt, which entered, and was welcomed in David's heart; and which nothing could ſatisfy but the wife of Uriah. But this parable repreſented only a ſmall part of the enormity of David's conduct: Uriah's loyal, and gallant ſervices; and David's treachery to, and murder of him and others, were not ſo much as alluded to in it: his injury to Uriah, and Bath-ſheba in the adultery, were alone ſhadowed forth; for perhaps the prophet meant to bring him by degrees to a view of his exceeding ſinfulneſs. But David, forgetful of his own crimes, was fired with indignation againſt the imaginary offender, and with a ſolemn oath condemned him, not only to make legal reſtitution, but to ſuffer death. The circumſtances of the ſuppoſed offence might deſerve more than ordinary puniſhment: yet the exceſſive ſeverity of this ſentence was the natural effect of the unhumbled ſtate of David's heart.

V. 7. *Thou art*, &c.] Though Nathan had not brought David to make the application of the parable to himſelf; yet he had gained a great point, in bringing him to pronounce ſo ſevere a ſentence againſt a ſuppoſed offender, for crimes of far inferior malignity to his own. He therefore, with great firmneſs, and courage, addreſſed David's conſcience; and aſſured him, that he was the very perſon, whoſe conduct had been delineated, and whoſe ſentence had been denounced out of his own mouth: and he then proceeded in a very plain, convincing, and even ſevere diſcourſe, to ſhew the extent, aggravations, and effects of his guilt.

V. 8. *Thy maſter's wives*, &c.] According to the cuſtom of the eaſtern kingdoms, the ſucceſſor to the crown obtained poſſeſſion of the women belonging to the preceding king: David therefore having ſucceeded Saul, his former maſter, had acquired a property in his wives and concubines: but we do not read, that he actually cohabited with any of them; and as Saul was his father-in-law, it ſeems probable that he did not, though he might marry ſome of the women belonging to Saul's court: however the Lord's giving David *in his providence*, the wives of Saul, was no more a divine approbation of his polygamy, than his giving Iſrael a king, proved that they did well in deſiring, and aſking one. And the Lord is alſo ſaid to give David's concubines to Abſalom, (v. xi.) But the multitude of unmarried women, of whom David had it in his power to make choice, aggravated his guilt in ſeizing upon the wife of another man.

If that had been, &c.] If David thought that any thing conducive to his comfort was yet wanting, he was allowed to aſk for it, and the Lord would not have denied it, if he ſaw it good for him: of this his former love was a convincing proof.

V. 9. *Wherefore haſt thou*, &c?] The paſſage may be rendered, "wherefore haſt thou deſpiſed the word of the "Lord?" his promiſes, as well as his precepts. David, *in this inſtance*, had ſhewn, that he thought the general, and ſpecial promiſes of God either too ſcanty, or too precarious, to ſuffice for, and to enſure his felicity; or he need not have ſought ſatisfaction in another way: and this was a dreadful contempt of them: he had alſo treated the commandments of God as rigorous, and needleſs reſtraints upon his inclinations; and as worthy to be neglected, diſpenſed with, and trampled on, when they interfered with

the ſword, and haſt taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and haſt ſlain him with the ſword of the children of Ammon.

10 Now therefore the ſword ſhall never depart from thine houſe; becauſe thou haſt deſpiſed me, and haſt taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

11 Thus ſaith the LORD, Behold, I will raiſe up evil againſt thee out of thine own houſe, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he ſhall lie with thy wives in the ſight of this ſun.

12 For thou didſt *it* ſecretly: but I will do this thing before all Iſrael, and before the ſun.

13 And David ſaid unto Nathan, I have ſinned againſt the LORD. And Nathan ſaid unto David, The LORD alſo hath put away thy ſin; thou ſhalt not die.

14 Howbeit, becauſe by this deed thou haſt given great occaſion to the enemies of the LORD to blaſpheme, the child alſo *that is* born unto thee ſhall ſurely die.

15 And Nathan departed unto his houſe: and the LORD ſtruck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very ſick.

16 David therefore beſought God for the child; and David faſted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

17 And the elders of his houſe aroſe, *and went* to him, to raiſe him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

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his preſent gratification. Thus he deſpiſed the word of the Lord: but he could not poſſibly give a good reaſon for ſo evil a thing.

V. 10 *Deſpiſed me*, &c.] When David deſpiſed the word of the Lord, he deſpiſed the Lord himſelf: his power, and authority, his juſtice and purity, his omnipreſence, and omniſcience, his favour, and wrath, and all his glorious perfections: elſe he would not thus have offended God, for the baſe gratification of his luſts, after all his knowledge of, and communion with him. This was an aggravation of his crimes, which is leſs obvious to our natural apprehenſions, but far more full of malignity, than all thoſe, which were enumerated in the former chapter. As the parable had particularly repreſented the evil of David's adultery, the addreſs of Nathan is moſt pointed againſt his murder of Uriah. We ſhall have the beſt commentary upon the threatenings of this paſſage in the ſubſequent hiſtory.

V. 11. *Before thine eyes*, &c.] David was not preſent at Abſalom's villainy; but it was committed in ſo ſhameleſs a manner, that it was as notorious, as if he had ſeen it with his own eyes. The Lord raiſed up this evil out of his own houſe: yet he did not put the wickedneſs into the hearts of his ſons; but he left them to their own vile paſſions, and over-ruled the effects of them for David's chaſtiſement.

V. 13. *I have ſinned*, &c.] The dormant ſpark of divine grace in David's heart now began to rekindle: before this plain ſtatement of facts in the name of God, all his evaſions vaniſhed, and his guilt appeared in all its magnitude. He did not therefore reſent the pointed rebuke of the prophet, nor attempt any palliation of his conduct; but in deep humiliation of heart confeſſed; "I have ſinned "againſt the Lord." The words are few; but the event proved them to have been the language of genuine repentance; which regards ſin, as committed againſt the authority, and glory of the Lord, whether or not, it have occaſioned much evil to our neighbour. Immediately Nathan aſſured him, "that the Lord had put away his ſin, "and that he ſhould not die." Murder, and adultery were crimes, to be puniſhed with death: and though no Iſraelite had authority to execute this ſentence upon the Lord's anointed; yet David might juſtly fear that the Lord would cut him off by ſome ſudden judgment: but the prophet without delay informed him, that he ſhould not thus be put to death, and intimated to him, that the eternal puniſhment alſo would be remitted.

V. 14. *Great occaſion*, &c.] Perhaps the Ammonites, and other idolatrous enemies of God, and Iſrael, had received information of theſe ſins of Jehovah's highly favoured ſervant, and zealous worſhipper, and blaſphemed his name on that account: and the wicked Iſraelites, eſpecially of Saul's party, would reflect upon the divine juſtice, in that Saul had been rejected for *apparently* leſſer crimes, and David was ſpared notwithſtanding theſe enormities. But the Lord did not puniſh Saul above his deſervings, and therefore did him no injuſtice in forgiving David: and he judges not merely by the outward action, but by the inward diſpoſition of the heart; and there he perceived a very important difference, and even contrariety, in the two characters. This obvious remark ſolves many difficulties of this kind to the humble enquirer. However in the temporal puniſhment of David in his family, the Lord determined to ſilence theſe blaſphemies; and he began by the death of the child, which Bath-ſheba had born to him. This providence, though eventually a mercy to all parties, yet being predicted, and publicly declared to be a rebuke for David's ſin, would be for the time a ſharp and painful chaſtiſement.

V. 15. *And Nathan departed*, &c.] The prophet having delivered his meſſage returned home probably to pray for the king: and David retired, and poured out his ſoul in godly ſorrow, and ingenuous confeſſions; and perhaps immediately penned, and ſoon after publiſhed the 51ſt Pſalm, which forms a complete example, and ſtandard of true repentance.

V. 16. *Beſought God*, &c.] David might hope that there was a ſecret condition in the threatening; and that

18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?

19 But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead.

20 Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed *himself*, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat.

21 Then said his servants unto him, What thing *is* this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child *while it was* alive; but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread.

22 And he said, While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell *whether* God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?

23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.

24 And David comforted Bath-sheba, his wife, and went in unto her, and lay with her: and she bare a son, and he called his name Solomon; and the LORD loved him.

25 And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet, and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

26 And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.

27 And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.

28 Now therefore gather the rest of the people together, and encamp against the city, and take it; lest I take the city, and it be called after my name.

29 And David gathered all the people together,

upon his humiliation, attended by fasting, and prayer, the child might yet be spared: he considered the infant as an innocent sufferer for his crimes; (c. xxiv. v. 17;) he had doubtless a very great affection for it; his spirit was at that time peculiarly tender; and perhaps Bath-sheba likewise was overwhelmed with a load of guilt, and sorrow, (v. 24.) On all these accounts he thus humbled himself before God, and sought the life of the child, though it would have lived a monument of his sin, and shame.

V. 18. *On the seventh*, &c.] That is, say some, from the child's birth; and this was an additional rebuke to David, as it died uncircumcised. But perhaps the continuance of it's sickness, and of David's sorrow and mortification are meant thereby.

V. 20. *And worshipped*, &c.] By changing his raiment, and going up to the house of God to worship, he publicly expressed his acceptance of the chastisement, and submission to the will of the Lord; and his gratitude to him for sparing his life.

V. 21—25.] Whilst he had hopes of prevailing, humble fasting, and prayer formed the present duty: but after the event, chearful submission to the divine appointment was required of him. He could not profit the child, and he might injure himself, and neglect his duty, by mourning for him; the child released from sufferings, and gone before him to a better world, was now no loser; the public sustained no detriment, as in the death of useful persons; and there remained no farther reason for sorrow, except he should quarrel with the will of God: this he would not do, but rather prepare to follow, and hope to meet him in the world above.

V. 24, 25.] David's marriage with Bath-sheba was sinful, as it was conducted; nevertheless it was not afterwards to be disannulled: and in the mystery of the divine counsels, it made way for the performance of God's promises, (c. vii. v. 12;) and Bath-sheba has her name inserted in the genealogy of the Redeemer! As a token of the Lord's reconciliation to David and Bath-sheba, this son by her was named Solomon, or the peaceable; and Jedidiah, or beloved of the Lord, because of the Lord's peculiar favour to him: though he was not ordinarily called by that name.

V. 26—31.] Probably this event took place before the birth of the former child. The Lord was very gracious to David, in thus prospering his arms, notwithstanding his manifold offences: and Joab approved himself very faithful to David, and attentive to his reputation. The crown of the king of the Ammonites is said to have weighed a talent; but that being about a hundred weight, seems enormous: probably it means the value of it, with the precious stones. David seems to have been too much pleased with this crown: whereas, *his anointing*, as the king of the Lord's people, was a far more honourable distinction. It is not certain what the punishments were, which he inflicted upon those Ammonites, whom he took prisoners: whether he put them to death, under saws, axes, harrows, &c. or whether he condemned them to wear out their lives in severe bondage, in various labours. He meant to punish their cruelty to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and their contempt of his ambassadors: but if there was, as seems probable, an undistinguishing severity exercised by him towards them, we must ascribe it to the state of his mind at that time. (1 *Chron.* c. xx. v. 1—3.)

gether, and went to Rabbah, and fought againſt it, and took it.

30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, (the weight whereof *was* a talent of gold, with the precious ſtones,) and it was *ſet* on David's head: and he brought forth the ſpoil of the city in great abundance.

31 And he brought forth the people that *were* therein, and put *them* under ſaws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them paſs through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jeruſalem.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Our falls are of ourſelves, but our recoveries are from the Lord: and he ordinarily makes uſe of the miniſtry of the word in bringing ſinners to repentance; and the plain authoritative declaration of the divine law, and of the evil nature, and effects of ſin, is the appointing method of awakening the careleſs conſcience, and of bringing men to condemn themſelves. In ſome caſes great prudence, and addreſs are neceſſary in delivering the Lord's meſſage, eſpecially to thoſe in exalted ſtations: and illuſtration often forms the moſt compendious, and effectual method of producing conviction. It is well when ſuch an indirect addreſs will ſpare the painful neceſſity of more explicit reproofs: but ſelf-flattery renders us quickſighted to the leſſer faults of others, and blind to our own moſt atrocious offences: and in proportion as men are tender to their own ſins, they will be unreaſonably ſevere in animadverting upon thoſe of others. Hence ariſes the neceſſity of great plainneſs of ſpeech in the public miniſtry of the goſpel; that the conduct, and caſes of ſinners, of every deſcription, may be ſo explicitly declared, that every one's conſcience may ſay, "thou art the man." Nor is this perſonal, ſo long as the general caſes of multitudes are deſcribed, and the *peculiarities* of an individual's character are not ſo deſcanted on, as to draw the general attention of the auditors from themſelves to him. But further, it is often neceſſary, *in private*, to be ſtill more explicit, and particular, with ſuch profeſſors, as will not underſtand the plaineſt public addreſs; and this without any reſerve, or reſpect of perſons, with all ſerioufneſs, energy, and expoſtulation. And it will never be well with the church of God, until ſecret lamentations over unreproved ſcandals, and abuſes, and private converſations concerning the faults of abſent perſons, be generally changed, by the miniſters of Chriſt, for ſuch faithful plain dealing with men in private: and they, who are of reputation, ought to take the lead, and to ſet the example in this arduous, but ſalutary buſineſs. The true miniſter's meſſage will comfort, or diſtreſs the conſcience of thoſe, who regard it, according as they are walking with, or contrary to God: nay the believer can expect no conſolation from a ſcriptural ſtatement of the truth, whilſt he is under the guilt and power of unrepented ſin; and if he obtain any, it is either through the miniſter's error, or unfaithfulneſs, or his own ill-grounded confidence. The marriage with one wife, who poſſeſſes the affections, is really a prevention of fornication: but variations from the original inſtitution commonly increaſe the force of the Paſſions, and introduce greater licentiouſneſs. Every former mercy increaſes the heinouſneſs of our tranſgreſſions: but the extent of the promiſes, and the Lord's readineſs to hear prayer, and to give every good thing to his people, peculiarly aggravate their guilt, when they hanker after forbidden gratifications. We need not wonder that men in general deſpiſe the Lord's truths, promiſes, and commandments; yea and the Lord himſelf, in his whole character, and in all his relations to them: when even eminent believers, in ſome inſtances, are capable of the ſame folly, and ingratitude. From this ſource all our ſins proceed: man's contempt of the infinite excellency, and invaluable favour of God; his diſregard to his authority, averſion to his ſervice, and enmity to his juſtice, and holineſs, give being, and malignity to every ſpecies of diſobedience; and are in themſelves utterly inexcuſable. But however iniquity may have prevailed, where there is true grace, there is alſo ſenſibility, and ſomewhat for the word of God to take root in: and the humbled ſinner will not be offended by, but thankful to his faithful reprover: and where there is true repentance God will not refuſe forgiveneſs. It is however grievous to think what great occaſion of blaſphemy to the enemies of God, the falls of his profeſſing people afford: yet none except the Lord's enemies will make this uſe of them: and the open confeſſions of ſuch offenders, their future conduct, their ſevere corrections, and their patience under them, will manifeſt the equity, and purity, as well as the mercy of God, in pardoning their offences; and will mark an eſſential difference of *habitual character, and diſpoſition* betwixt them, and unhumbled ſinners of every deſcription. The Lord often cauſes his offending people to read their ſins in their puniſhment; he openly puts them to ſhame for their ſecret offences; and by the ſufferings of thoſe, whom they moſt tenderly love, fills their hearts with the keeneſt anguiſh: and though others eſcape, they ſhall be ſure to ſmart in this world for their tranſgreſſions. Under ſuch rebukes they will be led to deeper humiliation, to chaſten themſelves with faſting, and to pour out more fervent and inceſſant prayers; and eſpecially for thoſe who are ſuffering on their account, and are unable to pray for themſelves. Yet the ſame principles will teach them to moderate their ſorrows for thoſe beloved objects, whom the Lord has taken from them, and to prepare the more diligently to follow them: and nothing ſhould induce them to neglect their preſent duty. Thus, as long as life laſts let the diſcouraged ſinner ſeek the Lord, humble himſelf before him, and pour out his prayers; if only able to ſay, "who "knoweth if God will be gracious to me." (*Jonah*, c. iii. v. 9.) They, who are ignorant of the divine life, cannot comprehend the reaſons of a believer's conduct in his varied experiences: they will miſtake deep humility, and fervent prayer, for impatience, and an inordinate love to created objects; and acquieſcence in the Lord's will, and chearful gratitude under ſharp trials will be deemed indifference, and apathy: and in a thouſand different ways

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Contains, 1st. Amnon David's son committing an incestuous rape on Tamar, and driving her from him in hatred: and her grief and shame, v. 1—19. *2d. Her brother Absalom's resentment, and murder of Amnon, v.* 20—29. *3d. David's grief; and Absalom's flight and absence, and his father's desire after him, v.* 30—39.

AND it came to pass after this, that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name *was* Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her.

2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she *was* a virgin: and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name *was* Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother: and Jonadab *was* a very subtle man.

4 And he said unto him, Why *art* thou, *being* the king's son, lean from day to day? wilt thou not tell me? And Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

5 And Jonadab said unto him, Lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick: and when thy father cometh to see thee, say unto him, I pray thee, let my sister Tamar come and give me meat, and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see *it*, and eat *it* at her hand.

6 So Amnon lay down, and made him-

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they will shew their incapacity to judge of the consistency, and reasons of his behaviour; (1 *Cor.* c. ii. v. 14, 15.) But God accepts those services, which man censures; and a humble submissive spirit prepares the way for divine consolations, notwithstanding former crimes: and we should encourage the desponding hearts of our fellow sinners, with the comforts, that the Lord hath graciously afforded us: and when the heart is thus prepared, the message of the minister will again be peace and joy. Our prayers for our children are graciously answered, if some of them die in their tender infancy; (for they are well taken care of;) and the others live "beloved of the Lord." Vengeance will in due season be taken of the persecutors and abusers of God's people, and ministers; and in their severest sufferings the Lord will be righteous, though the instruments should be unreasonably severe. In proportion as we lose sight of the honour, that cometh from God, we shall become ambitious, and vain of worldly distinctions: and we shall be most compassionate, kind, and forgiving to our fellow sinners, when we most feel our need, and taste the sweetness of the Lord's forgiving love to our own souls. In whatever service the Lord may please to employ us, may we (as Joab with David,) execute his will faithfully, and then give him the whole glory without any reserve.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII.] V. 1. *After this,* &c.] Nathan's word began to take effect not very long after it was delivered, to mark the Lord's abhorrence of David's crimes. He seems to have been too indulgent of his children, and probably their mothers had a great share in their education, and *several of them* instilled into them bad principles; which is a natural effect of polygamy. But they appear to have been restrained by his example, influence, and occasional instructions, from open excesses, until he had committed those crimes, which have been considered. Notwithstanding his repentance, they would *naturally* consider his conduct, as a license to their youthful inclinations, and conclude that he could not greatly censure them, after he had set them such an example. Thus David might trace the sins of his children from his own misconduct, which would increase the anguish of the chastisement.

V. 2. *For his sister,* &c.] His sister by the same father, but of another mother. If Amnon had not *secretly* been habituated to licentiousness, surely he never could, in the *first* instance, have given way to so unnatural a passion. By gazing upon her beauty concupiscence was kindled in his heart, and being allowed it gained an entire ascendancy. He was not restrained from his base purpose by the fear of God, by conscience, shame, regard to the peace, or favour of his father, or to the reputation, virtue, or comfort of Tamar, or any foresight of evil consequences: but by reason of her modesty, and the care that was taken of her, he could not find an opportunity of getting her into his power. His passion therefore preyed upon his spirits, and impaired his health.

V. 3—5.] Amnon deemed Jonadab his friend, because he was his flatterer, and the caterer for his lusts. He was "a very subtle man;" a very crafty courtier, who readily discerned the inclinations of men, and was very ingenious in devising means for their gratification, to subserve his own interests. Observing Amnon to look more and more languid one day after another, he suspected the cause, and intimated to him, that a person of his rank might obtain his desires, if he went about it; thus he drew from him the shameful secret. Had he not interposed, probably his passion might for a season have been stifled, and at length supplanted by an affection for some other person. But when Jonadab understood the state of his mind, he speedily put him in a way of obtaining his wishes. Amnon was the heir-apparent of the crown, and David was growing old, and probably shewed Jonadab but little favour, though a near relation: he therefore paid his court to Amnon; and supposed that his rank and authority would bear him out in any crime, which he was disposed to commit.

V. 6—14.] This plot was laid very artfully. Amnon's sickly looks gave plausibility to his pretended illness: David's tenderness, and affection to his children were well

ſelf ſick: and when the king was come to ſee him, Amnon ſaid unto the king, I pray thee let Tamar my ſiſter come and make me a couple of cakes in my ſight, that I may eat at her hand.

7 Then David ſent home to Tamar, ſaying, Go now to thy brother Amnon's houſe, and dreſs him meat.

8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's houſe; and he was laid down. And ſhe took flour, and kneaded *it*, and made cakes in his ſight, and did bake the cakes.

9 And ſhe took a pan, and poured *them* out before him; but he refuſed to eat. And Amnon ſaid, Have out all men from me: and they went out every man from him.

10 And Amnon ſaid unto Tamar, Bring the meat into the chamber, that I may eat of thine hand. And Tamar took the cakes which ſhe had made, and brought *them* into the chamber to Amnon her brother.

11 And when ſhe had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and ſaid unto her, Come, lie with me, my ſiſter.

12 And ſhe anſwered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no ſuch thing ought to be done in Iſrael: do not thou this folly.

13 And I, whither ſhall I cauſe my ſhame to go? and as for thee, thou ſhalt be as one of the fools in Iſrael. Now therefore, I pray thee, ſpeak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee.

14 Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice; but, being ſtronger than ſhe, forced her, and lay with her.

15 Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; ſo that the hatred wherewith he hated her *was* greater than the love wherewith he had loved her: and Amnon ſaid unto her, Ariſe, be gone.

16 And ſhe ſaid unto him, *There is* no cauſe; this evil in ſending me away *is* greater than the other that thou didſt unto me: but he would not hearken unto her.

17 Then he called his ſervant that miniſtered unto him, and ſaid, Put now this *woman* out from me, and bolt the door after her.

18 And *ſhe had* a garment of divers colours upon her: for with ſuch robes were the king's daughters *that were* virgins apparelled. Then his ſervant brought her out, and bolted the door after her.

19 And Tamar put aſhes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that *was* on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying.

20 And Abſalom her brother ſaid unto her, Hath Amnon thy brother been with thee? but hold now thy peace, my ſiſter: he *is* thy

known: perſons, who have been accuſtomed to indulgence, are naturally whimſical in their diet when ſick: David would be ſure to viſit him, and be diſpoſed to humour him in every thing; and would not ſuſpect ſuch a baſe deſign concealed under his requeſt: thus he would readily obtain David's conſent to Tamar's coming to him. Nor could *ſhe* have any ſuſpicion of ſuch horrid villainy from one, who *ſeemed* very ill, and in danger of death: but when he commanded all to leave the room, whilſt he eat of her cakes, ſhe might very juſtly have apprehended ſome bad deſign. Tamar's ſkill, and readineſs in ſuch ordinary employments, though a king's daughter; her compaſſionate attention to her half-brother; and all her anſwers and behaviour are ſuited to give us a very favourable opinion of her character. As her brother he ought to have protected, inſtead of injuring her: ſuch behaviour was peculiarly vile in an Iſraelite: it would for ever diſgrace and ruin her, and expoſe him to ſcorn and hatred, as one of the moſt abandoned of men. Her propoſal to him, to aſk her of the king, was meant to prevent preſent violence; for ſhe knew that David would afterwards protect her. And it is probable that ſhe accompanied her complaints, and expoſtulations, with unavailing outcries; which Amnon's domeſtics would diſregard: for ſhe ſeems to have been entirely free from blame in the ſcandalous tranſaction.

V. 15—18.] The determined conduct, and language of Tamar ſo irritated Amnon, that his pretended love was changed into the moſt vehement hatred: and without regarding her remonſtrances, he ordered to be turned out of doors, with every circumſtance of averſion, and abhorrence. This was doubtleſs an additional injury, and tended to publiſh her diſgrace, which might otherwiſe have been concealed: but we muſt attribute it to the confuſion, and diſtreſs of her mind, that ſhe ſtated this to be the greater injury: unleſs ſhe ſuppoſed that in ſo ſingular a caſe, he might, and ought to have married her.

V. 19, 20.] Tamar went home in the attire, and geſtures of an inconſolable mourner: doubtleſs her mind was filled with anguiſh; but perhaps ſhe meant thus to proteſt, that though ſhe was unfortunate, ſhe was not criminal. Abſalom diſſembled his reſentment, and perſuaded her to compoſe her mind, and not further to expoſe the ſhame of her family. It ſeems that Tamar lived all her days a ſingle, and a retired life.

brother,

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C. R. Ryley del. *Grignion sculp.*

Published as the Act directs by Bellamy & Roberts, Aug. 12. 1788.

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C.R. Ryley del. *Audinet sculp.t*

Published as the Act directs, by Bellamy & Roberts, Aug.t 2.d 1788.

brother, regard not this thing. So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth.

22 And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad: for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

24 And Absalom came to the king, and said, Behold now, thy servant hath sheepshearers; let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant.

25 And the king said to Absalom, Nay, my son, let us not all now go, lest we be chargeable unto thee. And he pressed him: howbeit he would not go, but blessed him.

26 Then said Absalom, if not, I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said unto him, Why should he go with thee?

27 But Absalom pressed him, that he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant.

29 And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded: then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him upon his mule and fled.

30 And it came to pass, while they were in the way, that tidings came to David, saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons and there is not one of them left.

31 Then the king arose, and tare his garments, and lay on the earth; and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent.

32 And Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, Let not my lord suppose *that* they have slain all the young men the king's sons; for Amnon only is dead: for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined, from the day that he forced his sister Tamar.

33 Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead: for Amnon only is dead.

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man

V. 21. *He was very wroth*, &c.] Amnon's incest was prohibited by the law, (*Lev.* c. xviii. v. 9. c. xx. v. 17;) and it was added, that the offenders "should be cut off," and "bear their iniquity:" but the magistrate was not *expressly commanded, to put them to death*, as in some preceding instances. Neither was he, who forced a woman, ordered to be put to death, unless she was betrothed; because otherwise he would be obliged to marry her. Perhaps these circumstances united with David's paternal tenderness, and his consciousness of his own guilt, to satisfy his mind in leaving Amnon to the judgment of God, without inflicting punishment upon him. But certainly he ought to have manifested his displeasure by some means or other; and this complication of crimes might have justified the severest punishment: but as David neglected his duty, the Lord afterwards took vengeance on him, in a way, which added still more to his domestic trials.

V. 22—29.] Absalom harboured the deepest resentment of the gross affront put upon himself, and the irreparable injury done to his sister: but for two years he concealed his hatred under the appearance of indifference. But at length he deemed matters ripe for the execution of his determined revenge: according to the custom of those times, having flocks of sheep, and making a feast when they were shorn, he formed his plot upon that circumstance. To cover his design he invited his father to come to his feast, sensible that from prudential reasons he would decline the invitation: but he thus obtained his approbation to Amnon's going with the rest of his brethren: and David perhaps hoped that the reconciliation betwixt them would have been thereby cemented: and when he entertained no suspicion, Amnon discarded all his likewise. Probably Absalom was urged on the more resolutely to the murder of his brother, because he was the next heir to the crown, if Chileab were dead, as is generally supposed. His crime was aggravated, by being a breach of hospitality, and committed under the mask of affection, in the presence of his brethren, and by his father being drawn in *unintentionally* to be accessory to it: he involved his servants also in the guilt of murder, as if his command could warrant their transgression of God's law: and he took the opportunity of killing Amnon, when he was drunk, or nearly so, as if he meant to murder body, and soul at once. We may suppose that Absalom's servants fled with him, as they were not called to an account for the murder.

V. 32. *This hath been*, &c.] Jonadab probably was not in Absalom's confidence: but being a subtle man, he had suspected his malicious intentions. It would have been more profitable sagacity, to have foreseen these consequences, and to have forewarned Amnon of them, before he had perpetrated the crime, which provoked this revenge.

that

that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill ſide behind him.

35 And Jonadab ſaid unto the king, Behold, the king's ſons come: as thy ſervant ſaid, ſo it is.

36 And it came to paſs, as ſoon as he had made an end of ſpeaking, that, behold, the king's ſons came, and lifted up their voice, and wept; and the king alſo and all his ſervants wept very ſore.

37 But Abſalom fled, and went to Talmai, the ſon of Ammihud, king of Geſhur. And *David* mourned for his ſon every day.

38 So Abſalom fled, and went to Geſhur, and was there three years.

39 And *the ſoul of* king David longed to go forth unto Abſalom: for he was comforted concerning Amnon, ſeeing he was dead.

V. 37—39.] Abſalom fled for refuge to the court of his mother's father (c. iii. v. 3:) and there he continued for three years. David did not demand him back, in order to puniſh him; but after a time wiſhed for his return, and to be reconciled to him. In this he too nearly copied Eli's example, and honoured his ſons more than the law of God; and therefore God made them his ſcourges, and then puniſhed them himſelf. However David's ſons were not *prieſts*, and ſo did not diſgrace the ſanctuary. He could not have proceeded againſt Abſalom, without condemning him to die; as Eli might have done by his ſons: and David's own blood-guiltineſs too much reſembling Abſalom's, (in that he murdered Uriah under the guiſe of friendſhip by the hand of others, after having previouſly tempted him to drunkenneſs,) enervated his reſolution, and diſpoſed him to lenity: but theſe conſiderations do not excuſe his conduct.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The judgments of God upon thoſe, who are finally ſaved, may be ſo terrible, varied, and continued, as effectually to proclaim his abhorrence of their crimes: and no reflecting perſon, with ſuch records before his eyes, would venture to commit iniquity, even if he could be ſure to eſcape eternal miſery: any more than a man would, for a trifling advantage, throw himſelf from a precipice, and break his bones, if he could be aſſured that his life would be preſerved: for he would be ſenſible, that he muſt ſuffer immenſe pain, and probably be a cripple all his days. The Lord *over-rules* the wickedneſs of men, (whilſt they are hurried on by their own luſts, and ſatan's temptations,) to accompliſh his own holy and righteous purpoſes. External accompliſhments are generally a detriment to the poſſeſſors, and a temptation to others: none ought to be vain of them, or to regret the want of them. So depraved is the human heart, that even natural affection may degenerate into licentiouſneſs: and the intercourſe betwixt near relations ſhould be conducted with caution, and prudence, that no opportunity may be given to thoſe, who are diſpoſed to commit iniquity. What men dignify with the name of love, is often a baſe, ſenſual inclination, entire ſelfiſhneſs, which triumphs over conſcience, and the fear of God, and without pity conſigns its object to irreparable diſgrace and miſery, for the ſake of a momentary animal gratification! How different from, yea contrary to, that love of others, which the law of God commands! Men's domineering luſts, when reſtrained from indulgence by external hindrances, become their tormentors, drink up their ſpirits, and diſorder their bodies: and probably the fury of ſinful propenſities, without any poſſibility of gratifying them, will form one dreadful part of the miſery of the damned: let the thought lead us to ſeek their mortification, that by the grace of God they may be extirpated from our hearts. But what would be the ſtate of this world, if every ſinner's power were equal to his inclination, for the commiſſion of wickedneſs? If indulged melancholy be improper for thoſe, who poſſeſs eminent ſtations, and great affluence in this world: how inconſiſtent is it with the profeſſions, privileges, and proſpects of the children of God: and if they are *lean from day to day in their ſouls*, it is commonly the effect of their yielding to ſloth, and worldly affections. When iniquity is conceived in the heart, all the powers of the underſtanding will be employed in deviſing how to effect it; and even ſickneſs will not always be ſufficient to take men off from their licentious purſuits. When ſuch debauched perſons, occupy exalted ſtations in ſociety, they will be attended by "very "ſubtle men," reſembling ſatan; ſagacious prompters to, and crafty adviſers in iniquity: theſe will aſſiſt them in overcoming the oppoſition of ſhame, and conſcience; and encourage them to gratify themſelves, without regarding truth, or juſtice, or the intereſts, or happineſs of others. Such are deemed, and treated as their friends, but the event will prove them to have been their moſt deſtructive enemies, merely for the ſake of their own emolument. Many violent but concealed evil deſires would be extinguiſhed, did not ſuch prompters diſcern, and draw forth the confeſſion of them, and contrive the method of their being gratified. Such plauſible villains know how to take advantage of the affection, candour, and modeſty, and unſuſpecting confidence of pious perſons, for the accompliſhment of their own infamous deſigns: and when iniquity is reſolved on, a perfect infatuation takes place, and all probable, or certain conſequences are forgotten. But ſilent abhorrence is the proper cenſure of ſuch abominable deeds of darkneſs; which are eſpecially horrible under the light of revelation: and even ungodly perſons will execrate thoſe, who perpetrate ſuch outrages againſt common decency; and they will appear as fools, and reprobates to their neighbours in general: what then will be the judgment, and ſentence of God reſpecting them! Senſual love ſoon changes into hatred, and concupiſcence into lothing: nor can it reaſonably be expected, that they, who make no ſcruple of debauching the perſons, for whom they *pretend affection*, will feel any remorſe at deſerting them with cruelty, and diſdain, at expoſing them to ſhame and con-

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Contains, 1st. Joab, by the feigned complaint of a widow woman, inducing David to recal Absalom, v. 1—24. 2d. Absalom's beauty, and family, v. 25—27. 3d. His method of bringing Joab to him, by whom he was introduced to David, and received to favour, v. 28—33.

NOW Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* towards Absalom.

2 And Joab sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead:

3 And come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king, she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance, and said, Help, O king.

5 And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, I *am* indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.

6 And thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and *there was* none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him.

7 And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew; and we will destroy the heir also: and so they shall quench my coal which is left,

tempt, or at leaving them to all the horrors of penury, or prostitution. Let no one ever expect better treatment from those, who are capable of attempting their seduction. But whatever anguish, and distress may result from injuries received, nothing will eventually harm us, except our own voluntary iniquity: and it is better to suffer the greatest wrong, than to commit the least sin, though apparently with impunity, and without rebuke. It is every one's duty to comfort, as he hath opportunity, those who are in distress: but generally it is most adviseable for injured persons to be quiet, and leave their cause with God. When lesser crimes escape punishment from man, more and greater will be committed: and the magistrate's anger against atrocious offences should stimulate him to enforce the laws without respect to persons: but others must neither attempt present, nor meditate future vengeance; for it belongeth not to them: if calm expostulations with the offender will do no good, our duty is to forgive, and pray for him; and not to give him another opportunity of injustice. But hatred, and revenge possess the hearts of ungodly men: and some are so artful, and malicious, that they defer their vengeance, and cover it with the appearance of affection, till they have an opportunity of executing it with more determined malignity. Often have festive interviews, and seasons of sensual indulgence, been the chosen scenes for assassinations, and massacres; and men have been sent into the eternal world from the midst of their riot, and excess. Such is human nature, left to itself, armed with power, and emboldened by prosperity: what need have we then to pray for converting grace! No crime is so great, or evident, that men will not be found daring enough to commit, in order to please their superiors: but alas! their command will not bear them out at the day of judgment, for violating the law of God. Evil tidings are generally enhanced: yet the imaginary calamity proves a real affliction for the time, and may serve the purpose of an humiliating chastisement. Children are always uncertain comforts: but indulged children will surely prove crosses to godly parents, whose foolish love for them induces them to neglect their duty to God: yet parental affection can scarce be extinguished by any degree of misconduct. But the case of those parents is very deplorable, whose children copy their conduct in their crimes; and yet whose duty it is to punish them with great severity for those very imitations. Let this be a warning to us, to watch and pray against temptation, lest by the misconduct of one unguarded hour, we should occasion such fatal consequences to our offspring, and such misery to ourselves, throughout our future lives. And let us not covet that worldly wisdom, which, with all it's boasted sagacity, cannot prevent the destruction of those, who are counselled by it: but let us seek that heavenly wisdom, which safely leads the possessor through all the dangerous paths of this life, to the perfect felicity of the eternal world.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV.] V. 3. *So Joab*, &c.] Joab perceived that David desired to recal Absalom; but did not know how to do it, without disgracing his character, and government: he therefore framed a plausible story, and employed an ingenious woman, in the character of a disconsolate widow, to relate it to him. He intended to obtain a concession from David, that in some possible cases the punishment of a murderer might be dispensed with: and then to apply it to the case of Absalom. Thus he hoped to ingratiate himself with both parties: and doubtless he would also be glad to increase the number of precedents for the impunity of murderers, when he lay under the guilt of that crime himself.

V. 6, 7.] This feigned case was very different from that, which it was intended to represent. It was indeed pretended that one brother had been slain by the other, and that the survivor was exposed to the sentence of the law. But David had many other sons, and the death of Absalom would not have "quenched his coal, that was left:" that is, would not have deprived him of the comfort of children,

and ſhall not leave to my huſband *neither* name nor remainder upon the earth.

8 And the king ſaid unto the woman, Go to thine houſe, and I will give charge concerning thee.

9 And the woman of Tekoah ſaid unto the king, My lord, O king, the iniquity *be* on me, and on my father's houſe: and the king and his throne be guiltleſs.

10 And the king ſaid, Whoſoever ſaith *ought* unto thee, bring him to me, and he ſhall not touch thee any more.

11 Then ſaid ſhe, I pray thee, let the king remember the LORD thy God, that thou wouldeſt not ſuffer the revengers of blood to deſtroy any more, leſt they deſtroy my ſon. And he ſaid, *As* the LORD liveth, there ſhall not one hair of thy ſon fall to the earth.

12 Then the woman ſaid, let thine handmaid, I pray thee, ſpeak *one* word unto my lord the king. And he ſaid, Say on.

13 And the woman ſaid, Wherefore then haſt thou thought ſuch a thing againſt the people of God? for the king doth ſpeak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his baniſhed.

14 For we muſt needs die, and *are* as water ſpilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again: neither doth God reſpect *any* perſon: yet doth he deviſe means, that his baniſhed be not expelled from him.

15 Now therefore that I am come to ſpeak of this thing unto my lord the king, *it is* becauſe the people have made me afraid: and thy handmaid ſaid, I will now ſpeak unto the king; it may be that the king will perform the requeſt of his handmaid.

16 For the king will hear, to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man *that would* deſtroy me and my ſon together out of the inheritance of God.

17 Then thine handmaid ſaid, The word of my lord the king ſhall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, ſo *is* my lord the king to diſcern good and bad: therefore

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to ſucceed him in his inheritance. Abſalom had not ſlain Amnon, in ſudden anger, and haſty ſtriving, when they were alone; but in deliberate malice, and revenge, in the preſence of his brethren: there was no malicious proſecution carrying on againſt him by thoſe, who coveted his inheritance: but the law of God demanded his death, as a ſatisfaction to juſtice, and for a ſalutary example to all others. Had the caſe been drawn more ſimilar, it would have betrayed the deſign, and defeated Joab's purpoſe: and the ſtate of David's mind rendered it unneceſſary to be very exact; for he did not require a good reaſon, but a plauſible excuſe for following his inclinations, as Joab well knew.

V. 8—11.] It would not have anſwered the intent, had David only engaged to examine into the caſe; a preſent favourable deciſion was the object: this woman having therefore excited his compaſſion, urged her plea with great earneſtneſs; and aſſured him, that ſhe was ſo ſatisfied of the goodneſs of the cauſe, that ſhe was willing that all the guilt, if there were any, ſhould reſt upon her, and her father's houſe, and not upon David, or his kingdom. Thus ſhe engaged for what was out of her power; for the neglect of puniſhing murder would notwithſtanding bring guilt upon both king and people. However ſhe requeſted him to remember the Lord his God; that is, to give her the ſecurity of an oath, that he would ſpare, and protect her ſon; and he was prevailed upon to grant her requeſt. In this David acted more according to his feelings, than his judgment, and was very precipitate. If the party concerned, in the ſuppoſed caſe, were not deſerving to die, the city of refuge would have afforded him a ſafe retreat, and a fair trial; and if he deſerved death, David had no right to diſpenſe with God's law, by protecting him: and moreover he had examined no witneſs, *but one intereſted party*.

V. 13—17.] The woman, having thus far carried her point, proceeded gradually, and *ambiguouſly* to apply David's conceſſion, to the caſe of Abſalom; which was artfully deviſed, that ſhe might retract, or be more explicit, as he took it. She intimated that the king's ſeverity to his ſon was injurious to the people of God; and that he was wanting in his duty to the kingdom, in delaying to recal him: as if Abſalom were ſo excellent a young man, that all the hopes of Iſrael centred in him! She repreſented his flight to Geſhur, as a baniſhment, which had already been too ſevere a puniſhment of his offence. She pleaded the certainty of death, and the impoſſibility of recalling the dead to life again: by which ſhe would either inſinuate that Amnon would have died in ſome other way, if Abſalom had not ſlain him; or that the puniſhment of Abſalom would not bring him to life again; or that, as David himſelf muſt at length die, it was proper that Abſalom ſhould be recalled to ſucceed him. But whatever ſhe meant, it was nothing to the purpoſe; for God had commanded the death of the murderer, which exceedingly tends to the preſervation of the life of man, though it cannot raiſe the dead. She alſo pleaded the mercy of God, in ſparing, and re-admitting ſinful men into his preſence and favour, who were juſtly baniſhed from it; and yet he is no reſpecter of perſons: And perhaps ſhe referred to the return of the man-ſlayer to his inheritance, at the death of the High Prieſt. But God pardons none to the diſhonour of his law and juſtice; nor any who are impenitent, or to the encouragement of crimes, and the injury of others. Perhaps ſhe

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the LORD thy God will be with thee.

18 Then the king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. And the woman said, Let my lord the king now speak.

19 And the king said, *Is not* the hand of Joab with thee in all this? And the woman answered and said, *As* thy soul liveth, my lord the king, none can turn to the right hand or to the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken: for thy servant Joab, he bade me, and he put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:

20 To fetch about this form of speech hath thy servant Joab done this thing: and my lord *is* wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all *things* that *are* in the earth.

21 And the king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing: go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again.

22 And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king: and Joab said, To-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant.

23 So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem.

24 And the king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned to his own house; and saw not the king's face.

25 But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him.

26 And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled *it*: because *the hair* was heavy on him, therefore he polled it:) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight.

27 And unto Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter, whose name *was* Tamar: she was a woman of a fair countenance.

28 So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face.

29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king; but he would not come to him: and when he sent again the second time, he would not come.

30 Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto *his* house, and said unto him, Wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?

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meant to hint, that the people expressed their dissatisfaction with Absalom's banishment so openly, that they made her afraid of an insurrection: but she *purposely* so confounded the feigned cause of her son, with that of Absalom, that part of her address is very obscure. However whilst she ventured to censure David for not gratifying himself, she took care repeatedly to give him many flattering commendations for his wisdom, and goodness, which in such a cause compensated for the weakness of her arguments.

V. 21. *I have done*, &c.] David was willing to suppose that his oath to spare the woman's supposed son, obliged him to recal Absalom, who was the person really intended; though he could not but perceive the insufficiency of her arguments, and the disparity of the cases. *As a favour* therefore he gave Joab permission to fetch home Absalom; and Joab appeared as thankful to the king for allotting him this service, as if David had done him the most expensive kindness: there was much of the courtier in all this.

V. 24. *Let him turn*, &c.] David perhaps meant to quiet his own conscience, and to silence the censures of others, by laying Absalom under some tokens of disgrace, and by denying himself the pleasure of seeing him. It might also be intended to humble him; but it entirely failed of producing that effect.

V. 25—27.] We hear no praises of Absalom's wisdom, justice, and piety: only of his beauty, and effeminacy; for such doubtless was his attention to his hair: and yet was he the admiration, and the favourite of Israel! His crimes were forgotten, and his accomplishments universally celebrated, which increased his arrogance, and issued in his ruin. His sons seem to have died before him.

V. 29. *He would not come.*] Either Absalom had not properly requited Joab for former services: or his popularity, and ambition made him regard him as a dangerous person, with whom he would not form any connexions; either out of regard to David's interest, or his own reputation.

V. 30—33.] Absalom's injurious, and hectoring treatment of so considerable a person as Joab; and his arrogant message to David, almost vindicating his conduct, and demanding justice, plainly shewed his character, intentions, and confidence in the favour of the people, and the ill-judged lenity of his father; and aggravated David's sin, and folly in receiving him into favour: for which he soon, and severely smarted.

32 And Abſalom anſwered Joab, Behold, I ſent unto thee, ſaying, Come hither, that I may ſend thee to the king, to ſay, Wherefore am I come from Geſhur? *it had been* good for me *to have been* there ſtill: now therefore let me ſee the king's face; and if there be *any* iniquity in me, let him kill me.

33 So Joab came to the king, and told him: and when he had called for Abſalom, he came to the king, and bowed himſelf on his face to the ground before the king: and the king kiſſed Abſalom.

CHAP. XV.

Contains, 1ſt. Abſalom ſtealing the hearts of the people, and raiſing rebellion againſt his father, v. 1—12. 2d. David's departure from Jeruſalem, the fidelity of Ittai, and the grief of the people, v. 13—23. 3d. Zadok, and Abiathar ſent back with the ark, v. 24—29. 4th. Ahithophel reported to be amongſt the conſpirators; David's humiliation, and prayer; and Huſhai ſent back with directions how to ſerve him, v. 30—37.

AND it came to paſs after this, that Abſalom prepared him chariots, and horſes, and fifty men to run before him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It behoves princes, and magiſtrates to be acceſſible, and to protect the deſtitute, and oppreſſed: yet the moſt amiable diſpoſitions muſt be under the government of diſcretion; or they will lead to improper conceſſions. Whilſt the wants of the poor are unheeded by many; the ſecret wiſhes of thoſe, who poſſeſs authority, and affluence, are diſcovered, and anticipated by crafty courtiers, and dependants, who ſeek their own intereſt by forwarding their indulgence: conſcientious ſelf-denial is therefore in ſuch a ſituation doubly difficult. If ſcruples, and fears deter great men from complying with their inclinations; ſome feigned precedent, ſome plauſible arguments, or ſome partial illuſtration will be deviſed, and ſpeciouſly ſuggeſted, to remove the hindrance. In *ſuch a caſe* the diſcerning favourite, perſonally, or by ſome well choſen inſtrument, will venture to find fault with his prince, or his patron; and to ſtate to him, that the public welfare, and the ſafety of the ſtate, or ſome other important intereſt demands thoſe meaſures, which he ſcruples to adopt: and by ſuch addreſſes to the paſſions, as are ſuited to his character, and diſpoſition, mixed with flattering commendations, and expoſtulations, he will cover the fallacy of his reaſonings, and the unlawfulneſs, and impolicy of that conduct, which he recommends. Thus many a one hath impoſed upon his own judgment, and conſcience, and ſuppoſed that he could not reſiſt ſuch urgent importunities, and ſuch cogent arguments; and that his conſent was extorted thereby; that to oblige ſuch kind friends, he had paſſed his word, and could not now in honour retract it: whilſt all the while he was overcome by his own inclinations, and only wanted a ſpecious excuſe for following them. If ſuch conceſſions be evidently contrary to the divine law, to the duty of his ſtation, and the intereſts of ſociety: it will readily be argued, that ſome exceptions, muſt be allowed of; that this was a ſingular caſe; that exactneſs would here be harſh, injurious, and of bad conſequence: and by ſuch ſophiſtical caſuiſtry may even wiſe and good men deceive themſelves, where their affections are previouſly engaged. Let us hence learn what need we have to keep cloſe to our rule of duty, to pray earneſtly for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to watch againſt the deceitfulneſs of our own hearts, and the bribery of our paſſions, and the agreeable poiſon of adulation. Sin hath ſo filled the world with miſery, that real caſes of diſtreſs may be found, more pitiable, than any, which the imagination can feign; and we ſhould readily endeavour to relieve thoſe, who are in trouble: but even compaſſion, amiable as it is, will not juſtify our violation of the moral precepts of God's word, or neglecting the important duties of our ſtation. With this ſingle exception, alleviating miſery is the nobleſt privilege, and employment of the great; who ſhould therein "remember the Lord their "God;" not only his authority, and their accountableneſs to him; but his compaſſion, and mercy to others, and to themſelves; and his juſtice and holineſs, who in his love to ſinners manifeſts moſt conſpicuouſly his abhorrence of their crimes. As all muſt needs die, and there is no recal from the tomb by human power, we ſhould not ſpend our time in immoderate, unavailing lamentations for the dead; but ſhould be employed in preparing for our own diſſolution, and in ſeizing the fleeting opportunity of ſerving our generation. When we are moſt commended for our diſcernment, we generally act the moſt fooliſhly; for thoſe very praiſes cloud the underſtanding, and pervert the judgment: we deem it not neceſſary that perſons of ſuch acknowledged diſcernment ſhould waſte time in nice diſtinctions, and we can ſcarce refuſe to ſpeak comfortably to thoſe, who ſpeak ſo agreeably to us: and the effect of extravagant commendations on thoſe, who receive, and thoſe who beſtow them, is often *mutual deception!* In our treatment of children, or others, that have greatly offended, every method ſhould be uſed, that hath a tendency to mortify their pride, and, bring them to repentance; and the feelings of our hearts muſt be repreſſed, in aiming at this important object. But when high rank, early indulgence, impunity in crimes, flattering commendations, perſonal accompliſhments, and popular favour, concur to increaſe pride, and the Lord leaves a man to himſelf, it is inconceivable to what a pitch of arrogance he will arrive. Such an one will vindicate the baſeſt villanies, will treat all ſuperiors with contempt, and all benefactors with ingratitude, and will overbear, and terrify all around him into compliance with his unreaſonable demands. But all this is the forerunner of deſtruction: and when parents, or rulers countenance ſuch imperious characters, they will ſoon experience the moſt fatal effects. The Lord grant unto us the inward beauty of holineſs, and the adorning of a meek, and quiet ſpirit: for favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; and they only, who fear the Lord, are truly excellent and happy.

2 And Abſalom roſe up early, and ſtood beſide the way of the gate: and it was *ſo*, that when any man that had a controverſy came to the king for judgment, then Abſalom called unto him, and ſaid, Of what city *art* thou? And he ſaid, Thy ſervant *is* of one of the tribes of Iſrael.

3 And Abſalom ſaid unto him, See, thy matters *are* good and right; but *there is* no man *deputed* of the king to hear thee.

4 Abſalom ſaid moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any ſuit or cauſe might come unto me, and I would do him juſtice!

5 And it was *ſo*, that when any man came nigh *to him* to do him obeiſance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kiſſed him.

6 And on this manner did Abſalom to all Iſrael that came to the king for judgment: ſo Abſalom ſtole the hearts of the men of Iſrael.

7 And it came to paſs after forty years, that Abſalom ſaid unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD in Hebron.

8 For thy ſervant vowed a vow while I abode at Geſhur in Syria, ſaying, If the LORD ſhall bring me again indeed to Jeruſalem, then I will ſerve the LORD.

9 And the king ſaid unto him, Go in peace. So he aroſe and went to Hebron.

10 But Abſalom ſent ſpies throughout all the tribes of Iſrael, ſaying, As ſoon as ye hear the ſound of the trumpet, then ye ſhall ſay, Abſalom reigneth in Hebron.

11 And with Abſalom went two hundred men out of Jeruſalem, *that were* called; and they went in their ſimplicity, and they knew not any thing.

12 And Abſalom ſent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counſeller, from his city, *even* from Giloh, while he offered ſacrifices. And the conſpiracy was ſtrong; for the people increaſed continually with Abſalom.

13 And there came a meſſenger to David, ſaying, The hearts of the men of Iſrael are after Abſalom.

14 And David ſaid unto all his ſervants that *were* with him at Jeruſalem, Ariſe, and let

NOTES.

CHAP. XV.] V. 6. *So Abſalom ſtole*, &c. This expreſſion aptly marks the way, in which Abſalom ingratiated himſelf with the people. He did not gain their affections by eminent ſervices, or by a wiſe, and virtuous conduct. But he affected to look great, and yet be very condeſcending, and affable to his inferiors: he pretended a great regard to the intereſts of the people, and threw out ſubtle inſinuations againſt David's adminiſtration: he flattered all, who had cauſes to be tried, with the aſſurance that they had right on their ſide; that, if it went againſt them, they might be led to accuſe David of injuſtice. Though he knew not how to obey, and deſerved to die for his crimes; yet he expreſſed a vehement deſire to be judge over all the land; and ſuggeſted, that their ſuits ſhould not then be ſo tedious, expenſive, and partially decided, as they now were: This he confirmed by apparent application; though it was to other people's buſineſs, and not his own duty. By ſuch ſiniſter arts, united with his perſonal attractions, and addreſs, he impoſed upon multitudes all over the land, to prefer ſo worthleſs a character to the wiſe, righteous, and pious David.

V. 7. *After forty years*, &c.] Theſe may be dated from David's firſt anointing, about ten or twelve years before he reigned at Hebron; which would bring us to about the thirtieth year of David's reign. But probably it is a trivial error crept into the text, and ſhould be read four years; that is from his being received into favour with David: who might have foreſeen theſe conſequences, and ſhould have checked and reſtrained the firſt appearance of his oſtentation.

V. 8, 9.] Abſalom knew that his father would be pleaſed to find, that he paid any regard to religion: and therefore he cloked his intended treaſon, and parricide with hypocriſy; pretending a vow made at Geſhur, which he had hitherto delayed to perform. He probably choſe Hebron, becauſe his father firſt reigned there.

V. 11. *They went*, &c.] As Abſalom went with David's approbation, and under the pretence of religion, theſe perſons, (who doubtleſs were of chief rank at Jeruſalem,) accompanied him, and undeſignedly countenanced his rebellion; and by involving them in the ſuſpicion of treaſon, he intended either to fix them in his intereſts; or to prevent David from placing confidence in them. In the mean time he took care to be proclaimed king all over the land, without mentioning whether his father was dead, or had reſigned, or admitted him to a ſhare of the authority: that whilſt David's friends heſitated in uncertainty, his party might become formidable.

V. 12. *Ahithophel*, &c.] This man poſſeſſed great abilities, and profeſſed much religion, and had been David's counſellor, and boſom friend: but he was now retired from court, perhaps in ſome concealed diſguſt; and he readily joined Abſalom's conſpiracy, and would have been the chief ſtay of it, had not God turned his counſel into fooliſhneſs. In many things he reſembled, and typified Judas the traitor.

V. 14. *Leſt he overtake*, &c.] At firſt ſight, in this meaſure, David ſeems to have acted inconſiſtent with his former intrepidity: but it doth not appear from the event to have been impolitic, and his friends did not object to

us flee; for we ſhall not *elſe* eſcape from Abſalom: make ſpeed to depart, leſt he overtake us ſuddenly, and bring evil upon us, and ſmite the city with the edge of the ſword.

15 And the king's ſervants ſaid unto the king, Behold, thy ſervants *are ready to do* whatſoever my lord the king ſhall appoint.

16 And the king went forth, and all his houſhold after him: and the king left ten women, *which were* concubines, to keep the houſe.

17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off.

18 And all his ſervants paſſed on beſide him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, ſix hundred men, which came after him from Gath, paſſed on before the king.

19 Then ſaid the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goeſt thou alſo with us? return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou *art* a ſtranger, and alſo an exile.

20 Whereas thou cameſt *but* yeſterday, ſhould I this day make thee go up and down with us? ſeeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth *be* with thee.

21 And Ittai anſwered the king, and ſaid, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* my lord the king liveth, ſurely in what place my lord the king ſhall be, whether in death or life, even there alſo will thy ſervant be.

22 And David ſaid to Ittai, Go, and paſs over. And Ittai the Gittite paſſed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that *were* with him.

23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people paſſed over: the king alſo himſelf paſſed over the brook Kidron, and all the people paſſed over toward the way of the wilderneſs.

24 And lo, Zadok alſo, and all the Levites *were* with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they ſet down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up until all the people had done paſſing out of the city.

25 And the king ſaid unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and ſhew me *both* it and his habitation.

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it. The ſmall force, which he had with him, might be inſufficient to defend the city againſt Abſalom; and he might have no confidence in the inhabitants: or he might be unwilling to expoſe that populous, and *ſacred* city to the effects of a ſiege. He might deem it prudent to give the furious blaze of popular phrenzy time to ſpend itſelf, hoping that numbers would ſoon be ſenſible of their folly, and ingratitude: and perhaps conſcious guilt, the hand of God evidently lifted up againſt him, as had been predicted; the treaſon of his much beloved Abſalom, and the fickleneſs of the people, after all his paſt ſervices, damped his wonted courage, and rendered him leſs prompt for battle, eſpecially in ſo horrid, and unnatural a war.

V. 16. *Concubines*, &c.] David took his other wives, and his children with him: but ſuppoſing that theſe would be an additional incumbrance, and not apprehending that Abſalom would injure them, he left them to take care of his houſe: by which inadvertency the Lord fulfilled his prophetic denunciation, (c. xii. v. 11.)

V. 18—22.] Theſe ſix hundred men ſeem to have been a diſtinct body from the Cherethites, and Pelethites: they had accompanied or followed him from Gath, and were proſelyted Philiſtines, commanded by Ittai, of the ſame nation. They were numbered amongſt David's moſt faithful attendants, being attached to him by eſteem for his character, and love to his religion: and we may infer, that his ſojourning in the land of the Philiſtines was over-ruled for very important good to numbers of that nation. David was unwilling to expoſe Ittai, and his men, who were ſtrangers, and exiles in Iſrael, (having been driven with their families from Gath, for their affection to David, and his religion and people,) to ſo much hardſhip, and peril, as were now before him, and he would have diſmiſſed them with thanks and prayers for them: but their attachment to his perſon and cauſe was more ſtrong, than that of moſt of the native Iſraelites, and they were determined to cleave to, and ſerve him, at all events.

V. 23. *The brook Kidron*, &c.] Chriſt paſſed this ſame brook, in his way to the garden, at, or near the mount of Olives, the evening before his crucifixion. Though the multitude favoured Abſalom, yet many ſympathiſed with David: thus whilſt the general cry againſt Jeſus was, "crucify him, crucify him," there were thoſe, that wept for, and bewailed him.

V. 25. *Carry back the ark*, &c.] Abiathar was the High Prieſt, yet Zadok of the family of Eleazar was more noticed than he; for Eli's family was gradually declining. The prieſts and Levites were generally attached to David, which was honourable to them, and ſhewed that religion was in a flouriſhing ſtate. The preſence of the ark, and the High Prieſt would have been a comfort, and an apparent advantage to David: but the ark had been placed, and the ordinances of God eſtabliſhed, in Zion, and he would not derange that order: he was under the divine rebuke, and would expreſs his humiliation, and ſubmiſſion to it; and not aſſume, by the preſence of the ark, that

26 But

26 But if he thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; behold *here am* I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him.

27 The king ſaid alſo unto Zadok the prieſt, *Art not* thou a ſeer? return into the city in peace, and your two ſons with you, Ahimaaz thy ſon, and Jonathan the ſon of Abiathar.

28 See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderneſs, until there come word from you to certify me.

29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jeruſalem: and they tarried there.

30 And David went up by the aſcent of *mount* Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

31 And *one* told David, ſaying, Ahithophel *is* among the conſpirators with Abſalom. And David ſaid, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counſel of Ahithophel into fooliſhneſs.

32 And it came to paſs, that *when* David was come to the top *of the mount*, where he worſhipped God, behold Huſhai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head:

33 Unto whom David ſaid, If thou paſſeſt on with me, then thou ſhalt be a burden unto me:

34 But if thou return to the city, and ſay unto Abſalom, I will be thy ſervant, O king; *as* I *have been* thy father's ſervant hitherto, ſo *will* I now alſo *be* thy ſervant; then mayeſt thou for me defeat the counſel of Ahithophel.

35 And *haſt thou* not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the prieſts? therefore it ſhall be, *that* what thing ſoever thou ſhalt hear out of the king's houſe, thou ſhalt tell *it* to Zadok and Abiathar the prieſts.

36 Behold *they have* there with them their two ſons, Ahimaaz Zadok's *ſon*, and Jonathan Abiathar's *ſon*; and by them ye ſhall ſend unto me every thing that ye can hear.

37 So Huſhai David's friend came into the city, and Abſalom came into Jeruſalem.

God was on his ſide, whilſt he was ſuffering for his ſins: but he would refer his cauſe to the Lord, either to bring him back to Zion in peace, or to let his unnatural, and ungrateful foes prevail againſt him; being conſcious, that he deſerved the worſt at the hands of God, though not from them. David's frame of ſpirit was excellent on this trying occaſion. It is not certain whether Zadok, who is called a "ſeer," was endued with the ſpirit of prophecy, or ſometimes enquired of the Lord in the place of the High Prieſt: or whether David only meant, that he was a perſon of remarkable ready diſcernment, and penetration, who could furniſh him with important, and authentic information by his obſervance of Abſalom's conduct.

V. 30. *Wept*, &c.] Theſe were expreſſions of his humiliation, and ſorrow for his ſins, and for the miſeries, which he had thereby brought upon himſelf, his family, and people. He thus humbled himſelf under the mighty hand of God, which he ſaw lifted up againſt him: and the people joined him with the ſame tokens of godly ſorrow and repentance.

V. 31. *O Lord*, &c.] David apprehended more danger from Ahithophel's capacity, than from the courage and numbers of Abſalom's followers: immediately therefore upon hearing, that he had joined the conſpirators, he oppoſed one ſhort ejaculation to all his wiſe counſels; and it was effectual. He prayed not againſt his perſon, but "that "his counſel might be turned into fooliſhneſs:" and they, who heard this prayer, could not but be much impreſſed with the anſwer, which it ſhortly after received. He afterwards worſhipped God in a more ſolemn manner, with his whole company.

V. 33. *A burden to me*, &c.] It ſeems, that David entirely confided in the fidelity, and prudence of Huſhai: but as he was not able perhaps to endure the fatigues of war, or was no ſoldier, he informed him, that in his preſent deſtitute condition he would burden him, and his friends, by attending him; and pointed out to him how he might better ſerve his cauſe, by remaining in Jeruſalem. Stratagems of war are lawful; for an enemy may as properly be out-witted, as overpowered: but the inſtructions given to Huſhai contain a falſhood, which perhaps cannot be wholly vindicated.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

An oſtentatious emulation of equalling our ſuperiors in external pomp is an evidence of a narrow mind, a weak judgment, and a depraved heart. It is the common folly, and ruin of indulged children, and frequently prepares the way for the moſt atrocious crimes. The very firſt appearance, therefore, of ſuch affectation ſhould be repreſſed by parents with deciſion, and even with ſeverity, if they would prevent the ruin of their families. They are commonly moſt ambitious of authority, who leaſt underſtand it's duties and could leaſt endure it's burdens. But when ambition prompts, the moſt ſelf-indulgent will aſſume the appearance of diligence; and the moſt haughty, of affability, and condeſcenſion: and whilſt men aſpire to the pinnacle

CHAP XVI.

Contains, 1ſt. David deceived by Ziba, and granting him the eſtate of Mephiboſheth, v. 1—4. 2d. Inſulted by Shimei, and bearing it patiently, v. 5—14. 3d. Abſalom impoſed upon by Huſhai, and counſelled by Ahithophel, and publicly defiling his father's concubines, v. 15—23.

of earthly grandeur, they will, for the time, pay the moſt abject court to the meaneſt of the mob. Such fawning ſons of ambition are peculiar to no age or nation: but let every wiſe, and honeſt man ſhun them as a peſtilence. They make their way, by openly, or obliquely traducing the characters, or cenſuring the meaſures of their rulers; and the wiſdom, and perfection of an angel would be no ſecurity againſt their malignant inſinuations. As ſelf-love cannot but murmur at impartiality, and men will continue diſcontented, and fond of change, theſe demagogues will always have proper perſons, on whom to practiſe. By joining in their groundleſs complaints, they feed their diſcontent; by flattering their perſons, and approving their cauſe, they humour their pride; and by laviſh promiſes, (which coſt nothing, and mean nothing,) what they would do, if they were in power, they excite their ſanguine hopes of greater felicity: and by a voluble tongue, an inſinuating addreſs, perſonal accompliſhments, and conſummate impudence, they *ſteal* the hearts of the people, and prepare the way for popular tumults, inſurrections, and rebellion. For ſuch is human nature, that theſe arts, and attainments go much further in gaining the favour of the multitude, than wiſdom, and juſtice, truth, and piety, or the moſt important, and long continued ſervices. This is the old hackneyed way for men, deſtitute of conſcience, or honour, to work themſelves into important ſtations; and yet it is as much practiſed, and as little ſuſpected, as if it were a new diſcovery. No wiſe, and good man, therefore, ſhould on any account promiſe himſelf the continuance of popular favour; or be caſt down, if he meet with treachery, and ingratitude: yet in general we may perceive the righteouſneſs of God, in the baſeſt treatment, which we can receive from man; and may thence be reminded to humble ourſelves before him, and to expect all our happineſs from him. No villainy can be termed complete, which is not diſguiſed under the maſk of religion; eſpecially at thoſe times, when the profeſſion of godlineſs is treated with general reſpect. Pious perſons are glad to ſee others, and particularly thoſe, whom they moſt love, appear to be religious, and are not apt to ſuſpect them of hypocriſy: and this gives occaſion for the moſt ſcandalous, and pernicious deceptions. The policy of wicked men, and the ſubtlety of ſatan are exerted to the utmoſt in drawing in reſpectable perſons to give an unintended, and unſuſpected countenance to the baſeſt deſigns: by which thoſe ſentiments, and practices acquire regard, to which otherwiſe they were not at all entitled: and none ſo much ſtrengthen the hands of profligates, or infidels, as apoſtate profeſſors. Little dependance can be placed on earthly proſperity; and as little can be judged of cauſes, or characters by their ſucceſs; until the final event of things ſhall arrive. Our ſevereſt trials often come from thoſe, in whom we moſt confided; and our firmeſt friends are raiſed up from amongſt thoſe, from whom we had the leaſt expectations. But a real godly man will never be entirely excluded from uſefulneſs; ſome, wherever he abides, will have to bleſs God for his example, converſe, and prayers. In our moſt critical, and important concerns we ſhould not require ought unreaſonable from our friends; or bind heavy burdens on new converts, leſt they ſhould be diſcouraged: we ſhould be thankful for fidelity, and kindneſs from thoſe, who are not likely to be further ſerviceable to us; and ſhould recompenſe them with our earneſt prayers: and if the mercy and truth of God be with them, or with us, and ours, we ſhall be ſafe and eventually happy, however at preſent afflicted or ſeparated. But that love of the brethren, which is the fruit of the Spirit of Chriſt, when it is vigorous, will not be reſtrained, by the fear of hardſhip, danger, or death, from rendering aſſiſtance to thoſe, who are in affliction. We often in deſpondency think our enemies to be more, and our friends leſs numerous, than they are found upon trial: for our ſevereſt croſſes are lined with comforts, and point out to us cauſes for thankfulneſs. The miniſters of God ſhould always ſet an example of ſubmiſſion in things lawful; and of cordial attachment, and faithful adherence to thoſe princes, who protect, and countenance them in their pious labours; and eſpecially in thoſe ſeaſons, when others oppoſe, and revile them. It behoves us to humble ourſelves before God under the tokens of his diſpleaſure; and godly ſorrow, confeſſion of ſin, repentance, ſelf-denial, and ſelf-abaſement are the proper methods of ſeeking deliverance out of thoſe troubles, which are the chaſtiſements of our ſins. At ſuch a time therefore it is improper to buoy up our confidence, by the externals of religion, which do not always imply the gracious preſence of the Lord. If he pardons our ſins, and then again employs us, his houſe, and ordinances will be our comfort: and he will do us no wrong, though he throw us by, or cut us off by death, as though he had no delight in us. However nothing muſt prevent our worſhipping the Lord, though we have not acceſs to his more ſolemn ordinances; and as afflictions increaſe upon us, the fervency of our prayers ſhould alſo increaſe. Vain is all worldly wiſdom, and power, againſt the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man; in anſwer thereto, the counſel of the prudent is carried headlong, and the force of the potent is turned into perfect weakneſs. Some are uſeful in one way, and ſome in another, to one common cauſe, when they are cordially united: but alas! where ſhall we find wiſdom, and ſimplicity ſo united in any mere man, that we can perceive nothing that merits cenſure, and needs forgiveneſs? But when the Son of David was treated with all poſſible treachery, indignity, cruelty, and ingratitude, his wiſdom, meekneſs, candour, and patience were unalloyed perfection. His inexpreſſible ſufferings are now over, his humiliation is exchanged for the throne of glory, where unſeen he ſerves our cauſe in the world above. Him let us follow, cleave to, and ſerve in tribulation, in life, and death. We are left behind here amongſt his enemies, that we may promote his cauſe; and his inſtructions are, that we be "wiſe as ſerpents, and "harmleſs as doves."

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AND when David was a little paſt the top *of the hill*, behold, Ziba the ſervant of Mephiboſheth met him with a couple of aſſes ſaddled, and upon them two hundred *loaves* of bread, and an hundred bunches of raiſins, and an hundred of ſummer fruits, and a bottle of wine.

2 And the king ſaid unto Ziba, What meaneſt thou by theſe? And Ziba ſaid, The aſſes *be* for the king's houſhold to ride on; and the bread and ſummer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that ſuch as be faint in the wilderneſs may drink.

3 And the king ſaid, And where *is* thy maſter's ſon? And Ziba ſaid unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jeruſalem: for he ſaid, To-day ſhall the houſe of Iſrael reſtore me the kingdom of my father.

4 Then ſaid the king to Ziba, Behold, thine *are* all that *pertained* unto Mephiboſheth. And Ziba ſaid, I humbly beſeech thee *that* I may find grace in thy ſight, my lord, O king.

5 And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the houſe of Saul, whoſe name *was* Shimei, the ſon of Gera: he came forth, and curſed ſtill as he came.

6 And he caſt ſtones at David, and at all the ſervants of king David: and all the people, and all the mighty men, *were* on his right hand and on his left.

7 And thus ſaid Shimei when he curſed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial:

8 The LORD hath returned upon thee all the blood of the houſe of Saul, in whoſe ſtead thou haſt reigned; and the LORD hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Abſalom thy ſon: and, behold, thou *art taken* in thy miſchief, becauſe thou *art* a bloody man.

9 Then ſaid Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah unto the king, Why ſhould this dead dog curſe my lord the king? let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head.

10 And the king ſaid, What have I to do with you, ye ſons of Zeruiah? ſo let him curſe, becauſe the LORD hath ſaid unto him, Curſe David. Who ſhall then ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo?

11 And David ſaid to Abiſhai, and to all his ſervants, Behold, my ſon, which came forth of my bowels, ſeeketh my life: how much more now *may this* Benjamite *do it?* Let him alone, and let him curſe: for the LORD hath bidden him.

12 It may be that the LORD will look on mine affliction, and that the LORD will requite me good for his curſing this day.

13 And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's ſide over againſt him, and curſed as he went, and threw ſtones at him, and caſt duſt.

14 And the king, and all the people that *were* with him, came weary, and refreſhed themſelves there.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI.] V. 1—4.] Ziba artfully formed, and ſucceeded in a plan for obtaining a grant from David of Mephiboſheth's eſtate. By his ſeaſonable preſent, and inſinuating behaviour, he prepoſſeſſed David's mind in his favour; and then, by his accuſation, he prejudiced him againſt Mephiboſheth. It was indeed improbable that Mephiboſheth ſhould prove ſo ungrateful, or form ſuch deſigns: but what villainy could excite wonder, when Abſalom was in arms againſt his too indulgent father? And Ziba might hope that ſome event would ſecure him from detection, or that David would be aſhamed to retract his grant, when he had once made it. However David acted too precipitately, and did injuſtice to Mephiboſheth, and even forgot his covenant with Jonathan, in thus paſſing ſentence, without hearing both ſides.

V. 5—18.] Bahurim was a city of Benjamin, Shimei was a relation of Saul, and the tranſlation of the kingdom to David marred all his proſpects of preferment. He diſregarded the expreſs appointment of God, and his heart was full of implacable enmity to David, as an uſurper of the throne. Contrary to the fulleſt evidence, he accuſed him of murdering Saul's family, and interpreted his affliction into a proof of his guilt; and took this opportunity to vent all kind of imprecations, and reproaches againſt him; and to expreſs all the rage of impotent malice. But if David had been a bloody man, and diſpoſed to ſlay the family of Saul, Shimei would ſoon have ſuffered the juſt puniſhment of his audacity. He indeed merited condemnation; but David was now under the divine rebuke for his ſins: though free from the guilt charged upon him, he was conſciouſly guilty of murdering Uriah: he therefore ſubmitted to the juſtice of God, in this injurious treatment from Shimei: he could not wonder that his enemies were ſtirred up againſt him; when his own ſon ſought his life. The ſin both of Shimei, and of Abſalom was from themſelves, and ſatan: but David's affliction was from the Lord; and they were but inſtruments,

15 And Abſalom, and all the people the men of Iſrael, came to Jeruſalem, and Ahithophel with him.

16 And it came to paſs, when Huſhai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Abſalom, that Huſhai ſaid unto Abſalom, God ſave the king, God ſave the king.

17 And Abſalom ſaid to Huſhai, *Is* this thy kindneſs to thy friend? why wenteſt thou not with thy friend?

18 And Huſhai ſaid unto Abſalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Iſrael chooſe, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

19 And again, whom ſhould I ſerve? *ſhould I* not *ſerve* in the preſence of his ſon? As I have ſerved in thy father's preſence, ſo will I be in thy preſence.

20 Then ſaid Abſalom to Ahithophel, Give counſel among you what we ſhall do.

21 And Ahithophel ſaid unto Abſalom, Go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the houſe; and all Iſrael ſhall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father; then ſhall the hands of all that *are* with thee be ſtrong.

22 So they ſpread Abſalom a tent upon the top of the houſe: and Abſalom went in unto his father's concubines in the ſight of all Iſrael.

23 And the counſel of Ahithophel, which he counſelled in thoſe days, *was* as if a man had enquired at the oracle of God: ſo *was* all the counſel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Abſalom.

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which the Lord employed, beſides their purpoſe, of correcting him for his good. The curſe cauſeleſs he knew could only injure him, who vented it: and his humble ſubmiſſion to ſuch baſe uſage from man, would he hoped, prepare the way for the return of peace and comfort from a merciful God: and therefore he would not permit Shimei to be moleſted.

V. 16—19.] Though Abſalom interpreted Huſhai's words into a promiſe of fidelity, and a tender of his ſervices, they did not neceſſarily imply them. He ſaid "Let "the king live," not "Let king Abſalom live." "He "would be his, and abide with him, whom the Lord, "and Iſrael ſhould chooſe:" but this was not Abſalom in the event; however it appeared for a time. "He would "ſerve in the preſence of the ſon, as in the preſence of "the father, &c." But whom would he ſerve? He would ſerve David in Abſalom's preſence, as faithfully, as when he was upon the ſpot. Had not Abſalom been blinded with pride, and popularity, he would have ſuſpected ſuch ambiguous words, when uſed by the known friend of his father, and not have admitted him amongſt his boſom counſellors. It is very hard to conduct ſtratagems without ſuch equivocations, if not direct falſhoods: and therefore it is beſt to keep at a diſtance from them, when we can.

V. 20—23.] Ahithophel was deemed as the oracle of God becauſe of his ſagacity; and at one time his profeſſions of piety ſeem to have been equally depended upon: but he was therein ſhamefully over-rated. He did not ſhew his wiſdom in joining himſelf to ſo vile a faction, headed by a raſh young man, of conſummate villainy, which foreboded nothing but ruin. But his confidence in his own wiſdom made him hope, that he could render it ſucceſsful: and his mind ſeems to have been much embittered againſt David. His hypocriſy now terminated in apoſtacy; and his firſt counſel to Abſalom, after his peaceable entrance into Jeruſalem, was more like an oracle of ſatan, than that of the Lord. For his own ſecurity, and that of the whole party, he intended to preclude all hope of reconciliation with David; that Abſalom might determine to conquer, or to periſh: and he put him upon an act of ſuch ſhameleſs wickedneſs, as was effectually ſuited to the purpoſe. As if he had been actually in poſſeſſion of the throne, in defiance of God's law, and of common decency, he defiled his father's concubines; and thus inflicted upon David the correction, which God had denounced, (ch. xii. v. 11.) So many women left behind, beſides all his wives, were by no means honourable to David: and probably they did not expreſs a proper degree of reluctance to ſo groſs an enormity. Abſalom ſignifies "the peace of my "father, or the father of peace," but never man leſs anſwered his name.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Selfiſh men are often very generous in diſpoſing of other men's property for their own advantage; and are great adepts in addreſs, and inſinuation: and flatterers are generally back-biters; for it is as eaſy to them to forge ſlanders of the abſent, as to pretend affection, and reſpect for the preſent: and thoſe ſervants, who purloin their maſter's ſubſtance, will commonly blacken their reputations. Though both adulation, and calumny are injurious to a great degree, yet the former is the moſt hurtful to the believer; for to be tempted to ſin is more injurious, than to be robbed of our riches, or even of our characters: and ſmooth ſpeeches and well-timed preſents often ſeduce even the wiſe, and righteous into improper conceſſions. When much treachery and ingratitude have been experienced, men are apt to become too ſuſpicious, and to liſten to every plauſible tale of calumny: the mind, when greatly agitated, views every thing through a falſe medium, and we are naturally moſt precipitate, when leaſt capable of judging aright: and thus godly men are unawares betrayed into indefenſible meaſures. But whilſt the diſſimulation of falſe friends occaſions ſin: the rage, malice, and contumely of cruel enemies call forth the exerciſes of the believer's graces, and often proves advantageous to him.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

Contains, 1ſt. Ahithophel's counſel rejected, and Huſhai's adopted, 1—14. *2d. Tidings ſent to David; and his paſſage over Jordan,* 15—22. *3d. Ahithophel's ſelf-murder, and Abſalom's appointments, and progreſs,* 23—26. *4th. David's entertainment by his friends,* 27—29.

MOREOVER Ahithophel ſaid unto Abſalom, Let me now chooſe out twelve thouſand men, and I will ariſe and purſue after David this night.

2 And I will come upon him while he *is* weary and weak handed, and will make him afraid: and all the people that *are* with him ſhall flee, and I will ſmite the king only.

3 And I will bring back all the people unto thee; the man whom thou ſeekeſt *is* as if all returned: *ſo* all the people ſhall be in peace.

4 And the ſaying pleaſed Abſalom well, and all the elders of Iſrael.

5 Then ſaid Abſalom, Call now Huſhai the Archite alſo, and let us hear likewiſe what he ſaith.

6 And when Huſhai was come to Abſalom, Abſalom ſpake unto him, ſaying, Ahithophel hath ſpoken after this manner: ſhall we do *after* his ſaying? if not, ſpeak thou.

7 And Huſhai ſaid unto Abſalom, The counſel that Ahithophel hath given *is* not good at this time.

8 For, ſaid Huſhai, thou knoweſt thy father and his men, that they *be* mighty men, and they *be* chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field: and thy father *is* a man of war, and will not lodge with the people.

Wicked men judge of right or wrong by ſelf-intereſt; and count themſelves robbed of every expected advantage, which goes beſides them: it gratifies malevolence to inſult the afflicted, and to vent imprecations and reproaches: and when men think nothing of the authority, providence, or word of God in other reſpects, they are often very ready to interpret the afflictions of their neighbours, as divine judgments, in oppoſition to the cleareſt evidence. But it is good to ſee the hand of God directing, though not dictating, the injuries of men. Some ſimilar, or equal evil, or ſome appearance of evil, their falſe accuſations may ſuggeſt to memory, which calls for humiliation, watchfulneſs, and prayer: we deſerve worſe from the Lord than their moſt cruel, and contemptuous treatment, and we are authoriſed to conſider that as his correction: and if we bear humbly, patiently, and meekly for his ſake, the injuries of man, he will graciouſly requite us with inward peace and conſolation. Seaſons of peculiar humiliation before God, require peculiar long-ſuffering towards men: private revenge muſt never be indulged; and on ſuch occaſions it behoves us to be very reluctant in ſeeking the execution of public juſtice upon thoſe offenders, who have *only* injured us. Nay the Judge of the world, in his humiliation *for our ſins*, bare with, and prayed for thoſe, who reviled, and crucified him. Indeed a deep ſenſe of perſonal guilt, will ſoften the ſpirit towards others, and diſpoſe a man to be indignant, and ſevere againſt himſelf. (Compare 1 *Sam.* c. xxv. v. 21, 22.) And the moſt zealous friends are to be diſregarded, when they counſel what is evidently wrong. Men, who admire themſelves, will be eaſily deceived by thoſe, who profeſs an attachment to them: yet men readily diſcern thoſe faults in others, of which themſelves are moſt notoriouſly guilty. And if a diſciple of Chriſt commit evident wickedneſs, even profligates will exclaim, "Is this thy kindneſs to thy friend?" But alas! how often might the Saviour himſelf addreſs theſe words to each of us, to our ſhame, and confuſion? And how often ſhould we thus check ourſelves, and remember our ingratitude, to our deeper humiliation? Deſtruction is before thoſe, who hearken to deceitful, and wicked counſellors: yet many young people, eſpecially in high life, will not regard any other! How deſperately wicked is the human heart, that can conceive, execute, and glory in thoſe deeds of darkneſs, which it is ſhocking to think of, and ſhameful to mention! yet all this might be educed from *our hearts* by ſucceſſive temptations, if ſatan and his agents were permitted to practiſe upon us! When great abilities, and daring wickedneſs unite in one character, they form the expreſs image of ſatan: and like that arch-apoſtate and rebel, ſuch men will ſpare no pains to puſh others forward into ſuch kinds, and degrees of guilt, as may drive them deſperate, and extinguiſh all thoughts of reconciliation unto God. But this wiſdom will ſhortly appear the moſt wretched, and contemptible folly, which perverts the noble powers of an angel, to increaſe and propagate guilt, condemnation, and eternal miſery.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII.] V. 3. *The man, whom,* &c.] The conſtruction of this verſe is very difficult; but the obvious meaning is, that by immediately aſſaulting David, before he was prepared for the attack, he might eaſily be ſmitten alone; and that this would effectually anſwer Abſalom's purpoſe, and bring over the people to a quiet ſubmiſſion to his authority. The deſperate wickedneſs of the propoſal excited no oppoſition, either from Abſalom, or from the people; but they were blinded from ſeeing, that it was the moſt politic meaſure, which could have been adopted in ſuch circumſtances.

V. 7—13.] Huſhai's great aim was to gain time for David to remove to a greater diſtance, and to increaſe, and encourage his army: and if he had only put Abſalom off from executing Ahithophel's counſel for one night, it might have proved of eſſential ſervice, eſpecially as he would have been able to give him intelligence of his danger. In purſuing this object, he oppoſed Ahithophel's propoſal with conſummate addreſs, and with ſome ſpecious arguments: From David's character for valour, and military ſkill; from the courage, and indignation of his fol-

9 Behold,

9 Behold, he is hid now in ſome pit, or in ſome *other* place: and it will come to paſs, when ſome of them be overthrown at the firſt, that whoſoever heareth it will ſay, There is a ſlaughter among the people that follow Abſalom;

10 And he alſo *that is* valiant, whoſe heart *is* as the heart of a lion, ſhall utterly melt: for all Iſrael knoweth that thy father *is* a mighty man, and *they* which *be* with him *are* valiant men.

11 Therefore I counſel, that all Iſrael be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-ſheba, as the ſand that *is* by the ſea for multitude, and that thou go to battle in thine own perſon.

12 So ſhall we come upon him in ſome place where he ſhall be found, and we will light upon him as the dew falleth on the ground: and of him, and of all the men that *are* with him, there ſhall not be left ſo much as one.

13 Moreover, if he be gotten into a city, then ſhall all Iſrael bring ropes to that city, and we will draw it into the river, until there be not one ſmall ſtone found there.

14 And Abſalom and all the men of Iſrael ſaid, The counſel of Huſhai the Archite *is* better than the counſel of Ahithophel: for the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counſel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Abſalom.

15 Then ſaid Huſhai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the prieſts, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counſel Abſalom and the elders of Iſrael; and thus and thus have I counſelled.

16 Now therefore ſend quickly, and tell David, ſaying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderneſs, but ſpeedily paſs over; leſt the king be ſwallowed up, and all the people that *are* with him.

17 Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz ſtayed by En-rogel, (for they might not be ſeen to come into the city,) and a wench went and told them: and they went and told king David.

18 Nevertheleſs a lad ſaw them, and told Abſalom: but they went both of them away quickly, and came to a man's houſe in Bahurim, which had a well in his court, whither they went down.

19 And the woman took and ſpread a covering over the well's mouth, and ſpread ground corn thereon; and the thing was not known.

20 And when Abſalom's ſervants came to the woman to the houſe, they ſaid, Where *is* Ahimaaz and Jonathan? And the woman ſaid unto them, They be gone over the brook of water. And when they had ſought, and could not find *them*, they returned to Jeruſalem.

21 And it came to paſs after they were departed, that they came up out of the well, and went and told king David, and ſaid unto David, Ariſe, and paſs quickly over the water; for thus hath Ahithophel counſelled againſt you.

22 Then David aroſe, and all the people

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lowers; and from the probability that David would, by ſome ſtratagem of war, ſurpriſe, and overcome his aſſailants, if they were not very numerous, and ſo diſcourage the whole party; he argued that Ahithophel's counſel was not good at that time. But the meaſures, which he propoſed in lieu of it, were addreſſed to the vain glory, the ambition, and perhaps the revenge of Abſalom, and of his followers. To raiſe a vaſt army, which being the univerſal favourite, he might eaſily accompliſh; to command it himſelf, that the honour might be all his own; to carry matters with a high hand, and to make ſure work, and to deſtroy David, and all his party: this was a more pompous ſcheme, and more ſuited to a man of Abſalom's capacity and diſpoſition, than the ſagacious counſel of Ahithophel: and it pleaſed God ſo to infatuate him and all his party, that it met with general approbation. Ahithophel's former counſel was followed; for God intended to correct David: but his latter was not; for he meant not to deſtroy *him*, but Abſalom. Thus God anſwered David's prayer, and turned the good, that is the politic counſel of Ahithophel into fooliſhneſs.

V. 16. *Lodge not*, &c.] Huſhai feared leſt Abſalom ſhould change his mind; and he was ſatisfied that he was determined to murder David, if poſſible, and without delay; and therefore he ſent him intelligence to provide immediately for his ſafety.

V. 17. *Now Jonathan*, &c.] It ſeems that theſe young men were ſuſpected by Abſalom's party, though they were reſtrained from injuring Zadok, and Abiathar: and therefore they did not enter the city, but abode at a diſtance; whither their intelligence was ſent to them by a young woman, as an unſuſpected meſſenger: which with great danger they were enabled to deliver.

V. 22. *There lacked*, &c.] This was a remarkable inſtance of God's providential care over his ſervant, and his friends; and he was therein a type of Chriſt, who

that *were* with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.

23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled *his* ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.

24 Then David came to Mahanaim: and Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him.

25 And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab: which Amasa *was* a man's son whose name *was* Ithra, an Israelite, that went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother.

26 So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

27 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,

28 Brought beds, and basons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched *corn*, and beans, and lentiles, and parched *pulse*,

29 And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that *were* with him, to eat: for they said, The people *is* hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

CHAP. XVIII.

Cantains, 1st. David's army sent forth to battle, with orders to spare Absalom, v. 1—5. 2d. Absalom's army routed. His flight, suspension on a tree, and death, v. 6—18. 3d. Tidings carried to David, with his bitter lamentation, v. 19—33.

loses none of his true followers. About this time David penned the third psalm.

V. 23. *And when*, &c.] This crafty politician had seen enough of Absalom to consider his cause already lost: his vexation, when he saw so wild a scheme preferred to his sound policy, was intolerable; he expected nothing but extreme disgrace, and a public execution for his treason; but it is doubtful whether he despaired of God's mercy, or was hardened in presumption and infidelity: however he most deliberately murdered himself. It is observable that three, at least, out of the four instances of self-murder, recorded in scripture, were apostate professors of godliness, viz. Saul, Ahithophel, and Judas. Now David's prayer was answered more terribly than he expected or desired.

V. 27.] Perhaps this Shobi, the son of Nahash, had been advanced to the kingdom by David, instead of Hanun his brother; and thus expressed his gratitude: or perhaps he was proselyted, and lived amongst the Israelites. The provisions, which were brought to David, not only expressed the liberality of his friends, but the extreme distress, to which his followers were reduced.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When satan hath seduced men into a wicked course of life, every crime makes more, and greater enormities almost necessary, and they must go forward, or lose the fruit, and suffer the punishment of their former villanies. His servants are more sagacious, and vigorous in their mischievous devices, than the servants of God are in doing good: and they have a vast *apparent* advantage, being freed from the restraints of conscience, gratitude, natural affection, and the fear of God. That some few individuals should be monsters of iniquity would not excite much surprise: but from age to age vast multitudes are found, who with one consent break through every tie of duty to God or man; especially when engaged in opposing the cause of true religion, and its cordial friends: and this demonstrates, that man by nature is an enemy to the service and holiness of God.—When the heart is hardened in iniquity, it is righteous for God to infatuate the understanding: and when the rage of his enemies hath accomplished his secret purposes, and they are about to proceed, their machinations prove unsuccessful, and forward their own destruction. The Lord can perform the greatest deliverances by the feeblest instruments: he can protect his servants in their extremest dangers; or provide for them in their most pressing necessities: he can restrain the malice of their most cruel enemies, and enlarge the heart of unexpected friends: and whatever wisdom, address, dispatch, or assistance, any man employs or affords, the success is from God alone, who will not suffer one of his people to perish. When satan hath tempted to successive crimes, till men are ripe for destruction; and when God's providence hath disappointed their ambitious and vain-glorious projects, and their lives are rendered miserable; the last device of that subtle enemy is to urge them to murder themselves: and in this way he sometimes deludes those, who have been most renowned for their wisdom, but who are at length so foolish as to plunge themselves into everlasting misery, for fear of temporal disgrace and suffering. Let us then beware of hypocrisy and apostacy, which frequently have this event: let us fear sinning against knowledge and conscience, which is often the forerunner of judicial hardness: let us seek the wisdom which comes from, and leads to God, and heaven: let us watch against the rising emotions of pride, malice, envy, or ambition: let us learn to pity, and relieve those who are in distress, with liberality proportioned to our ability. Our King indeed needs not our help: but he hath assured us, that what we do for the least of his brethren, who are sick, poor, or destitute, shall be accepted and recompensed, as if it were done to himself.

AND David numbered the people that *were* with him, and ſet captains of thouſands and captains of hundreds over them.

2 And David ſent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab, and a third part under the hand of Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king ſaid unto the people, I will ſurely go forth with you myſelf alſo.

3 But the people anſwered, Thou ſhalt not go forth: for, if we flee away, they will not care for us; neither if half of us die will they care for us: but now *thou art* worth ten thouſand of us; therefore now *it is* better that thou ſuccour us out of the city.

4 And the king ſaid unto them, What ſeemeth you beſt I will do. And the king ſtood by the gate ſide, and all the people came out by hundreds and by thouſands.

5 And the king commanded Joab and Abiſhai and Ittai, ſaying, *Deal* gently for my ſake with the young man, *even* with Abſalom. And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains charge concerning Abſalom.

6 So the people went out into the field againſt Iſrael: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim;

7 Where the people of Iſrael were ſlain before the ſervants of David; and there was there a great ſlaughter that day of twenty thouſand *men*.

8 For the battle was there ſcattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the ſword devoured.

9 And Abſalom met the ſervants of David. And Abſalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that *was* under him went away.

10 And a certain man ſaw *it*, and told Joab, and ſaid, Behold, I ſaw Abſalom hanged in an oak.

11 And Joab ſaid unto the man that told him, And, behold, thou ſaweſt *him*; and why didſt thou not ſmite him there to the ground, and I would have given thee ten *ſhekels* of ſilver, and a girdle?

12 And the man ſaid unto Joab, Though I ſhould receive a thouſand *ſhekels* of ſilver in mine hand, *yet* would I not put forth mine hand againſt the king's ſon: for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abiſhai, and Ittai, ſaying, Beware that none *touch* the young man Abſalom.

13 Otherwiſe I ſhould have wrought falſehood againſt mine own life: for there is no matter hid from the king, and thou thyſelf wouldeſt have ſet thyſelf againſt *me*.

NOTES.

V. 3. *Worth ten thouſand*, &c.] This was ſpoken, not only out of affection to David; but from a proper eſtimate of the importance of his life to the civil and religious intereſts of the whole nation; which was like to ſink into the moſt abject miſery, and the greateſt ungodlineſs, if Abſalom was ſucceſsful in his wicked uſurpation. As Ahithophel had foreſeen, Abſalom's delay afforded David's friends an opportunity of ſtrengthening his army, which was now become capable of meeting their opponents in the field of battle.

V. 5. *Deal gently*, &c.] Abſalom aimed only at the life of his indulgent father; David deſired nothing ſo much as the preſervation of his rebellious ſon. But Abſalom's crimes were too enormous to have been pardoned, conſiſtent with David's duty; and the peace of Iſrael could not be eſtabliſhed whilſt he lived. Perhaps he only hoped, that if he were not ſlain in battle, he would live to repent of his wickedneſs, and ſo eſcape the future vengeance of God. But if he had been ſpared, he would probably have occaſioned David further trouble, and ſin; and it pleaſed God to preſerve his ſervant from the guilt of pardoning, and from the anguiſh of puniſhing him. David ſeems not to have doubted of the victory, after his prayer againſt Ahithophel had been ſo remarkably anſwered. The wood of Ephraim was beyond Jordan, and, as is ſuppoſed, the place where the Ephraimites had been ſlain in the days of Jephthah. (*Jud.* c. xii. v. 4—6.)

V. 9. *His head*, &c.] Either his hair, which he had effeminately tended, was ſo entangled in the boughs of the oak, that he could not extricate himſelf; or his head was confined betwixt two arms of the tree, through the rapidity and inattention, with which he rode. In this dreadful ſituation he remained a conſiderable time, doubtleſs with unſpeakable horror, expecting his doom, without being able in the leaſt to help himſelf. His fate was as extraordinary as his crimes; and by being *providentially* hanged on a tree, he was, as it were, pronounced accurſed of God himſelf.

V. 13. *Wrought falſhood*, &c.] He meant, that he

14 Then

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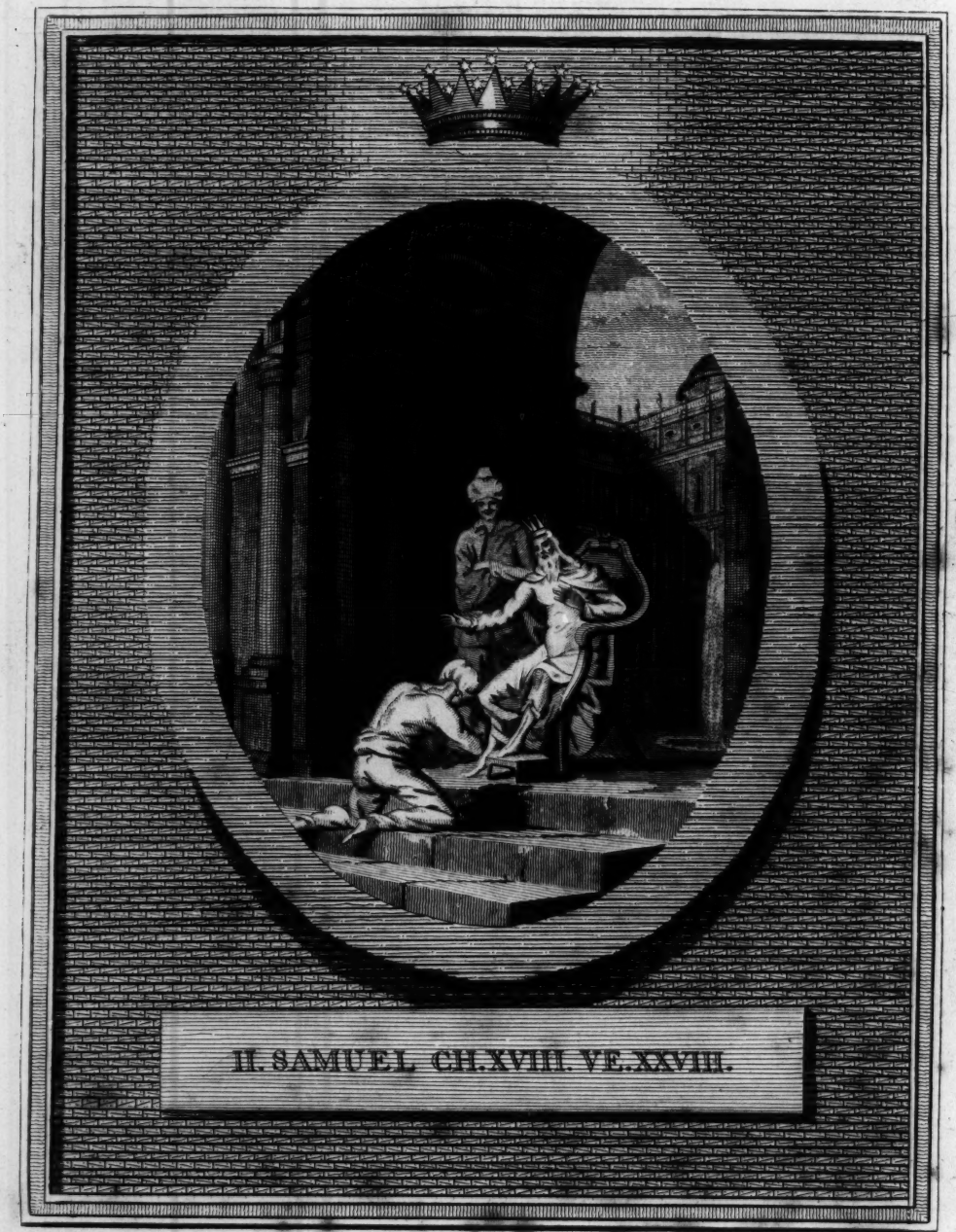

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14 Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he *was* yet alive in the midst of the oak.

15 And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him.

16 And Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing after Israel: for Joab held back the people.

17 And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood, and laid a very great heap of stones upon him: and all Israel fled every one to his tent.

18 Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself a pillar, which *is* in the king's dale: for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name: and it is called unto this day Absalom's place.

19 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, Let me now run and bear the king tidings, how that the LORD hath avenged him of his enemies.

20 And Joab said unto him, Thou shalt not bear tidings this day, but thou shalt bear tidings another day; but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead.

21 Then said Joab to Cushi, Go tell the king what thou hast seen. And Cushi bowed himself unto Joab, and ran.

22 Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab, But howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi. And Joab said, Wherefore wilt thou run, my son, seeing that thou hast no tidings ready?

23 But howsoever, *said he*, let me run. And he said unto him, Run. Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and over-ran Cushi.

24 And David sat between the two gates: and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall, and lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, a man running alone.

25 And the watchman cried, and told the king. And the king said, If he *be* alone, *there is* tidings in his mouth. And he came apace, and drew near.

26 And the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called unto the porter, and said, Behold, *another* man running alone. And the king said, He also bringeth tidings.

27 And the watchman said, Me thinketh the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok. And the king said, He *is* a good man, and cometh with good tidings.

28 And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD thy God, which hath delivered up the men, that lifted up their hand against my lord the king.

29 And the king said, is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and *me* thy ser-

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should have cheated himself; and by seeking a reward, have forfeited his life. This man's answer was replete with truth, good sense, and sound argument: and Joab was conscious that it did not admit of an answer.

V. 14. *Thrust them through*, &c.] Joab doubtless intended the interest of both David and his kingdom in dispatching Absalom; and his death was of salutary tendency, and even necessary: yet he cannot be excused in acting against the express desire and command of his Sovereign; for he had no warrant from God or man to execute deserved vengeance upon him; and having deserved death himself, he was the last person, who should have complained of the obstruction of public justice. But he was a man of an overbearing spirit, who presumed so much upon his services and consequence to David, that he domineered over him continually.

V. 17, 18.] It seems that Absalom's sons died young, (as a just judgment upon him for seeking the life of his father,) and that, after their death, he erected some magnificent building, within, or near to which, he meant to be interred; and by which he hoped to perpetuate his memory with honour to future generations. But, on the contrary, he was buried with ignominy as a criminal; (See *Deut.* c. xxi. v. 20—23;) and his pillar proved a monument of his folly and wicked ambition.

V. 22. *No tidings ready.*] That is, no convenient tidings. Joab was sensible that David would bitterly lament the death of Absalom; and was not willing to send so respectable a person as Ahimaaz with unwelcome tidings; but appointed for that service an inferior person, whose name seems to intimate that he was an Ethiopian, and perhaps a slave: however, he was cordially attached to the interests of David.

V. 29. *I saw a great tumult*, &c.] Perhaps one motive

vant,

vant, I ſaw a great tumult, but I knew not what *it was*.

30 And the king ſaid *unto him*, Turn aſide, *and* ſtand here. And he turned aſide, and ſtood ſtill.

31 And, behold, Cuſhi came; and Cuſhi ſaid, Tidings, my lord the king: for the LORD hath avenged thee this day of all them that roſe up againſt thee.

32 And the king ſaid unto Cuſhi, is the young man Abſalom ſafe? And Cuſhi anſwered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that riſe againſt thee to do *thee* hurt, be as *that* young man *is*.

33 And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he ſaid, O my ſon Abſalom! my ſon, my ſon Abſalom! would God I had died for thee, O Abſalom, my ſon, my ſon!

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that induced Ahimaaz to deſire to carry David the firſt news of the victory, was, that he might gradually prepare his mind for the intelligence of Abſalom's death: for though he rejoiced in his deliverance, he ſympathized with him in his grief; and for this purpoſe he evaded the king's queſtion; which Cuſhi ſoon after indirectly, but more plainly replied to. The piety of the language of Ahimaaz and Cuſhi on this occaſion are worthy notice and imitation.

V. 33.] David's grief was doubleſs extravagant, and very faulty. He ought to have been thankful for his own deliverance and that of Iſrael, and to have ſubmitted with ſilent patience to the righteous judgment of God upon his ſon. But he was a man of very warm paſſions: he had inordinately loved a very unworthy object, who was cut off in the midſt of his crimes: he could not but think of the ſtate of his immortal ſoul: he was conſcious that, when his own forfeited life was ſpared, after his adultery and murder, this burden had been laid upon his family; and he conſidered himſelf, by his tranſgreſſion, example, and the chaſtiſement of God, as acceſſory to the dire cataſtrophe; and in the vehemency of his grief he wiſhed, that he had died himſelf rather than his ſon, as being better prepared for the eternal world: whilſt the agitation of his mind prevented him from adverting to the fatal effects of ſuch an event to his kingdom, and to that cauſe, which, in his calmer hours, was neareſt to his heart.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

The peculiar exerciſes of religion ought to precede, but not to exclude the uſe of every prudent means of ſecuring ſucceſs in lawful undertakings: and they who would engage others in arduous and perilous attempts, muſt be willing to take a full ſhare in the hardſhip and danger. But in ſome caſes the life of an individual is of ſuch importance to the public welfare, that thouſands are authoriſed to demand it of him, as a duty, to take the utmoſt care of himſelf. It is well when ſuch affection and fidelity ſubſiſts betwixt princes and their ſubjects: and when they are mutually willing to venture, or to ſuffer for each other's benefit. Thus Jeſus loved his people, and laid down his life for them: thus they conſider his cauſe as dearer to them than every perſonal intereſt, and are prepared to lay down their lives for his ſake. True courage and firmneſs of mind are very different from raſhneſs and obſtinacy; and wiſe men are always moſt ready to liſten to prudent counſel, even from their inferiors. The extremes of our moſt amiable propenſities are often of fatal conſequence: and it is merciful for God to deny us thoſe things, which we greatly deſire, when he ſees they would prove our temptation or affliction. Multitudes ſuffer *through* the wickedneſs of one; but *for* their own crimes: and rebellion againſt good and lawful governors is generally, and juſtly puniſhed with the ruin of thoſe concerned in it. Yet the ſeducers into the ways of ſin muſt be anſwerable to God for the conſequences; and who can number the murders, for which many ambitious uſurpers will ſtand indicted before his righteous tribunal! At all times "evil purſueth ſinners." And when in the appointed hour it overtaketh them, they cannot poſſibly eſcape; but thoſe things on which they have moſt depended, and of which they have been moſt proud, often prove the occaſion, or inſtruments of their deſtruction. Let young people look upon Abſalom ſuſpended upon the tree, accurſed and forſaken of Heaven and earth; and there let them read the Lord's abhorrence of rebellion againſt parents: let them conſider the agony of his death, and the ignominy of his burial; and learn how empty all external embelliſhments are; how vain the flattery of man; and all that care, which is employed in rendering themſelves admired and renowned. After all, the memory "of the wicked ſhall rot;" and nothing can preſerve us from miſery and contempt, but heavenly wiſdom and the grace of God. They, who are greedy of gain, often work falſhood againſt their own lives or ſouls; and many perſons will rejoice in the effects of wickedneſs, who will be the firſt to inform againſt thoſe; who have committed it, in order to exculpate themſelves: but our ſafety lies in obeying the Lord, and the lawful commands of our rulers. The removal of one ringleader in daring crimes proves a public benefit, and makes way for the exerciſe of clemency to numbers: but that will not authoriſe every individual to take away the life of the moſt notorious offender: for it is not enough that the thing ought to be done; but we are to conſider whether it be a ſervice allotted to us by our great Maſter. Every deliverance ſhould be received with praiſe and thankſgiving to God: and good men delight in bearing glad tidings to thoſe, whom they love. May all, who proclaim the glad tidings of ſalvation to ſinners, be men of ſuch unblemiſhed reputation! and may numbers more be ſent forth with this joyful meſſage!—All other good tidings have ſo much alloy in them, that our joy on account of them muſt be mingled with weeping, or with trembling: and alas! we are more diſpoſed to complain of the trouble, which alloys our mercies, than to be thankful for the mercies themſelves. But whilſt we learn from the example before us, to watch and pray againſt partial and exceſſive attachments; and againſt the indulgence or neglect of our children; and the unadviſed language and paſſionate wiſhes of indulged grief: whilſt we learn to bow down to the

CHAP. XIX.

Contains 1st. David's grief restrained by Joab's remonstrance, v. 1—8. 2d. The men of Israel hesitating about bringing David back, whilst the men of Judah, excited by Zadok, &c, first invite his return, v. 9—15. 3d. Shimei meeting David, and obtaining a pardon, v. 16—23. 4th. Mephibosheth proving himself slandered, and the grant made to Ziba, in part revoked, v. 24—30. 5th. The conversation betwixt David and Barzillai, v. 31—40. 6th. A sharp dispute betwixt the men of Judah, and the men of Israel, v. 41—43.

AND it was told Joab, Behold the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 And the victory that day was *turned* into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day, how the king was grieved for his son.

3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son, Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends: for thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king; for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle: now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 And king David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last

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righteous appointments of God in our sharpest trials; to adore his unmerited mercy in our comfort sand deliverances; and to prefer the public welfare to any personal, or private affections: may we not in David perceive a shadow of the Saviour's love, who wept over, prayed for, and suffered death in all its bitterness, for us vile rebels and enemies, without even excepting those, who persecuted and crucified him; and from him may we learn "not to be overcome "of evil, but to overcome evil with good."

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX.] V. 1—8.] David's conduct was very impolitic, and tended to weaken the attachment, and damp the zeal of his adherents; who would interpret his excessive grief into an indifference about their interests, and dissatisfaction with their services: and instead of exultation and joy, and the commendations of their prince, they were sent away grieved, and ashamed. Joab had therefore good reason to interpose, and would have been justifiable in a very plain remonstrance with David, upon the impropriety of his conduct: but the asperity, the reproaches, and implied threat of a general defection, that he employed, are to be ascribed to his pride, and insolence, who gloried in disobeying, and being rude to his prince. However David, being conscious that Joab had truth, and reason on his side, smothered his resentment, and very prudently obviated the disgust of the people.

V. 9—15.] David would not appear to reign by force of arms; and therefore he waited, till he was publicly invited to resume the reins of government. From the time, that he began to reign in Hebron over the tribe of Judah only, the distinction betwixt Judah and Israel began to be more observed. The men of Israel were first disposed to return to their allegiance, and they spake honourably of David's former services: but either fear, or shame, or some such hindrance, retarded them from publicly inviting his return to Jerusalem. The report of this having reached the king, he probably thought it would be dishonourable to his own tribe, if they were the last in this service; or perhaps they were so deeply involved in Absalom's rebellion, that they feared his resentment, if he were reinstated in his authority: and therefore he employed Zadok, and Abiathar, to assure them of his affection, and to excite them to appear in this business: by which means

to bring the king back to his houſe? ſeeing the ſpeech of all Iſrael is come to the king, *even* to his houſe.

12 Ye *are* my brethren, ye *are* my bones and my fleſh; wherefore then are ye the laſt to bring back the king?

13 And ſay ye to Amaſa, *Art* thou not of my bone, and of my fleſh? God do ſo to me, and more alſo, if thou be not captain of the hoſt before me continually in the room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as *the heart of* one man; ſo that they ſent *this word* unto the king, Return thou, and all thy ſervants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

16 And Shimei the ſon of Gera, a Benjamite, which *was* of Bahurim, haſted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David.

17 And *there were* a thouſand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the ſervant of the houſe of Saul, and his fifteen ſons and his twenty ſervants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's houſhold, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the ſon of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And ſaid unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy ſervant did perverſely the day that my lord the king went out of Jeruſalem, that the king ſhould take it to his heart.

20 For thy ſervant doth know that I have ſinned; therefore, behold, I am come the firſt this day of all the houſe of Joſeph, to go down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah anſwered and ſaid, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, becauſe he curſed the LORD's anointed?

22 And David ſaid, What have I to do with you, ye ſons of Zeruiah, that ye ſhould this day be adverſaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Iſrael? for do not I know that I *am* this day king over Iſrael.

23 Therefore the king ſaid unto Shimei, Thou ſhalt not die: and the king ſware unto him.

24 And Mephiboſheth the ſon of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dreſſed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor waſhed his clothes from the day the king departed, until the day he came *again* in peace.

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they took the lead in ſuch manner, as led the men of Iſrael to conclude, that they meant to engroſs the credit of recalling David, and excluſively to ſecure his favour. It would have been much better, if they had conſulted with their brethren, and acted in concert in this matter, which would have precluded many bad conſequences. David alſo was very uneaſy under Joab's haughtineſs, and was diſpleaſed with him for ſlaying Abſalom, and for his conſequent rudeneſs: and he wiſhed to lay him aſide. And he ſuppoſed, that if Amaſa were aſſured of pardon, and preferment, he would draw over all his party into his intereſts. But he was not a proper perſon to ſupplant Joab, having headed ſo daring a rebellion: and Joab's influence with the army, and with David's beſt friends, was too great to be thus ſhaken; and he was ſure not to ſubmit quietly to ſuch a diſgrace. David therefore did not act with prudence upon this emergency.

V. 20—23. *The houſe of Joſeph*, &c.] That is, of Iſrael, (in contradiction from Judah,) of which Ephraim the ſon of Joſeph was accounted the chief: for Shimei was of the tribe of Benjamin. Shimei appeared penitent, and David granted him a pardon, and ſware to him, that he ſhould not die at that time, by his authority, and for that crime. Abiſhai would have had him made an example of, as indeed he well deſerved to be: but David intimated, that he, and Joab were always inſtigating him to acts of ſeverity, and to act improperly: and it would be injurious to his intereſts, as well as contrary to his inclinations, to fully his reſtoration, with the execution of a ſingle criminal: and there was no occaſion; for all were diſpoſed peaceably to ſubmit unto him.

V. 24—30.] Mephiboſheth probably did not come to David, until his return to Jeruſalem: from the time of the king's departure, he had utterly neglected the care of his perſon, and ſhewn every token of exceſſive ſorrow. To the enquiry, wherefore he had not accompanied him? he anſwered by a ſimple narration of facts, united with the moſt reſpectful, affectionate, thankful, and ſubmiſſive language. He owed all he poſſeſſed to David's clemency, and bounty; he complained not of the grant that had been made to Ziba; and he was confident that the king would do nothing, but what was conſiſtent with wiſdom, and

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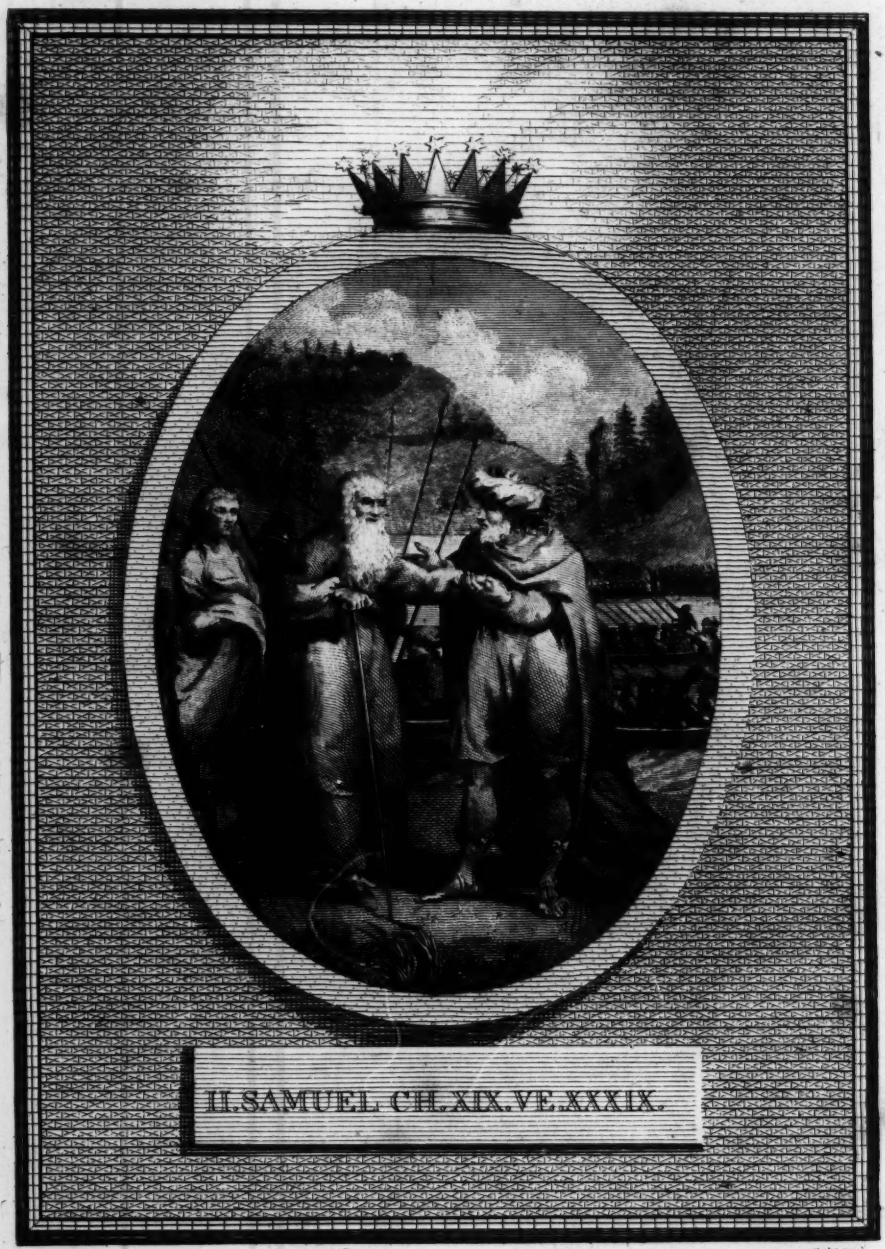

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25 And it came to paſs, when he was come to Jeruſalem to meet the king, that the king ſaid unto him, Wherefore wenteſt not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he anſwered, My lord, O king, my ſervant deceived me: for thy ſervant ſaid, I will ſaddle me an aſs, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; becauſe thy ſervant *is* lame.

27 And he hath ſlandered thy ſervant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king *is* as an angel of God: do therefore *what is* good in thine eyes.

28 For all *of* my father's houſe were but dead men before my lord the king; yet didſt thou ſet thy ſervant among them that did eat at thine own table: what right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

29 And the king ſaid unto him, Why ſpeakeſt thou any more of thy matters? I have ſaid, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth ſaid unto the king, Yea, let him take all, foraſmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own houſe.

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, *even* fourſcore years old: and he had provided the king of ſuſtenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a very great man.

33 And the king ſaid unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jeruſalem.

34 And Barzillai ſaid unto the king, How long have I to live, that I ſhould go up with the king unto Jeruſalem?

35 I *am* this day fourſcore years old: *and* can I diſcern between good and evil? can thy ſervant taſte what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of ſinging men and ſinging women? wherefore then ſhould thy ſervant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy ſervant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why ſhould the king recompenſe it me with ſuch a reward?

37 Let thy ſervant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in my own city, *and be buried* by the grave of my father and of my mother. But, behold, thy ſervant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what ſhall ſeem good unto thee.

38 And the king anſwered, Chimham ſhall go over with me, and I will do to him that which ſhall ſeem good unto thee: and whatſoever thou ſhalt require of me, *that* will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kiſſed Barzillai, and bleſſed him; and he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and alſo half the people of Iſrael.

41 And, behold, all the men of Iſrael came to the king, and ſaid unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah ſtolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his houſhold, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah anſwered the men of Iſrael, Becauſe the king *is* near of kin to us? wherefore then be ye angry for this matter?

juſtice. But whether David did not fully credit him, or whether he was aſhamed of his credulity, and wiſhed not to have it further noticed, he ſuffered Ziba to eſcape merited puniſhment, and to enjoy part of the fruits of his ſlander: or at leaſt contented himſelf with reſtoring matters to their former ſettlement. But Mephibosheth ſo rejoiced in David's ſafety, and ſucceſs, that he treated the whole affair concerning his own eſtate, as a matter of indifference.

V. 40—43.] By ſuch time as David had paſſed over Jordan, part of the elders of Iſrael came to bring him back, and were diſguſted at finding that they came too late, and that the buſineſs was ſettled without conſulting them. This might have been expected from the natural ambition, and jealouſy of the human heart: for they thought themſelves deſpiſed, and that the men of Judah took too much upon them: whilſt their plea of relationſhip to David tended only to increaſe their ſuſpicions, and envy; and the *fiercer* words, which the men of Judah returned to their angry remonſtrance, produced very bad effects. Whatever value, or reſpect they at this time profeſſed for their king; they would not have quarrelled ſo furiouſly about their own credit and intereſt in recalling him, if they had been truly ſorry for their former rebellion. David freely forgave them all their groſs injuries againſt him; but they could not endure the leaſt affront from each other.

matter? have we eaten at all of the king's *cost?* or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more *right* in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Excessive indulgence of any passion not only offends God, but betrays men into great imprudences in their temporal concerns. They, who have faithfully served our interests, expect that we should appear pleased with them, and thankful for their services. And many will do more for a smile, and a kind word from their superiors, than for a more substantial recompense: and will be much grieved, and disheartened, if they think themselves frowned upon: and it is great imprudence to displease such adherents. Upon important emergencies plain truths may properly be spoken to the greatest, and best of men; and they may be closely reasoned and expostulated with: but indecent roughness, and an assuming demeanour in an inferior will render the most prudent, seasonable, and honest counsel unacceptable; and perhaps ineffectual. However a wise man will endeavour to disregard the impropriety, and benefit by the sound reason of well-intended remonstrances: and timely concessions will commonly prevent the ill effects of mistaken measures. Men are often betrayed, by their discontents, and fickleness, into such actions, as their sober judgment disapproves, and of which experience will constrain them to be weary: but they do not so readily condemn themselves for the most evident treachery or ingratitude. Many allow that such and such things should be done, and wonder that others do not set about them: and yet they are equally tardy, through their own indolence, pride, or covetousness. Ministers should at all times be examples of fidelity to magistrates, and rulers: and may very properly exhort others to do their plain, and evident duty in that, as well as in other respects. Otherwise it is best for them to intermeddle very little in public transactions. Convincing arguments, urged in mildness, and love, are very forcible, and produce great effects upon the minds of men in all temporal concerns. But only the grace of God can bow our hearts into submission to his humbling truth, and holy will. In acts of clemency to those, who have been open offenders, care should be taken not to disgust such, as have deserved better of us; though in some respects they have failed of their duty: and whatever exposes a man to envy, or rivalship, however splendid, and valuable, will probably prove injurious to him. Self-preference, and contempt of others should always be guarded against; and every thing should be avoided, which can bear such a construction: equality, mutual respect, and harmony should be studied, and many interests and punctilios receded from, that strife, and contention may be excluded. Many seem to be sorry for those crimes, which expose them to present punishment; and the language, and semblance of repentance are easily imitated: but it is safest for us to judge favourably of others, and if we do err, to err on the side of candour, and clemency; and to leave it to the heart-searching God, to determine between the upright, and the hypocritical. Peculiar mercies from God should dispose us to be the more merciful to others: and our best friends must be considered as adversaries, when they would persuade us to act contrary to our conscience, and our duty. Perseverance in well doing will at length refute slanderous accusations: true affection for our friends, and sympathy with them in their afflictions, will create an indifferency to the pleasures of sense, and external decorations: and when they are beloved for the Lord's sake, as well as for personal obligations; the effect will be much greater, and continued. But this sorrow shall be turned into joy, on account of their present, or in the prospect of their future prosperity, and our own in fellowship with them; which should still more increase our weanedness from the trifling interests of this world. Credulity in believing slanders often leads godly people into difficulties, and covers them with shame: yet no offenders are so seldom treated with proper severity, as back-biters. When God gives largeness of heart, as well as great wealth, he qualifies a man to be a public blessing: and doing good liberally is the proper pleasure, and advantage of wealth. For the little pleasure of outward enjoyments quickly grows insipid: old age destroys the relish for them: death must soon separate a man from his riches, and then he must give an account to God of his stewardship. It becomes us therefore, as we advance in life, to relinquish worldly pursuits, before we be torn from them; and leaving to our juniors those scenes of business, or of pleasure, where reflection is too often dissipated, and the voice of conscience stunned, to prefer retirement, and privacy, where we may best prepare for the closing hour. Even the cities, where the truths of God are most professed, and his ordinances are best administered; and those courts, where the prince encourages, and sets an example of true piety, are ensnaring places, through the multitudes of another character, which frequent them. And though allowances are to be made to youth, in matters inexpedient to old age; yet the sooner, and the more entirely young people devote themselves to God, the safer, and happier they will be. However it is our duty to recompense to the children, the kindness shewn us by their parents, and to pray for them, that they may have grace properly to use their temporal good things. Envy, and anger often interrupt the most promising appearances; and in most quarrels both parties are culpable. A supposed neglect excites displeasure; an angry expression provokes a retort: words grow warmer, and fiercer: and thus the best designs are disconcerted, and much evil is committed: which might be otherwise, if men would watch against their own pride, and be careful not to affront that of others; and would remember, that a soft answer turneth away wrath. But here again, methinks, some glimpses may be discerned of the glorious character, and kingdom of David's son, and David's Lord. Though anointed of the Father, to be his King upon his holy hill of Zion, he reigns over a willing people, who deem it their privilege to be his subjects. Once indeed they were rebels,

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Contains, 1st. The rebellion of Sheba, &c. v. 1, 2. 2d. The seclusion of David's defiled concubines, v. 3. 3d. Amasa sent to raise forces; Abishai leading forth the Cherethites, &c; Amasa meeting him, and murdered by Joab, who resumed the command, and pursued Sheba, v. 4—10. 4th. Sheba shut up in Abel Beth-maachah, and slain by the citizens, through the interposition of a wise woman: the end of the rebellion; and the names of David's chief officers, v. 11—26.

AND there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name *was* Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women *his* concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than *did* Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities and escape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they *were* at the great stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a

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and numbers perish in that rebellion: but when they became sensible of their danger, they were fearful, or reluctant to submit unto him, till his ministers, by representing his tender love, and brotherly relation to them, and by his promises of pardon, and preferment, through the concurring influences of his Spirit, bowed their hearts to an humble willingness that he should reign over them: then he readily pardoned, and accepted them; and upon no accusation will he cast out, or cut off the worst offender, who cries for his mercy. His friends sincerely mourn when his cause is run down, and rejoice when it prospers; however it fares with them, in respect of their worldly circumstances. He will recompense those, who from love to him feed his servants, with a place in his holy city, the new Jerusalem; he will feast them upon the provisions of his house; and will bless their children after them. Alas, that it must be added, that whilst the king himself is so plenteous in mercy, many of his professed subjects are envious of, and contentious with each other, upon the most unimportant concerns: which prevents much good, does immense mischief, and occasions lamentable scandals. May he at length teach all, who are called by his name, to follow the example of his humility, and meekness; and to rejoice in seeing the common cause promoted, let who will engross the credit of being the instrument: and may they all endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!

NOTES.

CHAP. XX.] V. 1, 2.] The disputants vied with each other in loyal affection for their prince, but were really actuated by ambition of pre-eminence: one party confiding in nearness of relation to David, the other in their numbers. But at length the men of Israel, who had boasted that they had *ten parts* in David, were so irritated, that they would have *no part* in him, but preferred a man of Belial before him. Thus are men hurried by their passions from one extreme to another.

V. 3.] The confinement and retired maintenance of these women was the only measure, that could be adopted, in justice, or prudence: unless they had been found deserving of severer punishment. The less they were seen or heard of, after what had past, the better; and perhaps their seclusion might be of real benefit to their souls.

V. 5.] *He tarried*, &c.] Amasa's appointment to be commander of the army in the place of Joab, must needs be very unpopular with all those, who had fought, and conquered under that commander: and as Amasa had not been successful for Absalom, perhaps his own party did not greatly favour him. This might occasion the unexpected delay in raising an army: but the men of Judah were more eager to dispute about their king, than to engage in battle for him.

V. 6. *Thy lord's*, &c.] That is, Joab's soldiers; David would not employ Joab on this occasion, because he intended to remove him from his service.

V. 8—10. *Amasa went*, &c.] Amasa arriving with the troops, which he had collected, took upon him the command of the army: and Joab seemed very chearfully to submit; and followed the army as a private person; professing zeal for the cause of David, whilst he was medi-

girdle *with* a ſword faſtened upon his loins in the ſheath thereof: and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab ſaid to Amaſa, *Art* thou in health my brother? and Joab took Amaſa by the beard with the right hand to kiſs him.

10 But Amaſa took no heed to the ſword that was in Joab's hand: ſo he ſmote him therewith in the fifth *rib*, and ſhed out his bowels to the ground, and ſtruck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abiſhai his brother purſued after Sheba the ſon of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men ſtood by him, and ſaid, He that favoureth Joab, and he that *is* for David, *let him go* after Joab.

12 And Amaſa wallowed in blood in the midſt of the highway. And when the man ſaw that all the people ſtood ſtill he removed Amaſa out of the highway into the field, and caſt a cloth upon him, when he ſaw that every one that came by him ſtood ſtill.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to purſue after Sheba the ſon of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Iſrael unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went alſo after him.

15 And they came and beſieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah, and they caſt up a bank againſt the city, and it ſtood in the trench: and all the people that *were* with Joab battered the wall to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wiſe woman out of the city, Hear, hear; ſay, I pray you unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may ſpeak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman ſaid, *Art* thou Joab? and he anſwered, I *am he*. Then ſhe ſaid unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he anſwered, I do hear.

18 Then ſhe ſpake, ſaying, They were wont to ſpeak in old time, ſaying, They ſhall ſurely aſk *counſel* at Abel: and ſo they ended *the matter*.

19 I *am one of them that are* peaceable *and* faithful in Iſrael: thou ſeekeſt to deſtroy a city and a mother in Iſrael: why wilt thou ſwallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

20 And Joab anſwered and ſaid, Far be it,

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tating revenge, and murder. And he had ſo contrived, that his ſword fell from its ſcabbard, as if by chance, when he approached Amaſa, that without ſuſpicion he might have it drawn in his hand, when he ſaluted him: and thus pretending brotherly love, (for he was a near relation,) and in the very expreſſion of endeared friendſhip, he baſely murdered him, at one blow. Amaſa could not but know Joab's daring, and revengeful character, and the vexation, that he would feel, at being ſuperſeded by the commander of that rebellion, which he had cruſhed; and yet he did not ſuſpect, or attempt to avoid the fatal blow! But it was the Lord's righteous will, that he ſhould thus ſuffer the puniſhment due to his former treaſon. Joab confiding in the favour of the army, by this conduct, ſet both the king and public juſtice at defiance, and declared his reſolution to keep his place in contempt of all oppoſition. Having given Amaſa a mortal wound, he left him in the agonies of death, reſumed the command of the troops, and marched againſt the common enemy without concern, or delay.

V. 11—13. By the artifice of repreſenting the cauſe of Joab, as united with that of David, the people in general were left in ſuſpenſe, whether he acted by, or againſt the king's orders: and when Amaſa was removed, and covered, they followed their old commander without further heſitation.

V. 16—19.] The Iſraelites after they had had time for recollection, generally deſerted the cauſe of Sheba, having little inclination for another civil war: ſo that he was without bloodſhed, driven to take ſhelter in a fortified city in the tribe of Naphthali: againſt which Joab laid ſiege, ſuppoſing that the citizens were firmly attached to Sheba: and they prepared for reſiſtance, ſuppoſing he meant their deſtruction. But the effects of this miſunderſtanding were prevented, by the interpoſition of a prudent woman, who firſt expoſtulated with Joab, and then went to the citizens, and perſuaded them to the proper method of effecting an accommodation. Perhaps Abel of Beth-maachah had long been noted, as the reſidence of wiſe men, who had ſettled differences by prudent and equitable accommodation; ſo that it was become proverbial, "that "the way to terminate matters in litigation, was to aſk "counſel at Abel:" and therefore that city ought not raſhly to be deſtroyed. Or perhaps this wiſe woman referred to the law of God, which required that peace ſhould be proclaimed even to foreign cities, before ſiege was laid to them: which if Joab had obſerved, they would have ended the matter, by ſatisfying his demands. However ſhe pleaded that Abel had always been peaceable, and faithful, and a mother in Iſrael, a protector, and ſupport of the contiguous villages; and that in deſtroying it, he would do a public injury to the nation, by "ſwallowing up the "inheritance of the Lord."

V. 20—22. *Far be it*, &c.] Joab, though guilty of private revenge, was attentive to the public intereſt, and was very willing to ſettle the diſpute: if they would deliver far

far be it from me, that I ſhould ſwallow up or deſtroy.

21 The matter *is* not ſo: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the ſon of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand againſt the king, *even* againſt David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman ſaid unto Joab, Behold, his head ſhall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wiſdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the ſon of Bichri, and caſt *it* out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jeruſalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab *was* over all the hoſt of Iſrael: and Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites:

24 And Adoram *was* over the tribute: and Jehoſhaphat the ſon of Ahilud *was* recorder:

25 And Sheva *was* ſcribe: and Zadok and Abiathar *were* the prieſts:

26 And Ira alſo the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

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up the traitor, he would not injure them: and thus his head purchaſed the ſafety of the city, and terminated the rebellion. And Joab without fear, or ſhame, as if he gloried in revenging himſelf, as well as in ſerving the public, returned to David, as though nothing had happened. When he murdered Abner, he might have been dealt with, but he was now grown too powerful to be diſplaced.

V. 24. *Adoram was*, &c.] After a ſeaſon the voluntary contributions of the people had been converted into a regular ſubſidy; and the tribute from the conquered kingdoms rendered this new office neceſſary. (Ch. viii. v. 16—18.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

We muſt expect one trial after another for our ſalutary chaſtiſement, till we reach the place where ſin and ſorrow are for ever excluded. Angry diſputants commonly miſunderſtand, or miſconſtrue one another's words: and proud men will either manage every thing their own way, or they will have nothing to do with any thing. When we are greatly enraged, we are apt to avenge ourſelves upon the innocent, and thoſe, whom we profeſs to love, inſtead of thoſe, who have affronted us. The favour of the many is no more to be depended on, than that of the great: and what indeed have others a right to expect, when "Hoſanna to the Son of David" was ſo ſoon changed into "Crucify him, crucify him?" However all appearance of partiality betwixt thoſe, who are equally related to us, or have an equal claim upon us, ought to be avoided: for it often excites diſcord in families, churches, and kingdoms. Many a vehement quarrel would ſpend it's fury in angry words, and then die away; if ſome man of Belial were not preſent, to ſound the trumpet of public and laſting contention. Satan, if permitted, will be ſure to excite ſuch ringleaders of diſſention: and God, in wiſe and holy ſovereignty, is pleaſed often to permit them, that he may execute vengeance, or inflict correction, according to his righteous purpoſes: hence nations are viſited with war and bloodſhed, and the church with peſtilent diviſions, and *virulent controverſies*. When immoderate and inexpedient proviſion is made for ſenſual gratification, it will ſurely iſſue in grief and ſhame: and obſcure retirement beſt ſuits thoſe, who are become infamous by ſin. The moſt powerful men cannot effect all they wiſh, or all, that they ſee to be right; nay they cannot attempt it without danger: for at laſt they can only do, what *the many* can be prevailed with to concur in. Conſequences ſhould be well weighed before important meaſures are adopted; for reſentment, and diſguſt are dangerous counſellors. Our inbred luſts, like able wicked men, are hardly dealt with, when they have acquired an habit of domineering: the beginning of evil is therefore in every thing to be deciſively reſiſted. By degrees men grow more, and more bold, and unfeeling in the commiſſion of crimes, until they vindicate, and glory in their villanies: and when ſuch daring offenders are actuated by ambition, or revenge, they will not be reſtrained by the ties of relation, or friendſhip; nay, they will employ the guiſe, and the language of love, to obtain the opportunity of perpetrating the moſt horrid crimes: but the more of contrivance, or of diſſimulation there is connected with malice, the deeper is its malignity. The murderer may conceal, or proſper in his ways for a ſeaſon, and may elude or outbrave the juſtice of man: but let him not expect to eſcape the vengeance of God. Vain are earthly diſtinctions and preferments, which excite ſo much greater envy, and enmity, without affording any additional ſecurity to man's uncertain life: may we be ambitious of that honour, which cometh from God only! Great abilities, ſtrong attachment to the intereſts of the public, and eminent ſervices performed with firmneſs, prudence, and clemency, conſtitute a great, but not always a good man: ſuch a perſon, being the ſlave of one imperious luſt, may violate every moral obligation, in order to it's indulgence; though ſuch treachery, cruelty and injuſtice "be far from "him," in other parts of his conduct. Wiſdom is not reſtricted to rank, or ſex; and it conſiſts not in extenſive knowledge, or ingenious ſpeculations; but in underſtanding how to act, as circumſtances ariſe, in order that calamities may be averted, and benefits may be ſecured, perſonal, relative, and public. Contending parties would often be reconciled, if they properly underſtood one another; hence the benefit of a prudent, and impartial mediation: and the juſt puniſhment of one atrocious criminal is often mercy to great numbers. Thus the ſinner perſiſts in his rebellion, till, through the Saviour's mediation, he perceives that his offended Lord ſeeks not his deſtruction, but that of his ſins: then he becomes willing that they

CHAP. XXI.

Contains, 1ſt. A three years famine in the land, occaſioned by Saul's cruelty to the Gibeonites, and removed by the execution of ſeven of his deſcendants, v. 1—9. *2d. Rizpah's attention to their dead bodies, and David's interment of them, with the bones of Saul, &c, v.* 10—14. *3d. The ſlaughter of ſome Philiſtine giants by David, and his ſervants, v.* 15—22.

THEN there was a famine in the days of David, three years, year after year; and David enquired of the LORD. And the LORD anſwered, *it is* for Saul, and for *his* bloody houſe, becauſe he ſlew the Gibeonites.

2 And the king called the Gibeonites, and ſaid unto them; (now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Iſrael, but of the remnant of the Amorites; and the children of Iſrael had ſworn unto them: and Saul ſought to ſlay them, in his zeal to the children of Iſrael and Judah.)

3 Wherefore David ſaid unto the Gibeonites, What ſhall I do for you? and where-

with ſhall I make the atonement, that ye may bleſs the inheritance of the LORD?

4 And the Gibeonites ſaid unto him, We will have no ſilver nor gold of Saul, nor of his houſe; neither for us ſhalt thou kill any man in Iſrael. And he ſaid, What ye ſhall ſay, *that* will I do for you.

5 And they anſwered the king, The man that conſumed us, and that deviſed againſt us, *that* we ſhould be deſtroyed from remaining in any of the coaſts of Iſrael,

6 Let ſeven men of his ſons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the LORD in Gibeah of Saul, *whom* the LORD did chooſe. And the king ſaid, I will give *them.*

7 But the king ſpared Mephiboſheth, the ſon of Jonathan, the ſon of Saul, becauſe of the LORD's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the ſon of Saul.

8 But the king took the two ſons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom ſhe bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephiboſheth; and

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ſhould be crucified, eſpecially, the ſtrongeſt and moſt domineering of them; and receiving pardon, and grace from God, he becomes peaceable, faithful, and uſeful in Iſrael.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI.] V. 1—2. *There was*, &c.] This famine ſeems not to have been very grievous, and the ſcarcity of the firſt, and ſecond year was not greatly regarded: but when it continued the third year alſo, David underſtood that it was a national judgment for ſome particular iniquity, and enquired of God wherefore he thus contended with them. We do not read in the hiſtory of Saul concerning the tranſaction, which was declared to be the cauſe of this calamity: but it ſeems that Saul, in order to increaſe the poſſeſſions of the people, attempted to extirpate the Gibeonites, as being of the ancient inhabitants of Canaan; though they had ſubmitted to, and quietly ſerved the Iſraelites, and were protected by the public faith, and a ſolemn oath ratifying a covenant of peace with them on thoſe terms; (*Joſ.* c. ix.) Yet he did not attempt to extirpate the Amalekites, Philiſtines, and other hoſtile nations, whom God commanded him to deſtroy. But theſe were able and determined to reſiſt, and could not be ſubdued without apparent danger, and difficulty; and the inoffenſive Gibeonites might be oppreſſed with eaſe, and *apparent* ſafety: and perhaps he diſliked them the more, for being peculiarly devoted to the ſervice of the prieſts, and the ſanctuary. (1 *Sam.* c. xxii. v. 17—19.) It ſeems that Saul's relations were diſpoſed to cruelty, as well as he; and concurred in this bloodſhed; and many Iſraelites had willingly aſſiſted in the perſecution. The violation of the oath of God, and the treachery to and murder of the Gibeonites, formed therefore an enormous load of national guilt, which had never been expiated by the puniſhment of the guilty: and it pleaſed God in this manner, and ſo long after, to proceed againſt the nation for it; to ſhew them his abhorrence of ſuch crimes; to teach their rulers to keep at a diſtance from ſimilar offences themſelves, and to puniſh them in others; and to intimate that the chief puniſhment of ſin is after the death of the offender. And he informed David of the cauſe of the viſitation; that he might take proper meaſures for expiating the national guilt.

V. 3—6.] As the Lord accepted of the expiation here required, we may ſuppoſe, that both the enquiry of David, and the anſwer of the Gibeonites, were directed by ſome open, or ſecret intimation from him. They demanded not their own liberty, or any acceſſion of wealth, or the death of any other Iſraelite: but that in the character of the avengers of the blood of their brethren, they might be permitted to put to death ſeven of Saul's deſcendants; whom they would "hang up unto the Lord," as a ſacrifice to his juſtice, and an example to others not to injure or oppreſs them. They were willing to undertake the trouble, and to bear the odium of the execution: and would do it in Saul's own city, as a warning to thoſe, who had witneſſed, or aſſiſted in the oppreſſion.

V. 7—8. *Michal*, &c.] Theſe ſeem to have been the ſons of Merab, whom Michal adopted, and brought up as her own, (1 *Sam.* c. xviii. v. 19.) David conſented to this meaſure in obedience to God, and for the public welfare, and not out of private reſentment; and therefore did not violate his oath to Saul: but as he could ſpare one at leaſt of Saul's deſcendants, his covenant, and oath of *ſacred friendſhip* with Jonathan, required the preſervation of his ſon, in preference to all the reſt.

the five ſons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom ſhe brought up for Adriel the ſon of Barzillai the Meholathite:

9 And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them in the hill before the LORD: and they fell *all* ſeven together, and were put to death in the days of harveſt, in the firſt *days*, in the beginning of barley harveſt.

10 And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took ſackcloth, and ſpread it for her upon the rock, from the beginning of harveſt until water dropped upon them out of heaven, and ſuffered neither the birds of the air to reſt on them by day, nor the beaſts of the field by night.

11 And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done.

12 And David went and took the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his ſon from the men of Jabeſh-gilead, which had ſtolen them from the ſtreet of Beth-ſhan, where the Philiſtines had hanged them, when the Philiſtines had ſlain Saul in Gilboa:

13 And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his ſon; and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged.

14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his ſon buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the ſepulchre of Kiſh his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was entreated for the land.

15 Moreover the Philiſtines had yet war again with Iſrael; and David went down, and his ſervants with him, and fought againſt the Philiſtines: and David waxed faint.

16 And Iſhbi-benob, which *was* of the ſons of the giant, (the weight of whoſe ſpear *weighed* three hundred *ſhekels* of braſs in weight,) he being girded with a new *ſword*, thought to have ſlain David.

17 But Abiſhai the ſon of Zeruiah ſuccoured him, and ſmote the Philiſtine, and killed him. Then the men of David ſware unto him, ſaying, Thou ſhalt go no more out with us to battle, that thou quench not the light of Iſrael.

18 And it came to paſs after this, that there was again a battle with the Philiſtines at Gob: then Sibbechai the Huſhathite ſlew Saph, which *was* of the ſons of the giant.

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philiſtines, where Elhanan the ſon of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, ſlew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the ſtaff of whoſe ſpear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 And there was yet a battle in Gath, where was a man of *great* ſtature, that had

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V. 9. *They hanged*, &c.] As they were hung up for an anathema, an accurſed thing, a national atonement to divine juſtice, they were to hang until ſome tokens of the Lord's reconciliation were afforded: and they were not within the meaning of the law againſt the bodies of malefactors, being left ſuſpended upon a tree all night: (*Deut.* c. xxi. v. 22, 23:) for that ſtatute meant, that they, who were put to death for breaking human laws, were not to be treated as "accurſed of God." And moreover the Lord may command that, in a particular caſe, which he prohibits in general: provided it be not intrinſically unjuſt. He might order the children to be put to death, for the parents crimes, though magiſtrates in general were forbidden to do it: becauſe all have deſerved worſe than temporal death at his hands, and there is an eternal ſtate of recompence for the manifeſtation of his juſtice. In like manner he might require, or allow of this treatment of theſe dead bodies, though in ſome reſpects contrary to the general rule.

V. 12—14. *And David went*, &c.] Though Rizpah improperly fed, and indulged her grief by this uſeleſs attention to the dead bodies; yet her caſe was truly pitiable: and David doubtleſs ſympathized with the bereaved and aged parent; and gladly embraced the opportunity, as ſoon as it was proper, of relieving her from her melancholy charge, by decently interring them, together with the bones of Saul and his other ſons: by this he avowed that he had not acted out of diſreſpect to Saul, or his family. The firſt rain, (ver. 10.) was a token of reconciliation; but after the expiation was finiſhed, the ſcarcity was removed in anſwer to prayer; and doubtleſs the Gibeonites joined, in ſeeking "this bleſſing for the inheritance of the "Lord," (v. 3.)

V. 15—23.] All theſe events ſeem to have occurred in the order here related, and towards the latter end of David's reign. The Philiſtines, though frequently vanquiſhed, were not totally ſubjugated: and the remains of the Anakims, of enormous ſize, and ſtrength, gave David, and his ſervants, not only an opportunity of ſignalizing their courage, but repeated proofs of the Lord's truth, and goodneſs. However David having been once in imminent danger, his life was deemed too valuable to Iſrael

on every hand ſix fingers, and on every foot ſix toes, four-and-twenty in number; and he alſo was born to the giant.

21 And when he defied Iſrael, Jonathan the ſon of Shimeah the brother of David ſlew him.

22 Theſe four were born to the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his ſervants.

CHAP. XXII.

Is nearly the ſame with the Eighteenth Pſalm; and contains, 1ſt. The introduction, v. 1. 2d. David's profeſſions of faith, and joy in God, v. 2, 3. 3d. His acknowledgment of the Lord's wonderful interpoſitions in his favour, v. 4—20. 4th. His avowal of his own integrity; and his declaration of the Lord's method of dealing with him, and with others, 21—28. 5th. Further celebrations of the praiſes of God for former mercies, and believing expectations of ſtill, greater and more complete deliverances, &c. v. 29—51.

AND David ſpake unto the LORD the words of this ſong, in the day *that* the LORD had delivered him out of the hand

to be any more expoſed, now that his ſtrength and activity began to fail him. For, as king, prophet, and pſalmiſt, he was the "light of Iſrael," and a type of the light of the world.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Every affliction ariſes from ſin, and ſhould excite us to repentance and humiliation before God: but ſome troubles loudly proclaim that they were ſent to bring ſin to remembrance. In this caſe, we prolong our ſufferings, by neglecting ſelf-examination and prayer to the Lord, to ſhew us wherein we have offended him, if the cauſe be not plain to our own conſciences: and however reluctant we may be, we muſt come to this work before we can expect relief in mercy. Whilſt the grand outlines of the Lord's government are evidently righteous, ſome of his judgments are too deep for us: but faith believes thoſe divine appointments to be juſt, which aſſume a different appearance, and waits a brighter day for the diſplay of the glory of God in them. By the puniſhment of children for the ſins of their parents, and of ſubjects for thoſe of their princes, even after their death, he marks his abhorrence of deſtructive crimes, gives enormous wickedneſs a check, and teaches us to pray for our rulers, and to refuſe to be inſtruments of their vices, and to deny our paſſions out of love to our offſpring: and he will take care that no individual ſhall in the event have cauſe to complain of injuſtice. That our guilty land ſhould experience ſucceſſive years of plenty, calls for our admiring gratitude: and we need not wonder, if our miſuſed abundance ſhould be puniſhed with as great a ſcarcity: yet how few are diſpoſed to enquire of the Lord in ſuch caſes concerning the ſinful cauſe; whilſt the ingenuity of numbers is employed in diſcovering the ſecond cauſes, by which he is pleaſed to work! The Lord will plead the cauſe of thoſe, who cannot or will not avenge themſelves: and the prayers of the poor, either for or againſt us, are of vaſt efficacy. The blood of nobles is an atonement ſcanty enough to expiate the guilt of the murder of the meaneſt perſon, that the wrath of God may be averted from the land: and violated oaths, and covenants will be ſeverely puniſhed, either in this world or the next, let the criminal be ever ſo highly exalted amongſt his fellow creatures. Our zeal, either for the public good, or the ſuppoſed cauſe of religion, is naturally exerciſed in a perverſe manner, and as if in contempt of God's commandments: but an apparently eaſy and ſafe exertion, which conſiſts with our ſelf-indulgence, and flatters our pride and luſts, is the temptation that prevails againſt us: unleſs the grace of God teach us a better way. Little do we know what may befal our children, or what anguiſh they may occaſion us: but if we educate them in the fear of God, and commit them to his keeping, he will either exempt us from heavy trials about them, or ſupport us under them. In every caſe reſignation to the will of God is our duty and intereſt; and whatever cheriſhes inordinate grief, is ſinful and tormenting, however ſpecious it's aſpect may be. All perſonal reſpects muſt yield to the commandment of God: yet in ſubordination to it a tribute of gratitude is due to the memory of our friends, and of reſpect to our civil governors. Whilſt we are able, we ought to venture and labour for the public welfare: but we cannot exceed our appointed meaſure of ſervice; and when bodily vigour fails, ſome are ſo uſeful by their counſels, prayers, and examples, that their lives ſhould be taken care of, as a public bleſſing. Strength, and courage often increaſe men's pride; but more frequently haſten, than retard the ſtroke of death; whoſe unexpected approach, miſerably cauſes all their vain thoughts to periſh. The valour, and affection of friends ſhould be acknowledged, and the ſtrongeſt need the aſſiſtance of the more feeble: but the glory in every thing belongs to God. Through the atonement of Jeſus, who performed all that was commanded, and through his interceſſion, the Lord is willingly entreated for ſinners: and the believer, having peace with God, need not fear the ſtouteſt foe, who defies his Iſrael; for though ſometimes he be in apparent danger, he will at length be more than conqueror.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. V 1. *In the day*, &c.] This ſong of praiſe was probably compoſed early in the reign of David, and ſoon after he was finally delivered from the perſecuting rage of Saul. And perhaps we have it in this place, as it was found amongſt thoſe compoſitions, which he uſed in his private devotions: and in the book of Pſalms, it ſtands as it was corrected and delivered to the chief finger, to be ſung in the public ſervice of the ſanctuary; from time to time, upon occaſion of recent deliverances, as well as in remembrance of former mercies. The variations are immaterial, and but few of them need be noted in the expoſition of it. That, which is the firſt verſe of this chapter, forms the title of the eighteenth pſalm, with ſome alteration; the moſt re-

of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul.

2 And he ſaid, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortreſs, and my deliverer;

3 The God of my rock, in him will I truſt: *he is* my ſhield, and the horn of my ſalvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour; thou ſaveſt me from violence.

4 I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praiſed: ſo ſhall I be ſaved from mine enemies.

5 When the waves of death compaſſed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid;

6 The ſorrows of hell compaſſed me about; the ſnares of death prevented me;

7 In my diſtreſs I called upon the LORD, and cried to my God: and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry *did enter* into his ears.

8 Then the earth ſhook and trembled; the foundations of heaven moved and ſhook, becauſe he was wroth.

9 There went up a ſmoke out of his noſtrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it.

10 He bowed the heavens alſo, and came down; and darkneſs *was* under his feet.

11 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: and he was ſeen upon the wings of the wind.

12 And he made darkneſs pavilions round about him, dark waters, *and* thick clouds of the ſkies.

13 Through the brightneſs before him were coals of fire kindled.

14 The LORD thundered from heaven, and the moſt High uttered his voice.

15 And he ſent out arrows, and ſcattered them; lightning, and diſcomfited them.

16 And the channels of the ſea appeared, the foundations of the world were diſcovered,

markable of which is, the inſertion of the words, "Th "ſervant of the Lord," in which the pſalmiſt deemed himſelf more honoured, than in being a renowned conqueror, and a very proſperous king. He had had many enemies, both amongſt his own people; and the ſurrounding nations; but Saul eſpecially is mentioned, being the moſt formidable, malicious, and unwearied of them. In the whole of this ſacred hymn, David ſeems principally to celebrate providential deliverances: yet he uſed language, which may well be accommodated to ſpiritual bleſſings. He appears alſo primarily to ſpeak of the Lord's dealings with himſelf; yet he was led by the prophetic ſpirit to ſpeak thoſe things, which may, with great propriety, be applied to the Redeemer; of whom he was an evident and remarkable type.

V. 2, 3. *The Lord is*, &c.] The eighteenth pſalm abruptly begins, "I will love thee, O Lord my ſtrength:" which words ſeem to have been added, when it was made public, as an expreſſion of David's exulting gratitude, in order to kindle the devotions of the people. The accumulation of metaphors, that is here uſed, as deſcriptive of David's expectations from God, which had been fully anſwered, denotes, that thoſe energetic figures of ſpeech, which commonly exceed the bounds of ſober truth, are all too feeble to expreſs what God is to, and doeth for his believing people. He is a rock, on which ſecurely to build their confidence; a refuge, in which to ſhelter themſelves from every foe, and in every trouble: a fortreſs, and a ſtrong tower, which are formed by human art and labour, to ſupply the want of, or give greater ſecurity to the natural fortifications of rocks and mountains: a ſhield to ward off every hoſtile aſſault; a horn wherewith to puſh, and proſtrate every aſſailant: for the Lord is a Deliverer, and a Saviour, and Salvation itſelf, from every evil and danger, to which the true believer is expoſed, who cannot but be ſafe and comfortable, when exerciſing faith in, and dependance on him. Several expreſſions, as "The God "of my rock," and "the horn of my ſalvation," ſeem to refer to the perſon of the Redeemer, God manifeſted in the fleſh, become the ſalvation of his people, and *in human nature* diſplaying divine power and authority in the redemption of ſinners, and the deſtruction of their enemies.

V. 5, 6.] Theſe verſes contain a figurative and poetical deſcription of the violence of David's enemies, and the imminent danger, to which he was expoſed. The fear and "ſorrows" of death ſeemed ready to ſwallow him up, as the waves of the ſea overwhelm thoſe, who are caſt into them: Multitudes of wicked men preſſed upon him with incumbent force, like the riſing floods, from which there appears no deliverance: nay, the temptations of ſatan, and the conſciouſneſs of his ſins, filled him with fears of wrath, and dreadful apprehenſions of future conſequences: and he felt like a malefactor bound for execution, whoſe fetters prevent him from attempting an eſcape, for whoſe body the grave hath certainly opened her mouth, and who is horribly alarmed, leſt the pit of hell ſhould ſwallow up his ſoul. In ſhort, he was like the helpleſs bird caught in the fowler's ſnare, and doomed to inevitable death. All this ſeems to be implied in the expreſſions here employed, ſome of which may hereafter be more particularly conſidered.

V. 7—16. *In my diſtreſs*, &c.] When every other hope failed him, the Pſalmiſt ſimply and earneſtly ſought help from God, whoſe manifeſted preſence, in the ſanctuary above the mercy-ſeat, repreſented his tabernacling in human nature as God our Saviour, as well as his exalted diſplay of his glorious preſence in his holy temple in heaven. Thither his prayers aſcended, and thence were they anſwered in a moſt effectual manner. As we are not informed, that the Lord delivered David by ſuch *external* diſplays as are here mentioned; it is ſuppoſed that he

at

at the rebuking of the LORD, at the blaſt of the breath of his noſtrils.

17 He ſent from above, he took me; he drew me out of many waters;

18 He delivered me from my ſtrong enemy, *and* from them that hated me: for they were too ſtrong for me.

19 They prevented me in the day of my calamity; but the LORD was my ſtay.

20 He brought me forth alſo into a large place: he delivered me, becauſe he delighted in me.

21 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteouſneſs: according to the cleanneſs of my hands hath he recompenſed me.

22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

23 For all his judgments *were* before me: and *as for* his ſtatutes, I did not depart from them.

24 I was alſo upright before him, and have kept myſelf from mine iniquity.

25 Therefore the LORD hath recompenſed me according to my righteouſneſs; according to my cleanneſs in his eye ſight.

26 With the merciful thou wilt ſhew thyſelf merciful, *and* with the upright man thou wilt ſhew thyſelf upright.

27 With the pure thou wilt ſhew thyſelf pure; and with the froward thou wilt ſhew thyſelf unſavoury.

28 And the afflicted people thou wilt ſave: but thine eyes *are* upon the haughty, *that* thou mayeſt bring *them* down.

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adorned his ſacred poem with ſublime images, taken from the hiſtory of Iſrael in Egypt, at the Red ſea, at Mount Sinai, in the wilderneſs, and in the conqueſt of Canaan: and thereby intimated, that his deliverances were as honourable to God, as thoſe of old vouchſafed to his people, though effected in a different manner. The earthquake, the ſhaking as it were of the foundations of the heavens, the ſmoke, the fire, and the darkneſs, into which the Lord came down, and in which he majeſtically dwelt, with ſeveral other expreſſions, lead our thoughts to Mount Sinai. His riding upon a cherub, &c, denote the miniſtration of angels, that he employed, and the ſpeed with which he effected the deliverance of his ſervant: the coals of fire being kindled at his preſence, may indicate that the wrath of God arms all creatures againſt his enemies; or that it will conſume them, as fuel is conſumed by the fire; other circumſtances recal to our remembrance the dividing of the Red ſea, and of the river Jordan; the deſtruction of the Canaanites, when the hailſtones deſtroyed more than the ſword of Iſrael; and that of the Philiſtines, when the Lord thundered upon, and diſcomfited them, &c. And the whole declared that the indignation of the Lord againſt the enemies of his ſervant equalled his diſpleaſure againſt thoſe adverſaries of his people; and that their conſternation and deſtruction were no leſs, than theirs had been.

V. 17, 18.] David's deliverance from his ſtrongeſt enemy, when he was ready to devour him, by the providential interpoſition of God, was like ſending from heaven on purpoſe to take him out of great waters, into which he muſt otherwiſe have ſunk and periſhed: for his enemies were too ſtrong for him, and therefore his deliverance was evidently the work of God.

V. 19. *They prevented*, &c.] When David had framed any plan for ſecreting, or ſecuring himſelf in the day of his calamity, his enemies employed every method of treachery and malice to prevent his ſucceſs: thus the men of Keilah were ready to deliver him to Saul, and the Ziphites repeatedly informed of him: and therefore, notwithſtanding his own prudence and activity, he muſt have been cut off, if the Lord himſelf had not in a very remarkable manner protected him.

V. 20. *A large place*, &c.] He had been ſtraitened in dens and caves, as in a priſon, and was afraid to walk abroad in the open air: but now, through the Lord's goodneſs, he might walk at liberty, whitherſoever he would: or this may refer to the extent of his dominions, and the greatneſs of his proſperity, compared with his former difficulties. All this the Lord had done for him, "becauſe he "delighted in him" as the object of his ſpecial love, and a partaker of his ſanctifying grace; and in the general tenor of his conduct, a man "after his own heart."

V. 21—28.] In the ſeveral events of David's life, his character had been grievouſly aſperſed, and many heinous things laid to his charge: but his conduct had been upright and conſcientious in an uncommon degree. In all his perſecutions by Saul, he would not injure him or his party; and he embraced every occaſion to ſerve the cauſe of Iſrael, though rewarded by envy, treachery, and ingratitude: and in the other calamities, which he endured, he was hated without a cauſe, and was always ready to overcome evil with good. He perſevered under every diſcouragement to adhere to the worſhip of God, and out of the fear and love of his name, to act with equity, candour, and kindneſs to man: not renouncing his religion, or allowing himſelf in ſin; but making the commandments of God his rule, and the glory of God his aim, in the habitual courſe of his conduct, in an unreſerved and upright manner. This the heart-ſearching God could witneſs; and this his conſcience teſtified: and every providential deliverance was both a gracious recompence of, and a divine atteſtation to his innocence, from thoſe crimes of which his enemies accuſed him; and that his cauſe was more righteous than theirs. He mentioned particularly, "That he had kept "himſelf from his own iniquity;" from that ſin, or thoſe ſins, to which he was moſt ſtrongly and conſtantly tempted: and his care and watchfulneſs in this reſpect was a good evidence of his ſincerity. He had indeed committed many ſins, and ſome of them very grievous, and he was con-

29 For

29 For thou *art* my lamp, O LORD: and the LORD will lighten my darkneſs.

30 For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall.

31 *As for* God, his way *is* perfect; the word of the LORD *is* tried: he *is* a buckler to all them that truſt in him.

32 For who *is* God, ſave the LORD? and who *is* a rock, ſave our God?

33 God *is* my ſtrength *and* power: and he maketh my way perfect.

34 He maketh my feet like hinds *feet*; and ſetteth me upon my high places.

35 He teacheth my hands to war; ſo that a bow of ſteel is broken by mine arms.

36 Thou haſt alſo given me the ſhield of thy ſalvation: and thy gentleneſs hath made me great.

37 Thou haſt enlarged my ſteps under me; ſo that my feet did not ſlip.

38 I have purſued mine enemies, and deſtroyed them; and turned not again until I had conſumed them.

39 And I have conſumed them, and wounded them, that they could not ariſe: yea, they are fallen under my feet.

40 For thou haſt girded me with ſtrength to battle: them that roſe up againſt me haſt thou ſubdued under me.

41 Thou haſt alſo given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might deſtroy them that hate me.

42 They looked, but *there was* none to ſave; *even* unto the LORD, but he anſwered them not.

43 Then did I beat them as ſmall as the

ſcious of manifold imperfections, (which the review of the book of pſalms will ſufficiently demonſtrate;) but he neither denied, excuſed, or perſiſted in them: on the contrary, he had been deeply humbled for, and repented of them; and was in that reſpect alſo conſcious of his uprightneſs in the ſight of God. This profeſſion therefore hath nothing to do with the manner, in which David was juſtified in the ſight of God, nor was it intended as a vindication of every part of his conduct; or a ſelf-confident boaſt, as if he needed not forgiveneſs: but it was the ſame conſciouſneſs of general integrity that every true believer poſſeſſes, and may on ſome occaſions avow, as an evidence of God's favour, and an anſwer to unmerited reproach, conſiſtent with the deepeſt humility, and the moſt entire dependance on the mercy and grace of God, through Jeſus Chriſt. And the gracious recompence, which David ſpake of, may be generally expected by thoſe, who act conſcientiouſly in the ſight of God, from right motives; for it is the Lord's method of dealing with the profeſſors of his truth: if he ſees them humble, ſincere, teachable, watchful, loving, pure, and obedient in their diſpoſition, aim, and general conduct; he will be merciful, and kind to them, and will fulfil his gracious promiſes, and communicate his holy conſolations to them: but if he ſees them diſſembling or perverſe, "he will wreſtle with them," as it may be tranſlated: eſpecially he will ſave thoſe who are poor in ſpirit, and ſuffer perſecution for his ſake; but with his wrath he will frown upon proud oppreſſors to bring them down.

V. 29, 30.] David's way was intricate, dangerous, and gloomy; but the preſence and favour of the Lord was a lamp unto him, marking out his path, and chearing him, whilſt he walked therein. By his help alſo he had ſingly broken through whole armies of his enemies; and leaped over every wall, that ſeemed to render his eſcape or his ſucceſs impracticable.

V. 31—33.] From experience he could teſtify that the Lord's word was a ſufficient ſecurity for every needed or expected deliverance: all the methods of his providence and grace had been in perfect wiſdom, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs: none other could be in any degree depended on; for Jehovah is God alone: they who truſt in, and ſerve him, are perfectly ſafe: and whatever ſtedfaſtneſs and integrity he had before ſpoken of, as marked in his own conduct, the glory of them belonged unto God, by whoſe ſtrength he had been upheld, and preſerved from falling.

V. 34, 35. *Like hinds feet*, &c.] As theſe animals climb the craggy rocks, and ſtand firm upon the ſlippery ſummit of the precipice: ſo David had been upheld in the moſt dangerous and ſlippery paths by the Lord's providence and grace; and advanced to his preſent exalted ſtation: and his extraordinary ſkill, and ſtrength were to be aſcribed to the ſame cauſe.

V. 36.] *Thy gentleneſs*, &c.] The rebukes, corrections, and inſtructions, which the Lord intermixed with his merciful forgiveneſſes, encouragements, and deliverances, like the gentle tuition of a kind parent, tended to prepare David for, and to advance him to his eſtate of proſperity and authority.

V. 42. *Even unto the Lord*, &c.] In their extreme diſtreſs, David's enemies are repreſented as crying to the Lord for ſucceſs in their unrighteous cauſe, or deliverance from impending ruin; but not in repentance, faith, and integrity, and therefore in vain. Thus Saul enquired of the Lord, and he anſwered him not.

V. 43—46.] Theſe verſes may refer to David's victories over his rebellious countrymen, and the ſurrounding nations; and to the deſolations, that he made amongſt them: this he might conſider as the earneſt of ſtill more deciſive advantages; until the ſpirits of all his adverſaries ſhould fail, and their ſtrength decay; and the ſtrongeſt of them ſhould tremble even in their faſtneſſes and fortified cities, and ſurrender themſelves to him to be his ſervants upon the firſt ſummons. But here the Spirit of inſpiration ſeems eſpecially to have carried his mind forward to the glorious kingdom of the Redeemer, the deſtruction of all his ene-

duſt of the earth, I did ſtamp them as the mire of the ſtreet, *and* did ſpread them abroad.

44 Thou alſo haſt delivered me from the ſtrivings of my people, thou haſt kept me *to be* head of the heathen: a people *which* I knew not ſhall ſerve me.

45 Strangers ſhall ſubmit themſelves unto me: as ſoon as they hear, they ſhall be obedient unto me.

46 Strangers ſhall fade away, and they ſhall be afraid out of their cloſe places.

47 The LORD liveth; and bleſſed *be* my rock; and exalted be the God of the rock of my ſalvation.

48 It *is* God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me,

49 And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies: thou alſo haſt lifted me up on high above them that roſe up againſt me: thou haſt delivered me from the violent man.

50 Therefore I will give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and I will ſing praiſes unto thy name.

51 *He is* the tower of ſalvation for his king: and ſheweth mercy to his anointed, unto David, and to his ſeed for evermore.

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mies, and the prevalency of his cauſe on earth. And whilſt he concluded with the high praiſes of God, and exulting joy in him; he looked forward to his poſterity, and rejoiced in the proſpect of the bleſſings reſerved for them, not only as kings of Judah for many ſucceſſive generations; but alſo in Chriſt, the anointed King of the church and of the world, for evermore; yea, even for ever and ever.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

When we have received mercies from God, we ſhould, without delay, render him our tribute of praiſe and gratitude; and every recent favour ſhould be acknowledged with thankful remembrance of former deliverances: and ſignal interpoſitions of the Lord in our behalf ought to be publicly celebrated, with the beſt endowments that we poſſeſs. They, who know the Lord in his glorious perfections, and the various relations, in which he ſtands to his rational creatures; and eſpecially as a God of ſalvation; and who thereby learn to fear, truſt in, love, and ſerve him, chooſing his favour for their portion, and waiting for his mercy unto eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt, according to the covenant which he mediated, may expect from him every conceivable bleſſing. Nay, words can never expreſs, or creation afford objects ſufficient to repreſent all, that the Lord is, and will be to them, through time, and to eternity. The more they expect and aſk from him in humble faith, the more they ſhall receive, and every paſt experience ſhall encourage and dictate further ſupplications: and all this felicity is propoſed to every ſinner who deſires, and will apply for ſuch important bleſſings in the name of the exalted Redeemer. But though this ſecurity and felicity belong to all true believers; yet frequently both the events of Providence, and their inward experience ſeem to indicate the contrary. They are aſſailed by powerful enemies, and expoſed to manifold troubles and dangers from without: they are diſquieted by diſtreſſing fears, and terrors of conſcience from within: whilſt ſatan pours in his horrible ſuggeſtions to aggravate their diſtreſs, and to urge them to deſpair: thus they feel, as it were, the very pains of hell, and are ſo bound in the ſnares of death, that they are ready to give up their lives and ſouls for loſt. But in their extreme diſtreſs they will cry unto the Lord with the greater earneſtneſs, and he will ſupport them, and appear for their relief: and all their ſorrows and fears ſhall iſſue in the diſplay of the glory of God's perfections, and in the evidence of his ſpecial love to them: they ſhall all exerciſe and increaſe their grace, and prepare the way for their future comforts: and they ſhall all become the ſubject of triumphant praiſe and thankſgiving; and however painful now, they ſhall hereafter be delightful in the retroſpect. Therefore when temptations and tribulations abound, and our prayers are mingled with groans and fears, with diſmay, and anguiſh of ſpirit; let us not deſpond, but be of good courage; for we ſhall certainly bleſs God for them ere long, as many before us have done for ſimilar or ſeverer trials. Without renewing the miraculous diſplays, with which Iſrael of old was favoured, the true believer, comparing his dangers, fears, prayers, and deliverances, may be as ſenſibly aſſured, that the Lord hath wrought for him, as ever they were: and that he hath not only made his angels and other creatures the miniſters of good to him; but that his own hand hath effected the ſurpriſing change, which he hath experienced, in his condition, his character, his hopes, and his proſpects. Nor are the judgments of God leſs terrible now upon the enemies of his people, than they were, when the earth ſwallowed them up, the depths of the ſea overwhelmed them, or the fire of the Lord conſumed them: though they are leſs noticed, becauſe more ſpiritual, and chiefly executed in the eternal world. Still the whole creation fights againſt them, yea, his own almighty arm is lifted up to deſtroy *them*, as well as to deliver thoſe who truſt in him. Under reproaches, and perſecutions, the teſtimony of our conſcience to our integrity and ſincerity, in our religious profeſſion, will prove a ſingular ſupport: and it perfectly conſiſts with the deepeſt humility and the moſt ſimple dependance upon the Saviour, (2 *Cor.* c. i. v. 12:) Nor can we without it expect the witneſs of the comforting Spirit of God. We ſhould therefore exerciſe ourſelves to have a conſcience void of offence towards God and man: and, earneſtly ſeeking the ſupporting and ſanctifying grace of God, we ſhould ſteadily perſevere in his ways, notwithſtanding diſcouragements and temptations to ſeek relief by turning aſide. We muſt keep all God's ſtatutes and judgments before our eyes, (without excepting or deſpiſing one of them,) that we may regulate our conduct and converſation by them: and we muſt watch and pray, eſpecially againſt thoſe ſins which, by conſtitution, cuſtom, or circumſtances, may be called "our own ini-

CHAP.

CHAP. XXIII.

Contains 1st. David's last words, v. 1—7. 2d. The names, and exploits of his chief warriors, v. 8—39. (1 Chron. c. xi.)

NOW these *be* the last words of David: David the son of Jesse said, and the man *who was* raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Is-

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quity." When we are betrayed into sin, we must, without delay, humble ourselves before God, and seek his pardoning mercy and recovering grace: and then even our falls, or our manifold infirmities, whilst we allow ourselves in no known sin, and neglect no known duty, shall not durably break our peace, nor interrupt this testimony of our conscience: and the Lord will plead our cause, and clear up our characters in due season: for he will deal with us according as we walk before him in humility and sincerity, or the contrary; both with respect to the dispensations of his providence, and the consolations of his Spirit. In the darkest seasons the Lord will guide and comfort those, who trust in and follow him: of the millions, who have tried his word, none ever complained that he was unfaithful: but all have been so assisted, that they have at length wondered at what the Lord had enabled them to do, as well as what he had done for them. Without him all other helpers are vain; with him they are needless, except he pleases to work by them, who could as readily work without them. All our talents and abilities are from him; and all our improvement of them. Whatever services we have performed, or however consistent our walk hath been, the will and the power were from God: he is our strength, who maketh our way perfect. Our ability and success in our spiritual warfare, our liberty from sin and satan, and enlargement of heart in God's service, and our preservation in the slippery paths of this ensnaring world, are causes of thankfulness to him, and not of glorying in ourselves. His gentle rebukes and corrections tend to real advancement, as much as our comforts and prosperity. Armed with the shield of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, the Christian soldier, being strong in the Lord, will pursue his victories, till he hath trodden upon the necks of all his enemies, and received the conqueror's crown. For the Lord liveth, as the God of strength and salvation, and will never leave us nor forsake us, till he hath brought us forth from all our enemies, and lifted us up on high, and above all, that rose up against us. In the prospect of that complete salvation, let us praise and rejoice in him upon the field of battle, surrounded with our enemies, and in the midst of our conflicts: and ere long we shall adore him, and sing praises to his name in more exalted strains, and surrounded with the millions of the redeemed, and innumerable multitudes of holy angels, who will triumph in our victories, and rejoice in our felicity. But we may here likewise discern the Redeemer's sufferings, and the glory which was to follow: for our sins he was encompassed with the waves of death, the floods of ungodly men, and the very sorrows of hell, in the garden, and on the cross. In his distress he called upon the Lord, and was heard, and was raised from the dead, and exalted to the throne of glory in heaven: whilst his death was attended by the most stupendous displays of the divine abhorrence of their guilt, who crucified the Lord of glory. In him the Father delighted, his righteousness was perfect, yea, divine; he was justified from the blasphemies of his enemies by his resurrection and ascension. All power in heaven and earth are in his hands: all enemies shall be put under his feet, and he will destroy all those, that hate him. He hath been delivered from the strivings of the people, and made the Head of the heathen: he continually receives the submissions of those who hear of him, and willingly obey him: and many pretend submission, who have no love for him, out of fear of his power: but all opposition shall at length melt away before him, and all nations shall do him service. For he is the anointed King, whom the Father hath placed upon the throne of glory, and his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him: (*Dan.* c. vii. v. 27.) May we then accept of his salvation, and submit to his authority; may we now follow him, bearing our cross; that, when he shall appear for judgment, we also may receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away!

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII.] V. 1, 2. *The last words*, &c.] As many things are after this recorded concerning David, it is not agreed in what sense these were his last words. Some suppose them to have been the last words, that he spake by inspiration, and, as it were, an appendix to the Psalms, which he composed. But perhaps he repeated them in his dying moments, as the expression of his faith and hope, and the source of his consolations. The last words of eminent persons have often been much attended to, and long remembered: these words of David were peculiarly worthy of regard, for the excellency of them; and shew, that when dying, this venerable servant of God was more than ever assured of the reality, and excellency of true religion; decided in his judgment concerning, and his choice of it's blessings; and animated with humble gratitude, and joyful expectation of his approaching felicity. In the introduction he mentioned his humble birth, and unexpected exaltation with thankfulness. God had raised him to a throne, and made him very successful and prosperous: but the most valued circumstance of his advancement was, that he was the anointed of God, to rule over his own people Jacob, and to be the type of the Messiah. Nor was he less thankful for being made "the sweet Psalmist "of Israel;" for being employed, and enabled to compose hymns of praise, and sacred poems, for the use of his people, and of the church of God in all future ages; and moreover to set them to music, and provide for the public performance of this delightful part of God's worship. And no wonder that the work was well done to the glory of God, and the edification, and comfort of his people, "for "the Spirit of the Lord spake by him, and his word was "in his tongue." This he declared with his dying lips,

rael

rael spake to me, He that ruleth over men *must be* just, ruling in the fear of God.

4 And *he shall be* as the light of the morning, *when* the sun riseth, *even* a morning without clouds; *as* the tender grass *springing* out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

5 Although my house *be* not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting

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that Israel, and that we, through successive generations, might learn how to estimate that part of holy Scripture.

V. 3—5.] Some observe that there is in this passage a plain intimation of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead. "The Spirit of the Lord;" "the God of Israel," and "the Rock of Israel," or the Son of God, the gracious Redeemer, the Rock of Salvation. Not only did the Spirit of the Lord speak by the mouth of his servant David; but the Lord "spake *to him*;" and he hath here recorded his words, with his own meditations upon them. The former part may either be interpreted of David, or of Christ: shewing what he ought to be and do, and how to instruct his son Solomon, &c. and what the promised Saviour would be, and do. "He that ruleth over men" should treat them as reasonable creatures, and as his equals by nature; and therefore "must be just," oppressing, and injuring none, and by an equal administration of justice, restraining them from defrauding, or doing wrong to one another; and by his example and influence promoting general equity among the people: "ruling in "the fear of God," as his subject, and accountable to him for the authority deputed to him, and the use that he makes of it; observing his commandments, aiming at his acceptance, fearing his displeasure, and subserving the interests of true religion. Such rulers may reasonably expect, that the Lord will prosper them, and afford them blessings, and comforts, like the exhilerating light of the unclouded morning sun: whilst their salutary regulations, discountenancing every species of evil, and protecting, and advancing every good thing, would diffuse the most important advantages, temporal, and spiritual all around; as the rising sun dispels the fogs, and damps, and brightens, and chears the face of nature: or as his clear shining after refreshing showers, rapidly promotes vegetation, and renders the earth luxuriantly fruitful. Upon the consideration of these words of God to him, David turned his reflections home upon himself, and his family: and he could not but regret, that "his house was not so with God," as was therein described, and required. Not without much blame of his own neglect, and misconduct, his family had been, and was much less religious, and prosperous, than might have been expected; and both he, and Israel had suffered many things in consequence. Many grievous, and scandalous things had occurred: matters were not yet as he could wish; and he had his fears concerning his descendants, who would succeed him in the kingdom. Perhaps by prophetic monition, he foresaw, that they would not be happy themselves, blessings to Israel, nor instruments of God's glory, in that measure, that he desired. However he comforted himself, that "the Lord "had made with him an everlasting covenant." God had covenanted to David that his family should succeed him in the kingdom, (c. vii. *Psalm* lxxxix:) but this was not "all his salvation, and all his desire;" and could give him but an inferior consolation in his dying moments, except as it referred to the promised seed, who was to descend from him. By the "everlasting covenant made "with him" David doubtless principally intended the Covenant of Mercy, and Peace, which the Lord had made with him as a sinner, who believed in the promised Saviour, who had embraced the proffered blessings, who had yielded up himself to the Lord, to be his redeemed servant, and had been made partaker of his sanctifying grace, as the seal and pledge of it. This covenant was from everlasting in the purposes of God, and shall be to everlasting in the blessed effects of it. From age to age sinners are admitted to share it's benefits in the same free, and gracious manner: believers shall for ever enjoy it's blessings; and God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost shall for ever be glorified through it, in their salvation. This covenant is made with the surety, in behalf of those, for whom he engaged, and all the blessings of it were purchased with his atoning blood, and freely bestowed upon all, who believe in his name; and through him it is made with every one, who applies for it's blessings in the appointed way; and secures to him pardon, righteousness, grace, and eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ. It is "ordered in all things, and sure:" For in the person, undertaking, and mediation of the Saviour, effectual provision is made for the manifestation of the divine holiness, the satisfaction of the divine justice, the honour of the divine law, and the discovery of the evil and desert of sin. Whilst the mercy of God abounds in the forgiveness, and salvation of the chief of sinners; there is an infinite fulness of grace, and all the blessings, that a sinner can want, treasured up in Christ, for the supply of those, who seek for this salvation: a way opened to the mercy seat of God, in which they may come in humble confidence; ordinances appointed, through which these blessings are communicated, invitations to draw near, and exceeding great and precious promises to plead with God. All those things, which in one respect are commanded, in another are also promised; and whilst we pray for the performance of the promise, we are enabled to obey the command, to repent, to forsake sin, to turn to God, and to walk in newness of life. Provision is in this covenant made for the forgiveness of sin, and the recovery of those, who have walked inconsistent with it, in the most disgraceful manner: and yet no encouragement is given to commit sin, but the most effectual methods are used to deter men from it, and constrain them to all holy obedience; (1 *John* c. ii. v. 1—3.) whilst the believer perseveres in love, and humble obedience, his evidence will be bright, and his comforts strong; slackness will induce darkness, and discouragement: more direct offences will cause *fear* to possess the heart, and by inward terrors, and outward rebukes, and severe repeated corrections, the Lord will bring the back-slider home again with weeping, and supplication. In proportion as love declines, fear increases; "for God will put his fear into "his people's hearts, that they shall not depart from him;" (*Jer.* c. xxxii. v. 40.) As for that confidence of their good estate, and final salvation, which many possess upon

covenant,

covenant, ordered in all *things*, and ſure: for *this is* all my ſalvation, and all *my* deſire, although he make it not to grow.

6 But *the ſons* of Belial *ſhall be* all of them as thorns thruſt away, becauſe they cannot be taken with hands:

7 But the men *that* ſhall touch them, muſt be fenced with iron and the ſtaff of a ſpear; and they ſhall be utterly burned with fire in the *ſame* place.

8 Theſe *be* the names of the mighty men whom David had: the Tachmonite that ſat in the ſeat chief among the captains; the ſame *was* Adino the Eznite; *he lifted up his ſpear* againſt eight hundred, whom he ſlew at one time.

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evangelical principles, whilſt they take encouragement from them to continue in ſin; it is no better than a horrible deluſion of ſatan, and a deteſtable abuſe of the ſacred truths of God's word. But this covenant is "ordered in all "things, and ſure," in ſuch a manner, that no true believer can want wiſdom, grace, or ſtrength ſufficient for him, whatever his conflicts, temptations, or difficulties may be: and he ſhall either perſevere in an uniform courſe of holy obedience, or be brought to deep, and evident repentance of his miſconduct; and ſhall infallibly at length inherit eternal life. This covenant was "all David's "ſalvation;" for he was ſo well acquainted with the holy character, and law of God, and of the evil of ſin, and his own ſinfulneſs in every thing, that he knew he could not eſcape condemnation, according to the covenant of works: he perceived what was ſuitable to, and ſufficient for his caſe, in this ſalvation; and that it was framed to honour God; to humble and encourage the ſinner; to inſpire love, and gratitude; and to bring him to a holy, and happy diſpoſition of mind, and to prepare him for, and admit him to that ſtate of complete felicity, in which all the powers of the human ſoul ſhall be eternally ſatisfied. This covenant was therefore "all his deſire:" in compariſon with it, all earthly objects loſt their attractions; he was willing to renounce them, whilſt he lived, as far as required, for the ſake of the bleſſings of the covenant; his comfort, whilſt he poſſeſſed them, was derived from it, not from them; and he was willing to die and leave all elſe, that he might enjoy it's full felicity. (*Pſalm* lxxiii. v. 24—28.) This he was conſcious of: and yet he complained, that matters were not with his ſoul, any more than with his houſe, as he could wiſh, which ſeems the meaning of the words "although he make it not to grow." The grace of the covenant he had received, but it had not been made to increaſe, and flouriſh, in that meaſure, that he deſired. Still the prevalence of ſinful propenſities, and the weakneſs of his faith, hope, and love were his grief and burden: the Lord had not "made them to grow;" in which David never meant to impeach God's wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs; he had good reaſons for what he withheld, as well as for what he gave; and doubtleſs David would have allowed that his own inattention, and ſlackneſs in the uſe of appointed means were the criminal cauſe, that his grace had not more been made to grow. But the hope that it would ere long be perfected in glory animated, and encouraged him in his dying moments. However ſome interpret the paſſage of Jeſus Chriſt, almoſt excluſively, and it will in many things apply to him, the anointed king over Iſrael, and the ruler over all men, of whom David was a type. He is not only righteous, and requires righteouſneſs of his ſubjects; but he is the righteouſneſs, and ſanctification of all true believers: the promotion of the fear of God amongſt men is the grand deſign of his kingdom: his truth, and mercy, his favour, and grace, are the light, comfort, and cauſe of fruitfulneſs to all, who partake of them; and the bleſſings of his government are inexpreſſible, and ſhall be eternal. The kingdom of David's family was not ſo with God in any other period, as under this his covenanted ſeed: foreſeen by faith, he, as the ſurety of the everlaſting covenant, was all David's ſalvation, and deſire; though his coming was diſtant, and his cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs did not proſper in Iſrael, nor even in the prophet's own heart, as he moſt earneſtly deſired that they might.

V. 6, 7. *But the ſons*, &c.] They, who oppoſed David's authority, and that of his deſcendants, were worthleſs and troubleſome; and would be certainly rejected, and deſtroyed, as uſeleſs thorns are caſt into the fire. And thoſe ſons of Belial, who will not bear Chriſt's yoke, nor have him to reign over them, will be very injurious, and uneaſy to his people; but will bring upon themſelves certain deſtruction. They cannot indeed be taken with hands, or dealt with by thoſe, who are unarmed, and unprotected: But as in every government, there muſt be perſons, who poſſeſs power to apprehend, confine, and puniſh diſobedient, and rebellious people; in the ſame manner, as a man fenced with iron, and the ſtaff of a ſpear, can thruſt the thorns into the fire: ſo Chriſt is able to deſtroy out of his kingdom all his enemies, and will make them, as a "fiery oven in the day of his wrath:" for he can deal with thoſe, that to all others are utterly unmanageable. As the willing ſubjects of David proſpered, but his oppoſers were cruſhed, ſo ſhall it be with thoſe who ſubmit to, and thoſe, who reject the authority of the Redeemer.

V. 8. *Theſe are*, &c.] Under Joab the chief captain, theſe perſons were the chief officers in David's army: and as only thirty-ſix are named, Joab muſt be added to complete the thirty-ſeven mentioned in the laſt verſe. There were two triumvirates, and under them thirty ſubordinate officers, who commanded ſubdiviſions of the troops. Of ſeveral of them, and of their exploits we read nothing elſewhere: ſo that David's reign and actions were outwardly more ſplendid, than they appear in the hiſtory; which was intended for our edification, and not to gratify our curioſity. Adino the Tachmonite, called elſewhere (1 *Chron.* c. xi. v. 11;) Jaſhobeam the Hachmonite, is ſuppoſed to have had his title from his wiſdom, and he ordinarily preſided in councils of war. It is here ſaid that he ſlew 800 men, in Chronicles only 300 are mentioned: perhaps 300 were left dead on the ſpot, and the reſt died afterwards. There are ſeveral other variations in names, &c, in the parallel paſſage in Chronicles, and ſome others

9 And after him *was* Eleazar the ſon of Dodo the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philiſtines *that* were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Iſrael were gone away.

10 He aroſe, and ſmote the Philiſtines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the ſword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to ſpoil.

11 And after him *was* Shammah the ſon of Agee the Hararite. And the Philiſtines were gathered together into a troop, where was a piece of ground full of lentiles: and the people fled from the Philiſtines.

12 But he ſtood in the midſt of the ground, and defended it, and ſlew the Philiſtines: and the LORD wrought a great victory.

13 And three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harveſt time, unto the cave of Adullam: and the troop of the Philiſtines pitched in the valley of Rephaim.

14 And David *was* then in an hold, and the garriſon of the Philiſtines *was* then *in* Beth-lehem.

15 And David longed, and ſaid, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which *is* by the gate!

16 And the three mighty men brake through the hoſt of the Philiſtines, and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem, that *was* by the gate, and took *it*, and brought *it* to David: nevertheleſs he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the LORD.

17 And he ſaid, Be it far from me, O LORD, that I ſhould do this: *is not this* the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives? therefore he would not drink it. Theſe things did theſe three mighty men.

18 And Abiſhai, the brother of Joab, the ſon of Zeruiah, was chief among three. And he lifted up his ſpear againſt three hundred, *and* ſlew *them*, and had the name among three.

19 Was he not moſt honourable of three? therefore he was their captain: howbeit he attained not unto the *firſt* three.

20 And Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada, the ſon of a valiant man of Kabzeel, who had done many acts, he ſlew two lion-like men of Moab: he went down alſo and ſlew a lion in the midſt of a pit in time of ſnow:

21 And he ſlew an Egyptian, a goodly man:

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mentioned after theſe here named: but having no uſeful remarks to make on theſe variations, I ſhall take no further notice of them: and this may account for ſilence in ſeveral other places. The titles annexed ſeem to have generally been derived from the place of their birth, or abode.

V. 9, 10. *When they*, &c.] In the courage of faith, David, and theſe three officers defied the Philiſtines, when the reſt of his army had fled: and Eleazar greatly diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the victory that the Lord wrought that day, having fought, till his hand, was ſo cramped with holding his ſword, that he could not readily leave go of it.

V. 13—17. *And three of*, &c.] Or the three chief over the thirty; that is over the captains above-mentioned. Theſe came to David, when he was perſecuted by Saul, and took ſhelter in the cave of Adullam. At that time a garriſon of Philiſtines occupied the entrance of Beth-lehem, the city of David. Some think that David by wiſhing for the water of the well of Beth-lehem, meant to ſtir up his whole band to attempt the diſpoſſeſſing of the garriſon; but not that his officers ſhould attack them alone. It is more probable, that being thirſty in hot weather, he eagerly deſired, and inconſiderately wiſhed to quench his thirſt at that well, the water being remarkably good: and that theſe brave men, to expreſs their peculiar attachment to him, broke ſword in hand through the Philiſtines, and returned to him with ſome of the water. But David was, upon recollection, aſhamed of his inordinate deſire, and raſh wiſh; and being unwilling to encourage ſuch deſperate attempts, he refuſed to drink of it, but poured it out as a drink-offering unto the Lord. For as it had been procured at the hazard of the lives of theſe brave officers; he would no more drink of it, than he would drink their blood; "far be it from me," ſaid he, or "my God forbid it me." This ſhewed David's tenderneſs of his ſoldiers, and his command over his own appetite, upon recollection, and when he ſaw occaſion. The word Beth-lehem ſignifies the houſe of bread; and the place was noted for excellent water: and there Chriſt the bread, and water of life was born; and we may ſafely long for, and venture all conſequences, in breaking through hoſts of enemies, to obtain this water of life and ſalvation.

V. 18—23.] We are not told on what occaſions, theſe exploits were performed, but they were done in faith, by the Lord's extraordinary aſſiſtance, and for the public good. Aſahel ſeems to have been the third, in this ſecond triumvirate, though mentioned as one of the thirty, over whom perhaps he preſided as captain; for there are thirty names beſides his. In the cloſe of the liſt we read the name of Uriah, and grieve to recollect the return, that he met with for his faithful ſervices.

man: and the Egyptian had a ſpear in his hand; but he went down to him with a ſtaff, and plucked the ſpear out of the Egyptian's hand, and ſlew him with his own ſpear.

22 Theſe *things* did Benaiah the ſon of Jehoiada, and had the name among three mighty men.

23 He was more honourable than the thirty, but he attained not to the *firſt* three. And David ſet him over his guard.

24 Aſahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the ſon of Dodo of Beth-lehem,

25 Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite,

26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the ſon of Ikkeſh the Tekoite,

27 Abiezer the Anethothite, Mebunnai the Huſhathite,

28 Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite,

29 Heleb the ſon of Baanah, a Netophathite, Ittai the ſon of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin,

30 Benaiah the Pirathonite, Hiddai of the brooks of Gaaſh,

31 Abi-albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite,

32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite, of the ſons of Jaſhen, Jonathan,

33 Shammah the Hararite, Ahiam the ſon of Sharar the Hararite,

34 Eliphelet the ſon of Ahaſbai, the ſon of the Maachathite, Eliam the ſon of Ahithophel the Gilonite,

35 Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite,

36 Igal the ſon of Nathan of Zobah, Bani the Gadite,

37 Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite, armourbearer to Joab the ſon of Zeruiah,

38 Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite,

39 Uriah the Hittite: thirty and ſeven in all.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

It hath been obſerved by thoſe, who intimately converſe with religious people, that they are uniformly moſt ſenſible of the reality, and importance of heavenly things, when they apprehend themſelves to approach the eternal world: when their hearts are diſcouraged reſpecting their intereſt in theſe inviſible bleſſings, their aſſured belief excites the moſt earneſt, and diſtreſſing anxiety, leſt they ſhould come ſhort of them. But when their hope abounds, they can exult, and triumph, though parting with all below, oppreſſed with pain, and ſickneſs, and in the very agonies of death. And many have gone from the dying beds of godly perſons, more convinced of the truth, and excellency of the goſpel, by their laſt words, and behaviour, than by all the arguments, which have concluſively been adduced in proof thereof. When we approach this cloſing ſcene, it will be uſeful, and pleaſant to conſider what we originally were, and to enquire what the Lord hath done for us, in his providence, and by his grace. The more we have been conformed to the Saviour; the more we have lived in, and been treated by the world, as he was; the plainer it will be, that we belong to him. When our endowments have been employed in the ſervice of the church of God; and our words, and works have been ſuch, as evince, that we were led by, and brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, the review will be comfortable to us, and we ſhall give the glory to God. They are peculiarly uſeful to the cauſe of godlineſs, who ſtir up, and aſſiſt their brethren in the exerciſes of devotion; and the ſweet work of praiſe, and thankſgiving, when it is conducted with ſolemnity, and ſprings from lively affections, is an anticipation of heavenly joy, a ſolace of earthly ſorrows, a preparation for every ſervice, moſt honourable to God, and calculated to give religion an attractive aſpect. When *by us* the Lord excites others to their duty, he ſpeaks *to us* likewiſe concerning our own; that we may exemplify by our conduct, in our proper ſtation of life, the rules, that we propoſe to others. They who rule over men, muſt remember, that they are the ſubjects of God; and muſt therefore imitate his equity, maintain his cauſe, and ſeek his glory in the exerciſe of their delegated authority. Then will they be happy themſelves, and bleſſings unto multitudes, who will bleſs God for them. The ſons of Belial indeed will be the more enraged againſt their equitable adminiſtration; and will create diſturbance, and vexation to them, and their ſubjects: but they ſhould endeavour, and will in ſome meaſure be able to cruſh, and keep them under, though they cannot quite extirpate them. The beſt of men, reviewing their paſt conduct, and comparing it impartially with the rule of duty, will ſee great cauſe to be humbled for, and to mourn over their ſins. Neither their hearts, or houſes will be found what they ought to be. Their deſire, aim, and prayer will be, that their families may be the accepted ſervants of God; and without this no outward proſperity will ſatisfy their minds: and if through their own negligence, or bad examples, they are otherwiſe, they will be the more earneſt in prayer for them, that they may not periſh with the ſons of Belial, who reject the authority of the Lord. Yet in all their troubles, true believers, being conſcious that they have fled for refuge to the hope, ſet before them in the goſpel, and having experienced the power of renewing grace, may rejoice that the Lord hath made with them an everlaſting covenant; and may meditate with comfort upon the rich proviſions and firm ſecurity of it: and ſeeing all their ſalvation there treaſured up, and find-

CHAP. XXIV.

Contains, 1ſt. David cauſing the people to be numbered, contrary to the mind of Joab, v. 1—9. 2d. Made ſenſible of his guilt, and praying for mercy: Gad ſent to require his choice of three ſore judgments, and David's anſwer, v. 10—14. 3d. A peſtilence waſting the people, but ſtayed through David's ſupplication, v. 15—17. 4th. David commanded to build an altar; his conference with Araunah, and his ſacrifices, &c. v. 18—25.

AND again the anger of the LORD was kindled againſt Iſrael, and he moved

ing all their deſires centre, there they may chearfully bear up under all, that they feel, or fear, and look forward with joyful hope of complete deliverance. Yet, they who have received true grace from God, will long for more holineſs: and they want evidence of their converſion, to whom remaining ſin is no grief, and burden, and the ſlowneſs of their own growth in grace is not the chief complaint: though they ſtill feel for the evils, which prevail in ſociety, and in the church of God. The Lord diſpenſeth all his gifts, as he pleaſeth, and there are various degrees of eminence, and uſefulneſs amongſt able, and ſerviceable men. Whether our talents therefore be more, or fewer, the honour of them belongeth to the Lord, and we ought to improve them for benefit to the church, and to the world, without envying, or deſpiſing others. In a good cauſe we ſhould willingly venture, and endure hardſhip; even when deſerted by thoſe, who ought to help us; for the Lord will be our helper: and we ſhould allow others ſometimes to ſhare the advantages, who would not expoſe themſelves with us for the public good. The habit of hankering, and wiſhing for thoſe things, which providence withholds, though natural to us, and often given way to by godly men, in an unguarded hour, is indeed rebellion againſt the Lord, ſhews the remaining ſenſuality, and ſelfiſhneſs of the heart, and leads to many ſnares, and evils: upon recollection, and experience, a wiſe man will be aſhamed of this folly; and will abſtain, not only from unlawful indulgences, but from thoſe alſo, which are inexpedient, and might expoſe his brethren to temptation and danger. Were we but as attached to the perſon, and cauſe of the Captain of our ſalvation, and as much pleaſed to ſhew our love, and gratitude to him, and to do his will, and promote his honour; as ſome ſoldiers have been, to a beloved prince, or commander: how ſelf-denying, and ready for every ſervice, and ſuffering ſhould we be, and how glad to ſpend, or to lay down our lives for his glory! And ſurely this is highly reaſonable. Never ruler, or captain was of ſo excellent a character as ours: his commands are all righteous, and beneficial, his authority is an inexpreſſible bleſſing. The obligations, that he hath conferred upon, the love he bears to, and the honours that he hath prepared for, his meaneſt ſoldiers, and ſubjects, are beyond all computation, or conception. The bleſſings, which he freely beſtows on us, were dearly purchaſed by him: and *for us, when rebels and enemies!* Precious in his ſight is the death of his ſaints; and he will expoſe them to no danger, or loſs, but for their good, and he will comfort them under, and finally deliver them from every ſuffering: and he will preſent them, and all their ſervices, as an oblation to the glory of God, and in order to their eternal recompence. Under his command, and refreſhed by the waters of life, that he beſtows, we may venture to engage, yea defy every adverſary, at the greateſt diſadvantage, and ſhall be able to turn their own arms upon them. Though not numbered with apoſtles, and prophets, our names, and ſervices will be recorded in the book of life: and not a cup of cold water, given for his ſake, ſhall be unrewarded: yea the willing mind to ſuffer for him, ſhall be accepted, as if we had actually ſhed our blood in his cauſe. But, as he hath ſhed his blood for ſinners, let all beware of neglecting ſo great ſalvation: for the ſons of Belial; eſpecially the abuſers of his truth, and the perſecutors of his people, will be thruſt away as thorns into the everlaſting fire of hell.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV.] V. 1. *The anger*, &c.] This chapter is nearly the ſame with the twenty-firſt of the Firſt Book of Chronicles, and the ſubject will be beſt underſtood by comparing the two narrations together: whatever therefore is requiſite by way of annotation will be introduced in this place; but the practical obſervations will be confined to the chapter before us. A continual reference to the above-mentioned chapter will be made, without further notice being taken of it The Iſraelites had offended the Lord by their ungrateful, and repeated rebellions againſt David; by their not duly profiting by the means, that were employed, for the revival of religion; and probably by that increaſe of pride, luxury, and ungodlineſs, which generally ſpring from great proſperity. They had juſt before in a three years famine experienced the effects of the Lord's diſpleaſure, and it is likely had not profited by the correction: and therefore "again the "anger of the Lord was kindled againſt them:" and ſatan obtained permiſſion, to provoke, or excite David to number Iſrael, and thus to execute his malice againſt them. From his ſuggeſtions, and David's remaining ſinfulneſs this purpoſe immediately took its riſe; and as it was "of the Lord" that David ſhould be moved thereto; (in the ſame manner, that it was of him that the Canaanites ſhould be hardened, or that Ahab ſhould be deceived;) he withdrew every internal, or external reſtraint, and left him to follow his own counſels, and unintentionally to coincide with ſatan's machinations againſt Iſrael. Thus, by a manner of expreſſion common in Scripture, the Lord is ſaid to have moved David againſt them: though other ſcriptures prove, that the ſinful diſpoſition, and reſolution could not be from God; though he both *permitted* them, and over-ruled them to accompliſh his own wiſe, and righteous purpoſes. For the people's ſin David was left to act very wrong, and in chaſtiſing him, their crimes received due puniſhment: which example throws much light upon the doctrine of God's providential government of the world, and will furniſh us, in the proper place, with many practical inſtructions. But wherein conſiſted David's ſin in numbering the people? It hath been alledged that it was a contempt of the promiſe, that they ſhould be

David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah.

2 For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which *was* with him, Go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, and number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.

3 And Joab said unto the king, Now the LORD thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my lord the king may see *it:* but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?

4 Notwithstanding, the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host. And Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

5 And they passed over Jordan, and pitched in Aroer, on the right side of the city that *lieth* in the midst of the river of Gad, and toward Jazer:

6 Then they came to Gilead, and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi; and they came to Dan-jaan and about to Zidon,

7 And came to the strong hold of Tyre, and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites: and they went out to the south of Judah, *even* to Beer-sheba.

8 So when they had gone through all the land they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

9 And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah *were* five hundred thousand men.

10 And David's heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.

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innumerable: and that they ought not to have been numbered without express command, as in the days of Moses: or that David neglected to collect the half shekel a piece, for the use of the sanctuary, which should have attended the numbering of them; and that he attempted to number those, who were under twenty years of age; (*1 Chron.* c. xxvii. v. 23, 24.) But it seems evident that the pride of David's heart both induced him to this measure, and rendered it so very displeasing to the Lord. Elated with the prosperity, and extent of his dominions, he wished to know, and that others might know, the number of his subjects, who were capable of bearing arms: and this originated from an ambitious curiosity, and an ostentatious vanity: and probably it was accompanied with a secret complacency in his own good conduct, under whose government Israel had attained this prosperity; and a too great dependance upon the number, and valour of his forces. As he was far advanced in life, he probably indulged the idea of having it said, how populous, and flourishing a kingdom he had left to his posterity. And it is evident that the chastisement was especially levelled against this pride, (*2 Chron.* c. xxxii. v. 25, 26. 31.) It had before wrought in his heart, but the Lord would have restrained it's effects, had he not seen it best to permit it to break forth, both for the people's punishment, and David's deeper humiliation: as a physician permits some disorders to come forward to a crisis, that the cure may be radical; which is more desirable, than only for a time to suspend their effects.

V. 3. *And Joab said,* &c.] Even this haughty wicked man readily perceived, that David's purpose arose from ambition, and was inconsistent with his character, and interest; and that if he persevered to "delight in," or require such a thing, "it would be a cause of trespass," *i. e.* of guilt and punishment "to Israel." We must allow, that on this occasion he spake with great reason, and temper, and expressed much affection both for his prince, and his country, and even assumed an appearance of piety: and David would have shewn his wisdom, in yielding to his remonstrances. Yet the king's word prevailed, but "it "was abominable to Joab;" and as he set about it reluctantly, we may conclude, that he did not perform it very exactly: much time was spent, and much trouble was occasioned by this measure, without any prospect of other advantage, than the gratification of a proud curiosity!

V. 9. *The sum of,* &c.] Various methods have been taken to explain the difference in the numbers betwixt the two accounts, but nothing certain can be adduced upon the subject. To those, concerned, it might be very intelligible; and to us it is no ways interesting. As different persons were employed, their accounts might vary: as Benjamin and Levi were not numbered, we may suppose, that in other respects, the accounts were inaccurate: and it might please God thus to order it, that David at last "might not "know the number of the people." It is remarkable that the Israelites had not multiplied in the possession of Canaan, in any proportion to what they had done in their bondage in Egypt.

V. 10. *And David's heart,* &c.] David was not convinced of the evil of his conduct, until he received account of the numbers, that had been censed: and then "his "heart smote him," and he was sensible that he had displeased the Lord.

11 For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet Gad, David's ſeer, ſaying,

12 Go and ſay unto David, Thus ſaith the LORD, I offer thee three *things*; chooſe thee one of them, that I may *do it* unto thee.

13 So Gad came to David, and told him, and ſaid unto him, Shall ſeven years of famine come unto thee in thy land? or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they purſue thee? or that there be three days peſtilence in thy land? now adviſe, and ſee what anſwer I ſhall return to him that ſent me.

14 And David ſaid unto Gad, I am in a great ſtrait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies *are* great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

15 So the LORD ſent a peſtilence upon Iſrael from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beer-ſheba ſeventy thouſand men.

16 And when the angel ſtretched out his hand upon Jeruſalem to deſtroy it, the LORD repented him of the evil, and ſaid to the angel that deſtroyed the people, It is enough: ſtay now thine hand. And the angel of the LORD was by the threſhing place of Araunah the Jebuſite.

17 And David ſpake unto the LORD when he ſaw the angel that ſmote the people, and ſaid, Lo, I have ſinned, and I have done wickedly: but theſe ſheep, what have they done? let thine hand, I pray thee, be againſt me, and againſt my father's houſe.

18 And Gad came that day to David, and ſaid unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the LORD, in the threſhing floor of Araunah the Jebuſite.

19 And David, according to the ſaying of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

V. 11. *For when*, &c.] Probably David had become ſenſible of his ſin, and had offered his humble confeſſion, and ſupplication before God over night, or in the night; previous to the meſſage, which Gad delivered to him in the morning; and then this ſhould be rendered, "and when David," &c. Gad was called David's ſeer, for he had long been employed as God's meſſenger to him, and David had paid great regard to his admonitions.

V. 12—14.] Though the Lord would pardon his ſervant's ſin, of which he deeply repented: yet, as it was a public offence, he would correct it in a public manner; by deſtroying David's ſubjects before his eyes. This would be diſtreſſing to him, both becauſe of his affection for them, and becauſe they ſuffered in conſequence of his pride, and ambition. Only three years of famine are propoſed in Chronicles: but ſuch variations frequently occur, and are probably owing to ſome trivial errors of the tranſcribers, in ſo long a courſe of years; eſpecially as *their numbers were diſtinguiſhed by marks*, which might eaſily be miſtaken. In this diſtreſſing difficulty, David preferred a judgment, which came immediately from God, whoſe mercies he knew to be very great; to thoſe wherein men were concerned, who would have triumphed in the miſeries of Iſrael, and been thereby hardened in their idolatry: and he choſe the peſtilence in preference to the famine; not only becauſe the land had already been viſited with one famine of three year's continuance, from which perhaps it was ſcarce recovered; and becauſe he, and his family would be as much expoſed to the peſtilence, as the pooreſt Iſraelite: but eſpecially that he might continue for a ſhorter time under the divine rebuke, however ſevere it was.

V. 15. *To the time appointed*, &c.] Either to the cloſe of the third day: or, as is moſt probable, only to the appointed hour of the evening ſacrifice on the firſt day; for "the Lord repented him of the evil," &c, which implies, that he did not proceed to the extent of the judgment denounced. Yet ſeventy thouſand died in the different parts of the land, in as few hours, as Joab had employed months in numbering the people; and this by the miniſtration of a ſingle angel!

V. 17. *When he ſaw*, &c.] Probably the angel had before been inviſible: but at length David, and the "elders of Iſrael, who were with him clothed in ſackcloth, "ſaw him ſtand between the earth, and the heaven, having "a drawn ſword in his hand," &c; an emblem of the divine juſtice about to be executed upon the city. David had before been humbled in the ſight of God, and had earneſtly interceded for the people; but this ſight affected him more than ever: and whilſt he and the elders proſtrated themſelves upon the ground, he poured out his ſoul before God in fervent prayer for the people, and eſpecially for Jeruſalem. He pleaded, that "he had commanded the people to be numbered," that "he had "ſinned, and done evil indeed:" and intreated that, as the whole blame belonged to him, ſo the indignation might ceaſe in the puniſhment of him, and his family. Indeed *his guilt occaſioned* the judgment; but the people were far from that innocency, which David ſuppoſed; for their wickedneſs was in reality the cauſe of the calamity. However his interceſſion prevailed: and it was doubtleſs in anſwer to his prayer, that the Lord ſaid to the deſtroying angel: "It is enough, ſtay now thine hand."

V. 18—25. *Of Araunah*, &c.] Araunah, or Ornan, though a Jebuſite by birth, ſeems to have been cordially attached to the intereſts of David, and of Iſrael: and was permitted to poſſeſs a threſhing floor, and ſome contiguous eſtate upon mount Zion. On that very ſpot the

20 And

20 And Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and bowed himself before the king on his face upon the ground.

21 And Araunah said, Wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? and David said, To buy the threshing floor of thee, to build an altar unto the LORD, that the plague may be stayed from the people.

22 And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the king take and offer up what *seemeth* good unto him: behold, *here be* oxen for burnt-sacrifice, and threshing instruments and *other* instruments of the oxen for wood.

23 All these *things* did Araunah, *as* a king, give unto the king. And Araunah said unto the king, The LORD thy God accept thee.

24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy *it* of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt-offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

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angel of the Lord appeared, and thence spake to Gad, that he should order David to build an altar there: whose ready obedience afforded Araunah an opportunity of shewing his veneration for the king, his affection for Israel, and his liberality in the service of God, and for the public advantage. With a generosity like that of a king, he was ready to give David the oxen, threshing-floor, and all that appertained to it, that he might offer the appointed sacrifices: but David did not deem it right to accept of them; and therefore gave him fifty shekels of silver, for the oxen, and the wood, &c: and six hundred shekels of gold for the ground. There the sacrifices were offered, and the Lord "answered "by fire from heaven;" and the plague was stayed: and upon this spot, bought of a gentile, the temple was soon after built.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

In the righteous government of God, rulers, and their subjects have a reciprocal influence on each other: like the members in the human body, they are interested in each other's conduct, and welfare: and cannot sin or suffer without mutually affecting one another. When the wickedness of nations provokes God, he leaves their princes to adopt pernicious measures, or to commit atrocious crimes, which bring calamities upon the people: and when the ruler commits iniquity, he is punished, by the diminution of his power, and by witnessing the distresses of his subjects. Instead therefore of mutually criminating each other under public calamities, however occasioned, all parties should be reminded to repent of their own sins; and to practice their own duties. Princes should hence be instructed, even for their own sakes, to repress wickedness, and to promote righteousness in their dominions, as well as to set a good example: and the people, for their own sakes, should concur in salutary measures, and pray continually for their rulers. The remains of sin live, and will often revive in the best of men, as long, as they continue in this world: and the wisest are soon induced to do very foolishly, when God leaves them to themselves, and permits satan to tempt them: against this there is no security, except humble watchfulness and unceasing prayer. Pride, in all its varied exercises, is the sin of fallen man, as well as of fallen angels: it is the substance of spiritual wickedness, the rival, and enemy of the glory, and authority of God, and equally averse to the submissive obedience of the law, and the sovereign grace of the gospel. Yet this hateful evil mixes with, and defiles the best of our services: thereby even the believer often sacrilegiously assumes to himself the glory, which belongs to God; idolatrously confides in himself, or in some creature; ostentatiously courts that admiration, and applause, of which the Lord alone is worthy; and becomes vain of those endowments, or possessions, which he had no share in procuring, and cannot secure for one hour. Those, who are altogether proud, God will resist, and fight against to their destruction: and he will detect and chastise the indulged pride of those, who upon the whole are humbled before him as mean sinful creatures, and yet inconsistently value, and prefer themselves upon some incidental advantages. Through this hateful principle it comes to pass, that we so readily can spy a mote in our brother's eye, and yet remain unconscious of a beam in our own. And even ungodly men can discern those evil tempers, and that unbecoming conduct in eminent believers, of which themselves remain unconscious. This should warn Christians to walk circumspectly, lest their mistakes should encourage others in unbelief, and ungodliness: and it is sometimes a part of our chastisement to be shamed, and rebuked by those of very bad characters. Yet men, who have no real piety, may, on personal, and relative accounts, be sincerely attached to the interests of true Christians; and *in a certain way*, may have the cause of religion much at heart; as it happens to be connected with that of their party, or their friends: but they cannot love the disciple simply because he belongs to, loves, and bears the image of his master. However they may give good advice, supported by solid arguments: and they can sometimes foresee consequences, which the believer suspects not; and sincerely endeavour to prevent them: and they can mingle their expostulations with affectionate good wishes, and a kind of prayers for their welfare, and success. These things do not prove a man to be a partaker of the grace of God; but they entitle him *so far* to the attention of godly persons: and it is a shame for them to require, and delight in those things, that such men perceive to be wrong: and it is our own fault, if we do not in many ways profit by their advices, and cautions. But when authority prevails against reason, and truth, bad effects must follow: yet this is so common, that they do not often acquit themselves honourably as professors of godliness, who possess too much power, or influence. Men seldom accomplish to good purpose those services, in

25 And David built there an altar unto the LORD, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the LORD was entreated for the land, and the plague was ſtayed from Iſrael.

which they reluctantly engage: and God ſeldom allows thoſe, whom he loves, the ſatisfactions, which they ſinfully covet. Where the grace of God poſſeſſes the heart, a man's conſcience, upon reflection, will reproach him with his tranſgreſſions: and he will not only be frighted, and diſtreſſed, as the hypocrite may often be; but he will be humbled before God, and with ingenuous confeſſions, and fervent prayers, will ſeek forgiveneſs from him, ſincerely purpoſing by his grace, no more to return to folly: and thus a man's pride will prove an occaſion of increaſing his humility. But when God corrects the tranſgreſſions of his people, by the anguiſh of their ſouls, in the great ſtraits, into which he brings them, he will make them taſte the bitterneſs of their ſins, and perceive his abhorrence of them. Whatever we idolize, or grow proud of, will generally be taken from us, or converted into a croſs: and no aggravation of affliction to generous minds, is more painful, than the reflection, that others, whom they love are ſmarting on their account. This is a common caſe in kingdoms, and in families: and perhaps, whilſt miniſters mourn over the ſtate of their congregations; they may ſometimes profitably enquire, whether their own ſupineneſs, pride, want of zeal, and ſimplicity; or their ſelf-indulgence, or conformity to the world, do not bring a ſecret blaſt upon their labours? (though more open evils do not bring a blot upon their profeſſion;) and whether the people's ſouls are not ſuffering for their correction; and to bring them to deeper humiliation, great fervency in prayer, and a more ſpiritual frame of mind, and devotedneſs to God? And ſurely we ſhould chooſe to be chaſtened in our own perſons, rather than that the bleſſing ſhould be withheld from our congregations: for though the Lord be righteous in theſe diſpenſations; yet the people have not deſerved *at our hands*, that we ſhould occaſion this evil to them. The grace of God teaches men to condemn themſelves, rather than others, and to ſeek their intereſts in many reſpects before their own: and earneſt prayers offered in this temper of mind, by thoſe who unreſervedly caſt themſelves upon the mercies of the Lord, are very prevalent. For he is ſlow to anger, and ready to forgive: he never fails of his promiſes, but readily recedes from his threatenings, in behalf of the humbled ſinner. If the power of an angel be ſo terrible, what is that of the Almighty Creator? and as *they* are ſo obedient to their Maker's word, and ſo prompt in executing his will; we ought carefully to imitate them, eſpecially in the delightful ſervice of miniſtring to the heirs of ſalvation. Death is continually, and in ſo many forms, and ſo ſuddenly deſtroying all around, that it is madneſs not to be expecting, and preparing for the cloſing ſcene: and through the great ſacrifice, and interceſſion of the Saviour, the vileſt ſinner may approach a reconciled God: and, being juſtified by faith in his blood, may become his ſervant, and child, and be made meet for his eternal kingdom. This meſſage, the miniſters of God propoſe to men, that they may adviſe, and conſider what anſwer they will return to him, that ſent them; and their deſire is, that it may be, that they thankfully accept of this great ſalvation. And though, they are required to forſake ſin, to renounce the world, and its friendſhip, and to deny themſelves, if they would be Chriſt's diſciples: yet ſurely this doth not reduce them to a great ſtrait; for he will ſupply every want, make up every loſs, and give them an hundred fold more in this preſent time, for all that they part with for his ſake! Grace will teach men liberality, when the honour of God, and the good of his people require it: and extraordinary occaſions require extraordinary diſintereſtedneſs. But we ſhould not encroach upon thoſe, who are willing to give; or deſire a cheap religion. All we poſſeſs, and are, belongs to God, and we are to employ in his immediate ſervice, that meaſure of our time, and ſubſtance, which he requires: and whilſt we ſimply follow his directions, we ſhall ſpeedily obtain the comfort of his pardoning love, and be inſtrumental in averting his wrath from others alſo.

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